

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 456

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about the "Golden Rule." **"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."** (Matt. 7:12). Paul wrote it like this to the Romans: **"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to his neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."** (Rom. 13:8-10)

There is no doubt about it, little babies are born selfish. To them they are the most important person in the world. When they are hungry, or uncomfortable, they cry out for service regardless of where they are or what time of the day or night it might be. They will disrupt a wedding or a funeral with equal impunity. Little babies do not have one ounce of consideration for anyone other than themselves. It is the job of parents, of course, to teach them to think of others. With maturity they can learn to be kind, polite, and considerate. With the help of the Holy Spirit they can even learn to love others in the same way they love themselves.

Sadly, even as adults, we too often "love our neighbor and hate our enemy" (Matt. 5:43). We sometimes do this by reducing our enemy to a "class" of people and not an "individual". When we call our brother "Raca", for example, we have, in a sense dehumanized him (Matt. 5:21). It is easier to hate a "label" than it is to hate a "person." It is easier for a soldier to kill a "target" than it is to kill someone whose name they know. There is something intrinsically evil about considering society as "classes" rather than as "individuals." Hopefully, at some point in time, we will remember that everyone has a name and is important to God. Perhaps also we will learn to love others in the same way we love ourselves.

In a previous letter we told of a doctor in Brazil who condemned his own son to death because he didn't value the life of another. He was a "doctor" and "patients" were not as important as "family". To him, the "patient" was in a different category. One night this doctor was working in a private clinic in Pituba, which is an upper middle class district in Salvador Bahia. The remarkable story was reported in the newspaper, "Jornal do Brasil" and confirmed by Jair C. Lopes, Nina Rogrigues, and Gregorio Sacramento. Here is what happened. A little boy was critically injured by a hit and run driver. A "good Samaritan" taxi driver picked up the injured boy and drove him to the hospital where the boy's father was the doctor on call. The doctor, however, didn't even look at the boy but routinely asked for a registration fee of 2,000 cruzeiros (only about \$2 U.S.). The cab driver refused to pay and decided to take the boy to the Hospital Getulio Vargas (about 12 kilometers away). Sadly, the injured boy died en route. It was then that the doctor discovered he had refused to treat his own son. The doctor was so mentally disturbed by what he had done that he was committed to a Psychiatric Clinic in Lapinha which is the capital of Bahia. If the doctor had only loved someone else like he loved himself there would have been no problem.

The Hindus divide society into four different classes. At the top of the hierarchy are the Brahmins who are mainly teachers and intellectuals which are believed to have come from Brahma's head. Then come the Kshatriyas, or the warriors and rulers, supposedly from his arms. The third slot belong to the Vaishyas, or the traders, who were created from his thighs. At the bottom of the heap were the Shudras, who came from Brahma's feet and do all the menial jobs. More than 160 million people in

India are considered "Untouchable"—people tainted by their birth into a caste system that deems them impure and less than human. Loving others like you love yourself would revolutionize the Hindu religion!

Karl Marx divided society into two classes, the proletariat, and the bourgeoisie. The proletariat is the class of those who sell their labor for wages. The bourgeoisie is defined by purchasing the labor of others and using their purchased labor as a route for profit. In other words, the bourgeoisie are the owners and the proletariat are the workers. Wikipedia estimates that as many as 148 million people may have been killed by those who hold to the philosophy of Karl Marx. Loving others like you love yourself would also revolutionize Marxism.

Jesus gave the “Golden Rule” just before telling his followers to “Enter through the narrow gate.” Note: **“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” (Matt. 7:12-14)**

The Sermon on the Mount emphasizes the contrast between law and love. The law said don't commit adultery, love said don't even lust. The law said an eye for an eye but love said turn the other cheek. The law said love your neighbor and hate you enemy, but love said love your enemies. No life style is more narrow and restrictive as loving someone else the same way you want to be loved. There is invariably a way around a law, but there is no way around love. Love never fails to monitor our conduct! Every time we interact with another human being love demands that we treat them with respect! It is indeed a “narrow gate” that only a few will find. Further, it is the unique aspect of human behavior that will convince the world that we belong to Jesus. Jesus said: **“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (Jn. 13:35)**

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce