

PREACHER SCHOOL

Ministry of Love — Class Syllabus

“God is Love!” (1John 4:8) And we know that because “God so loved the world... He gave His One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). “Dear Friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1John 4:11). Since “Christ’s love compels us” (2Cor 5:14) all true ministry must be done from a place of deep love for the Lord Jesus Christ and then deep love for *ALL* people. Jesus said the greatest commandment is, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and Love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). (All ministry done outside love is not ministry from the Lord. It is ministry from the flesh and to the flesh. It will be spiritually fruitless. It only feeds man’s carnal nature.)

Love produces an openness and sharing of our lives first with the Lord, then with others. Paul wrote, “because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well” (1Thess 2:8). Further, in Paul’s teaching on the gifts of the Spirit and how they are to work in the body of Christ, 1Corinthians 12, 13, and 14, Paul emphasized all our spiritual life must be directed first by love, because “love never fails” (1Cor13:8), and all that will remain of our spiritual life is “faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love” (1Cor 13:13).

We are called to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19). God’s desire for our lives, as disciples, is that we would learn to live fully dependent upon Him and trust that because He loves us, He will take care of us. Here again, “love never fails” is applicable. “God is love,” God cannot fail, He is God, so we can trust His love toward us. This is the reason we can “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” and know that in seeking His heart and His purposes—the seeking of the Kingdom—He will make sure “all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt 6:33). What are all these things? All our earthly needs. This is God’s promise to us: **when we love Him, seek Him, and prioritize His purposes He will make sure we have everything we need for life because “Love never fails”** (1Cor 13:8). We are encouraged to live like David, “I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness” (Psalm 26:3) —full dependence on the Lord means reliance on His good faithfulness because **LOVE NEVER FAILS**.

A disciple of Jesus is essentially, a laid down lover of Jesus, who holds nothing back from Him, and who will follow and obey Him in everything; “If you love Me, keep My commands” (John 14:15). “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me” (John 12:26).

Course Objectives:

1. Deeper love for God and for people
2. Deeper understanding of what love means
3. To have our whole lives motivated and governed by love,
4. To trust that God's love for us will never fail.

Three options of engagement:

We are offering three options for involvement. People can freely choose what option suits their schedule. Email romey.ritter@seashorechurch.com with the tier you choose:

Tier 1: Required class readings and weekly Zoom training/testimony meetings, only.

Tier 2: Required readings, Zoom, plus 8 weekly response papers of 300-500 (max) words.

Tier 3: Required readings, Zoom, weekly response papers of 300-500 (max) words, plus additional readings and two extra assignments; 10 total assignments.

Required Reading/tools

1. Baker, Heidi. *Compelled By Love*. Charisma House: Lake Murray, FLA, 2008.
2. Murray, Andrew. *Humility*. (Any publisher, there are many)
3. Willard, Dallas. *The Great Omission*. HarperOne: Broadway, NY, 2014.
4. Bible Hub. An online Bible study tool: <https://biblehub.com>
5. Download Zoom to a computer or device: <https://zoom.us>
6. **TIER THREE** (extra purchase): Williams, J. Rodman. *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective*, 3 vols. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI, 1996.
(We will continue to use this book throughout the year for Tier 3. It is a valuable investment.)

Reading and writing assignments:

Benefits/purpose behind the written assignments: the practice of writing forces us to think more carefully about the words we use and the subject we are writing about. This has a two-fold effect of moving us toward better understanding of the subject *and* our verbal communication skills grow through the process.

Submitting assignments: Submit all assignments in a Word document. Email assignments by attaching the word file. Single space your document. Note: write your name on the top left. On the second line write the class name. On the third line write the week number and corresponding assignment name/. Example:

Romey Ritter
Ministry of Love
Week 2

Assignment due dates: the class week begins on Monday. All assignments for that week are due, Saturday by 11:30PM. (They can be submitted earlier.) Submit via email: romey.ritter@seashorechurch.com

Weekly Assignments:

Week 1 – Beatitude Assignment – Read the introduction and chapters 1-4 of Baker’s *Compelled By Love*. Pick one of the first four Beatitudes:

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Use your own prayerful study: Bible Hub tool, various translations, commentaries, word definitions. Consider the specific chapter Baker wrote on your beatitude. Write your thoughts on the verse. **(Max 500 words.)**

Week 2 – Beatitude Assignment – Read chapters 5-8 of Baker’s and the appendices of *Compelled By Love*. Pick one of the second four Beatitudes:

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Again, same as week 1, use prayerful study and consider the specific chapter from Baker that relates to your chosen beatitude. Write your thoughts. **(Max 500 words.)**

