**Great Principles of Christianity, #1**

**Be a giver, not a getter, Acts 20:35**

Jesus teaches that satisfaction comes through sacrifice and service for others, not in what we can do or get for ourselves. Beyond what is necessary for life, material things are tools provided by God so we can help others. Greed separates us from each other and makes us enemies of God, James 4:1-7. Christ’s kingdom depends upon the principle of giving instead of getting. In Ephesians 4:11 Paul tells us that the offices of the church were designed by our Lord so church members could be “perfected” for the purpose of “ministry.” Ministry is another way of saying service. Christ’s kingdom, the church, is fuelled by the power of each member’s selfless, participation in service. See Ephesians 4:16. Mature Christians should not come to the church expecting to be served, but instead come expecting to serve. The church cannot long survive when its members are getters and not givers. Neither can our nation. We receive the greater blessing when we give of self for the needs of others.

**Great Principles of Christianity, #2**

**Teeter Totter Principle, Philippians 2:2-8**

Jesus demonstrated perfect love when He became our ***servant*** by dying for us. See Christ’s foot washing episode in John 13:1-17. We can have a love like Christ’s only if we make ourselves less worthy in our own estimation which, by the very nature of the case, makes others more important to us. If we lift self up we make others become less important in our view and therefore less worthy of our service and our love. Human relationships are like the teeter totter on a child’s playground, when one end of the teeter totter goes up the other goes down and *vice versa*.

**Great Principles of Christianity, #3**

**Love Your Enemies, Matthew 5:44**

This word for love is *agapao*. It means to want good for all others because they are God’s children. A good definition for biblical love is “sacrificial, active good will.” Jesus on the cross is our most wonderful example. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-36) is also a fine example of agape love because he went out of his way to save a complete stranger who was probably an enemy of sorts, a Jewish man, judging by the fact that the incident took place on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. According to John 4:9, “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” This makes the concern of the good Samaritan doubly courageous since natural instincts tend to repay in kind, making enemies out of those who act like enemies.

In the following Romans passage Paul teaches us that the quality of God’s love is supreme because He loved us while we were enemies. We did not deserve His love, but He sacrificed for us anyway: Romans 5:6-10 **“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”**

Jesus did not say that we have to ***like*** our enemies, but that we should love them. The difference between agape love and brotherly love shows up here. Brotherly love (Hebrews 13:1) is more like affection or friendship and pertains to emotions built over time. Because we admire and are pleased by the character and actions of certain people we enjoy their company and wish to associate with them. If we do not like the deeds of our enemies, or various aspects of their character, we will probably not wish to associate with them as brotherly love requires. In teaching us to love our enemies, Jesus is not saying that we must constantly associate with our enemies or wish to be around them, but that we must be concerned for their welfare. This is especially so in regard to their spiritual welfare. Sometimes the treatment we give our enemies because we love them will cause them to change their behavior so that they are better candidates for brotherly love.