

## **466 The New Normal Series# 5, The Rule in Action**

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Recap: Every Kingdom has: A Ruler, A Realm, and **Rule**

### **1 John 3:23**

*“And this is His commandment: that we should **believe** on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and **love** one another, as He gave us commandment.”*

### **Galatians 5:6**

*“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision carries any weight—the only thing that matters is faith working through love.”*

### **Introduction: Foundations for Practical Love**

First, we have to see that the rule of the kingdom is actionable faith expressed through love, and this is not incompatible with grace, it's an expression of it!

### **1 John 3:14**

*Yet we can be assured that we have been translated from spiritual death into spiritual life because we love the family of believers. A loveless life remains spiritually dead*

Real faith is not just that God exists but is rooted in his nature.

### **1 John 4:8 (TPT)**

*The one who doesn't love has yet to know God, for God is love.*

Secondly, we have see that love requires absolute freedom.

### **Jan. 2, 2012 Dr. Caroline Leaf FB post**

*“Love and fear are the root emotions – all the other emotions grow out of these. We are wired for love. We learn fear.”*

The freedom Jesus gives us, is fundamentally freedom from fear, fear of judgement, punishment, of not being enough, doing enough, having enough. Perfect love casts out all fear.

### **1 John 4:18-19**

*“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 19 We love because he first loved us.”*

### **Lets Get Practical**

1. In the Home
2. In the Workplace
3. In the Church

#### 4. In the World

Keep in mind the universals of love, while applying the specifics.

##### **1. In the Home - (Family and friends / close relationships)**

Relationships you have where you are fully known, exposed, accessed and accessible. You are at your most vulnerable and are most influenced and affected by these relationships. Also the ones that can cause the most pain and devastation because of the level of vulnerability and investment.

Love in these relationships:

- (1.) embraces vulnerability and shows up
- (2.) refuse to take offence and get bitter
- (3.) keeps no record of wrongs
- (4.) doesn't withhold affection, trust, or love as a tool to get what you want.

##### **1 Corinthians 13:5-7**

*Love does not traffic in shame and disrespect, nor selfishly seek its own honor. Love is not easily irritated or quick to take offense. Love joyfully celebrates honesty and finds no delight in what is wrong. Love is a safe place of shelter, for it never stops believing the best for others. Love never takes failure as defeat, for it never gives up.*

##### **2. In the Workplace**

This is a place of hierarchy and structure. You work for someone, you employ someone, or you work for yourself in service of another. Either way you look at it there are dynamics at work that are transactional.

So how can we love in an environment of transaction, analysis, and performance expectations, with bosses, reviews, targets, goals, and evaluations.

##### **Eph. 6:5-8 (MSG)**

*"...Don't just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ's servants doing what God wants you to do. And work with a smile on your face, always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders, you're really serving God..."*

##### **Col.4:17 (MSG)**

"And, oh, yes, tell Archippus, "Do your best in the job you received from the Master. Do your very best."

##### **Matthew 5:41**

*If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.*

Love goes the extra mile, not out of spite or bitterness. It raises the bar, it elevates people, it excels, and it goes both ways.

##### **James 5:4**

*Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.*

Love is just ! God's justice is way more than...

### **Acts 10:34-36 (MSG)**

*"...God plays no favorites! It makes no difference who you are or where you're from..."*

It goes way past the expectations and contractual bare minimums because it is rooted in love and honour for one another in Christ and not on the contribution one makes to the bottom line.

### **3. In the Church**

The place where we worship together, serve God together. Where we are family, where we come together to serve and equip and teach and worship and celebrate. We have a common union (Jesus), we have common goals, the glory of God, the kingdom of God. But if we are honest, in the church we have different ideas about what that looks like and how to carry these out.

New testament church agreed that Jesus was Lord. The kingdom of heaven was at hand. But like us they had differences of opinion and conviction over what real faith looks like, celebrating days and special occasions, issues over what is moral behaviour and ethical behaviour and what is not. They had different convictions about politics, economics, and social issues. They had different theological beliefs, end time expectations etc.