Week 3 – Jesus’ Upper Room Discourse – Read John chapters 14, 15, and 16. This is the conversation Jesus had with His disciples at the Last Supper. Earlier that same night, John 13, the Foot Washing and Judas’ betrayal take place. John 17 is still the same night but takes place in the Garden of Gethsemane. I point out these details because in these three chapters—14, 15, and 16—we hear Jesus’ heart. Three chapters is a significant amount of time that had been devoted to this subject. Imagine yourself at the Last Supper. The conversation is almost solely about love. Sit in these chapters prayerfully for a few days. Journal what Holy Spirit is telling you. Study some of the words using Bible Hub. Write a short paper explaining what you learn from these few chapters about Love. **(Max 500 words.)**

Week 4 – Humility – Read Andrew Murray’s *Humility*. 1) Provide a working definition or explanation of humility for life and ministry (everyone is in ministry), and answer “How does Murray connect humility and Love? Or, 2) Outline some of your thoughts on humility from his book. **(Max 500 words.)**

Week 5 – Short Study on Love – The English word “love” is used 686 times in the Bible. 425 in the OT, and 261 in the NT. And since “God is love” we should expect love to be a major theme in the Bible. Using Bible Hub, or other search/study tools (Blue Letter Bible, Bible dictionaries, commentaries) write on one aspect of God’s love. Maybe take cues from the introduction in this syllabus (first three paragraphs). Or pick a topic like, how God shows His loving-kindness through His faithfulness to us. This does not have to be a long essay. This subject is very large,

so pick one thing to study. The purpose is for you to learn. It is not about the paper you submit to me. It is about you learning more about God's love. **(Max 500 words.)**

For the remaining three assignments keep in mind BOTH the Great Commandment (Luke 10:27) and the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-19). These are inseparable.

Week 6 – “If you love Me, keep my commands” –Read the “Apprenticed to Jesus” section of Dallas Willard’s *The Great Omission*, chapters 1-5. Willard calls us to follow Jesus’ life of love, and love means being discipled to Jesus. Pick one of these chapters and write a chapter summary to submit. Remember the emphasis is LOVE! **(Max 500 words.)**

Week 7 – “If you love Me, keep my commands” – Read the “Spiritual Formation...” section of Willard’s *The Great Omission*, chapters 6-11. How do we become laid down lovers of Jesus? Pick one of these chapters and write a chapter summary to submit. Remember the emphasis is LOVE! **(Max 500 words.)**

Week 8 – “If you love Me, keep my commands” – Read the “Discipleship of the Soul...” section of Willard’s *The Great Omission*, chapters 12-15. Healing and reforming the soul—but allowing God’s love to be the thing that does this work, not our own striving or chasing. Pick one of these chapters and write a chapter summary to submit. Remember the emphasis is LOVE! **(Max 500 words.)**

Tier Three Assignments

Week 4 – Mid Term: God is Love – Read chapter 3, “God,” of J. Rodman Williams’ *Renewal Theology*, vol 1, page 47-81. For your assignment summarize the five aspects of God’s love under section B, titled, “God Is Love.” Hint, it begins page 65, vol 1. **(Max words 1000)**
***don’t wait till week 4 to begin this reading.**

Week 8 – Final Paper: God’s Love is displayed in His Goodness – Read chapter 3 from Williams, again. Let it go deep. Write a paper considering the love of God displayed in His goodness. John 10:11 says, Jesus is “the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” And John 15:12-14, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.” Hint: Goodness is explained pages 67-68 in Williams, vol 1. **(Max words 1000.)**

Course Readings and Assignment dates:

Week begins Monday	Readings, videos, etc.	Assignments Due by the end of the week
Wk 1 – Sept 7	Read chapters 1-4 of Baker's <i>Compelled By Love</i> . Zoom: Wednesday, Oct 9 7pm EST	First Beatitude assignment
Wk 2 – Sept 14	Read chapters 5-8, and appendices of <i>Compelled by Love</i> . Zoom Wed, Oct 16, 7pm EST	Second Beatitude assignment
Wk 3 – Sept 21	Read John 14, 15, and 16. Zoom Wed, Oct 23, 7pm EST	Jesus' Upper Room Discourse
Wk 4 – Sept 28	Read Andrew Murray's, <i>Humility</i> . Zoom Wed, Sept 30, 7pm EST	Humility Tier 3 Mid term: "God is Love"
Wk 5 – Oct 5	Get a jump on reading Dallas Willard's, <i>The Great Omission</i> Zoom Wed, Oct 7, 7pm EST	Short study on Love
Wk 6 – Oct 12	Willard chapters 1-5 Zoom Wed, Oct 14, 7pm EST	"If you love me..." #1
Wk 7 – Oct 19	Willard chapters 6-11 Zoom Wed, Oct 21, 7pm EST	"If you love me..." #2
Wk 8 – Oct 26	Willard chapters 12-15 Zoom Wed, Oct 28, 7pm EST	"If you love me..." #3 Tier 3 Final Paper: "God's Love is displayed in His Goodness"