

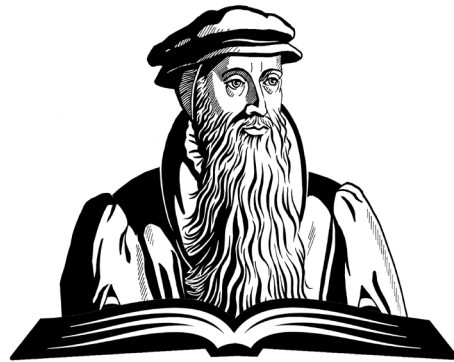
Study Guide for

THE LAW OF LOVE IN THE CHURCH

by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 6

Conclusion and Exhortation



The John Knox Institute
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Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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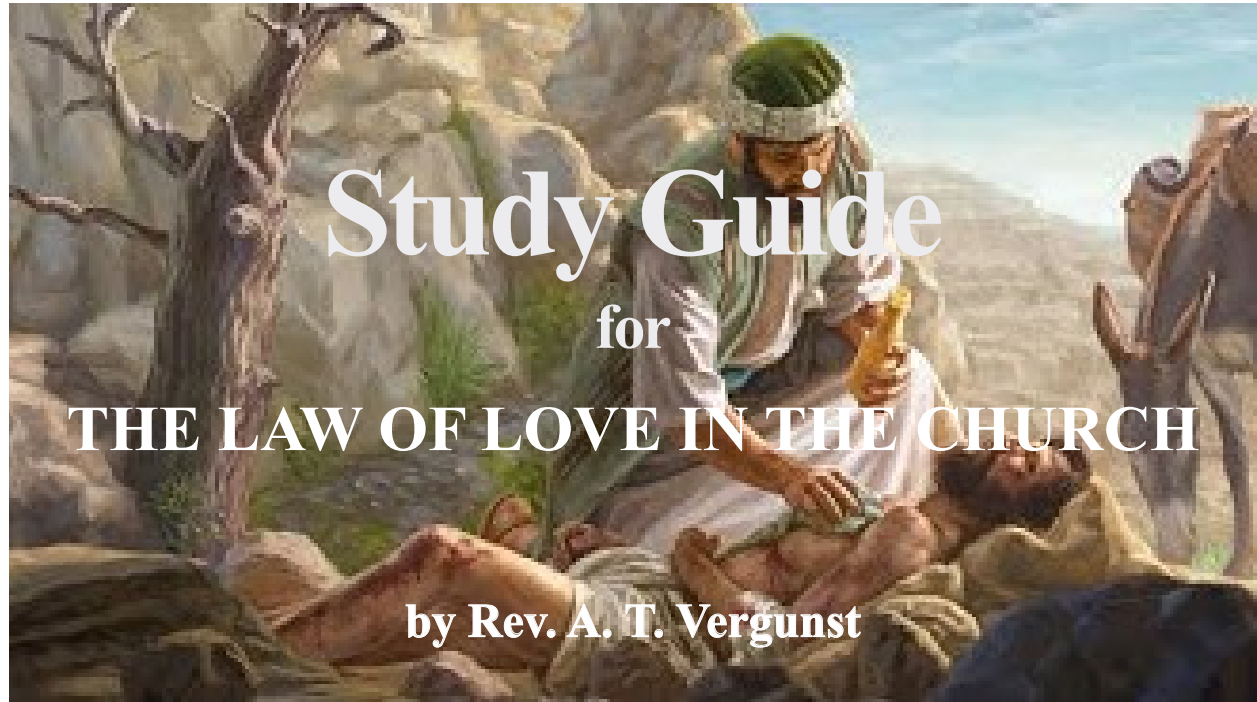
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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