### **Acts 15:1, 5**

*Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."...5 But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, "It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses."*

When we let our differences divide us we become *sectarian*.

### **1 Corinthians 3:3-5 (TPT)**

*Ask yourselves: Is there jealousy among you? Do you compare yourselves with others? Do you quarrel like children and end up taking sides? If so, this proves that you are living your lives centered on yourselves, dominated by the mind-set of the flesh, and behaving like unbelievers. For when you divide yourselves up in groups—a "Paul group" and an "Apollos group"—you're acting like people without the Spirit's influence.*

To be biblical we have to acknowledge there is incredible freedom and liberty given to act and hold to all sorts of divergent convictions:

### **Romans 14:5-6**

*In the same way, one person regards a certain day as more sacred than another, and another person regards them all alike. There is nothing wrong with having different personal convictions about such matters.*

If we were to get Biblical we would have to:

### **Romans 14:13-15 (TPT)**

*“...stop being critical and condemning of other believers, but instead determine to never deliberately cause a brother or sister to stumble and fall because of your actions...If your brother or sister is offended because you insist on eating what you want, **it is no longer love that rules your conduct.** Why would you wound someone for whom the Messiah gave his life, just so you can eat what you want? “*

Therefore:

### **Romans 14:20-23 (TPT)**

*“Stop ruining the work of God by insisting on your own opinions... You can eat anything you want, but it is wrong to deliberately cause someone to be offended over what you eat. 21 Consider it an act of love to refrain from eating meat or drinking wine or doing anything else that would cause a fellow believer to be offended or tempted to be weakened in his faith. Keep the convictions you have about these matters between yourself and God, and don't impose them upon others. You'll be happy when you don't judge yourself in doing what your conscience approves. 23 But the one who has misgivings feels miserable if he eats meat, because he doubts and doesn't eat in faith. For anything we do that doesn't spring from faith is, by definition, sinful.*

The one who is truly free must honour the one with the what they perceive to be “weaker” faith.

### **Romans 14:2-4**

*For example, one believer has no problem with eating all kinds of food, but another with weaker faith will eat only vegetables. The one who eats freely shouldn't judge and look down on the one who eats only vegetables. And the vegetarian must not judge and look down on the one who eats everything. Remember, God has welcomed him and taken him as his partner.*

If you think you have the moral high ground, you have faith and everyone else doesn't, your beliefs are correct: you can actually be right yet fail to walk out the rule of the kingdom if the way you insist on exercising your right to do or not do something causes harm or pain.

What about absolutes of God? You and your sister or brother are absolutely free to love and serve one another.

We need to love another in the church by not dividing, separating and retreating to only hang with those who think and act like we do. We need to be those who can love each other enough to take a strong stand and a bold expression of faith, not by imposing our views on each other, but secure in God's love, giving each other freedom to walk out their own faith.

### **Galatians 5:6 (NLT)**

*For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.*

## **4. In the World**

Public space is currently full of shame and tribalism. We are constantly judged or shamed for our opinion, what we support, who we side with, or whether we side with someone enough. Or we get identity from these things. How do we love in this environment?

We manifest healthy identity and we contribute something different. It's not our role to judge.

### **1 Corinthians 5:12**

*"For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? 13 God will judge those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you."*

We refuse to judge and we offer unconditional love in the public space.

### **John 3:16-17**

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*

We let our light shine before men, not by hiding, condemning or judging but letting it shine.

### **Matthew 5:13-16**

*"Your lives are like salt among the people..."Your lives light up the world. Let others see your light from a distance, for how can you hide a city that stands on a hilltop? **15** And who would light a lamp and then hide it in an obscure place? *Instead, it's placed where everyone in the house can benefit from its light.* So don't hide your light!..."*

Be public without being political, testify without being tribal, serve outside the sectarian boundaries, love without limitations, confess without seeking conflict.

**Summary:**

Love is demonstrable and free. It has practical application in all areas.

Love is the rule of the kingdom and it must go everywhere.

The kingdom must fill the whole earth and you are the agent to get it done. No one can occupy your family your life, your job, your relationship your home your church your world the way that you do.

**1 John 3:18**

*“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”*