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## *Devotion for January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022*

*"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*

*- Romans 13:8-10*

**In this passage taken from St. Paul's letter to the Romans, St. Paul has told the Romans, you, and me this very important piece of information: "Love is the fulfilling of the law."** There are different kinds of love, aren't there?

- Love between a married man and woman
- Love between family members, children toward their parents, and vice versa
- Love when we consider another person our friend

But finally, there is unconditional love that God has given to us and continues to provide.

This unconditional love is the type of love St. Paul was writing about in this passage, but can we unconditionally love each other? Are you and I capable of doing this? Are we capable of fulfilling the law?

Answer: Nope! Why? Because we sin.

When I was a young boy I stole a piece of candy from Sam's market. I really thought that I got away with it. However, Sam saw me take the candy and called my mom. When I got home she cornered me. She made me take the candy back and pay for it and to directly apologize to Sam (it was a different era). Taking that candy hurt Sam's feelings, because he routinely would give us neighborhood guys free candy. It also reduced his income and broke the trust between Sam and me. There was no unconditional love for Sam when I stole from him.

When we sin, we step out of this unconditional love. If I commit adultery, I have not loved my spouse and it does not matter what my spouse has done to me in the past. Remember it is unconditional love. I can't break a commandment and unconditionally love the one I have sinned against, including God.

So, do we stop trying to love our neighbors, because we can't love them unconditionally all the time? No way!!

We strive in every moment of every day to unconditionally love those around us. When we are doing this, we are not sinning. Thankfully, God's unconditional love never goes away. He even made a way for you and me to be forgiven so we can start anew unconditionally loving those around us. He even sent His only Son, Jesus, to die on a cross for the sins of the whole world, yours and mine included. Jesus was raised from the dead on Easter morning and lives. What a perfect example of unconditional love.

*In Christ Jesus,  
Rev. John Kyle, Associate Pastor  
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