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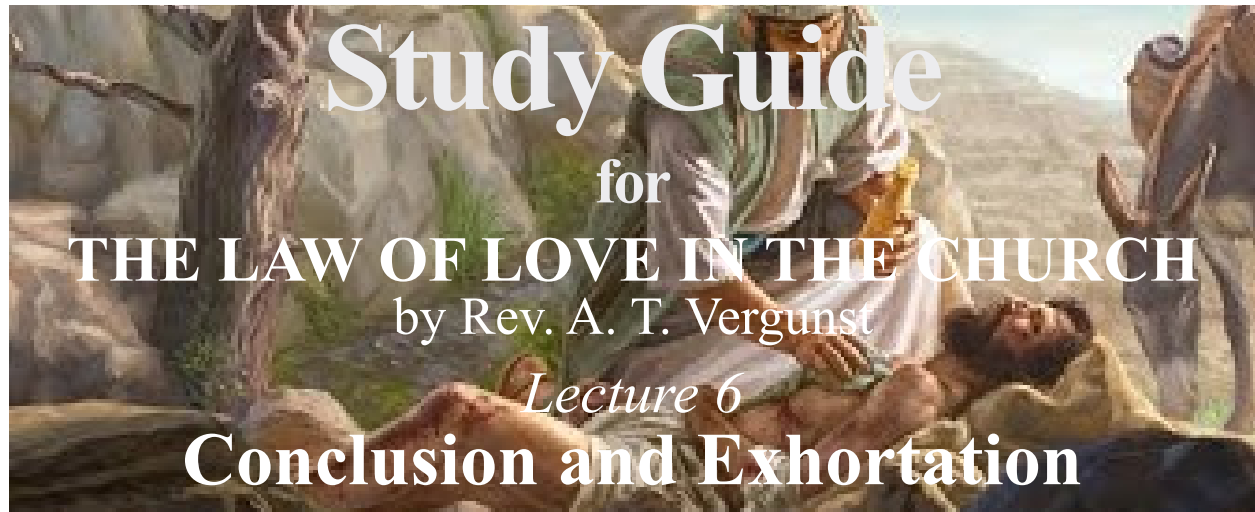
Study Guide

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THE LAW OF LOVE IN THE CHURCH

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1. Introduction
2. Three Principles for Harmony
3. The Strong and the Weak in the Faith
4. The King's Instructions for the Strong
5. The King's Instructions for the Weak
6. Conclusion and Exhortation



Scripture Text

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.”

—Romans 15:1–7

Key Points

1. Review of previous lectures.
2. Romans 15 is Paul’s conclusion of the King’s orders regarding Christian unity and fellowship in the church.
 - a. Best expounded by Paul’s own example, in 1 Corinthians 10, willing to do all things to win some to Christ.
 - b. More insight about Paul, in 2 Corinthians 11:29. He accommodated himself to connect with those who were weak in the faith.
 - c. Example of Aquila and Priscilla teaching Apollos.
3. We have a duty and privilege to instruct the ignorant in the faith.
 - a. Meekness, humility, patience are needed.
 - b. We are to enlighten their minds, not force their will.
 - c. Free their conscience from unnecessary scruples by deeper instruction in divine things.
4. Our instruction of the weak in faith can easily lead to reproach and persecution.
 - a. Examples from the Bible of how they persecuted the Lord Jesus for his instruction.
 - b. Example of Old Testament prophets.

5. Paul's instruction brings him to a prayer for his readers; for all believers in Jesus Christ.
 - a. Without the Holy Spirit, fights and failures will be the outcome.
 - b. Sin causes disunity in matters of Christian liberty.
 - c. Much prayer is required.
 - d. Much affectionate love is required among the people of God.
6. A pastoral note, exhorting to peace and holiness—Hebrews 12:14; abstain from all appearance of evil—1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 Peter 1:15; Jude 23.
7. Three questions for self-examination.

Review Questions

1. Why did the Apostle Paul become a servant to all, giving up his rights as a Christian?

2. How do we understand Paul's additional insight in 2 Corinthians 11:29, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?"

3. What two things can we accomplish in bearing the infirmities of the weak in faith?

4. How should those who are stronger in faith instruct the weak in the faith?

5. What might happen when the strong in faith come to instruct the weak in the faith? Will it always be successful?

6. Where might we find comfort and hope if we are reproached instead of being welcomed and accepted when instructing the weak in faith, according to Romans 15, verse 4?

7. Rev. Vergunst said, "Ignorance is never the mother of true devotion." How important is it for Christians to be instructed in the truths of God? And how can that lead to true devotion to God?

8. What four things should we pray for if we are going to instruct the weak in the faith?

9. What did the Apostle Paul mean when he wrote, "with one mind and one mouth glorify God" in Romans 15:6?

10. Rev. Vergunst reminded us, “Christian freedom and liberty go hand in hand with the strictest moral tenderness.” What three questions did he give us for self-examination as we use our Christian liberty?

Personal Applications

1. Rev. Vergunst gave us an excellent quotation: “God, who will not receive an offering while one is alienated from his brother, that God will not accept the praise of a company of believers where there are divisions among them. Tongues, which are used to backbite one another in private, cannot blend together in singing God’s praises.” How do you understand this relation between unity in the body of believers and harmony in worship of the church? How does this guide our church life in a local congregation?

2. We have learned good things in this lecture series about the importance of love and respect within the church. It is doubtful you can be a Christian in anything unless you are a Christian in everything. How has this series of lectures on the Law of Love in the Church affected the way that you think about other Christians? We hope it has been a great benefit to you.
