

Add to Your Brotherly Kindness Love

INTRODUCTION.

- A. *“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.”* (2 Peter 1:5-7)
- B. God’s love prompted the gift of Christ, the gift was the act of love. (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9)
- C. Charitable acts might exist without love, but love can’t exist long without acts.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE.

- A. What is the importance of Christian charity or love.
 - 1. Without love, we may speak all tongues that are as sounding brass. (1 Corinthians 13:1)
 - a. This chapter is a continuation of the subject commenced in chapter 12. In that chapter Paul had introduced the subject of the various endowments which the Holy Spirit confers on Christians, and had shown that these endowments, however various they were, were conferred in such a manner as best to promote the edification and welfare of the church.
 - b. In 1 Corinthians 12:31, we read, *“But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.”* Paul said that it was lawful for them to desire the most eminent of the gifts conferred by the Spirit; and yet says that there was one endowment that was more valuable than all others. That was love; to illustrate its nature, excellency, and power, is the design of this exquisitely beautiful and tender chapter 13. In doing this, Paul dwells particularly on three

points or views of the *excellency of love*; and the chapter may be regarded as consisting of three portions.

- 1) The *excellency of love* above the power of speaking the languages of men and of angels; above the power of understanding all mysteries; above all faith, even of the highest kind; and above the virtue of giving all one's goods to feed the poor, or one's body to be burned. All these endowments would be valueless without *love*. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
 - 2) A statement of the characteristics of love; or its happy influences on the mind and heart. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
 - 3) A comparison of *love* with the gift of prophecy, and with the power of speaking foreign languages, and with knowledge. (1 Corinthians 13:8-13)
2. Paul points out that even though you might have the gift of prophecy, without *love*, you are nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:2)
 3. Paul then said you might understand all mysteries and knowledge and yet you are nothing without love. (1 Corinthians 13:2)
 4. Then he said we might have all faith so that we could remove mountains, but yet we are nothing without *love*. (1 Corinthians 13:2)
 5. In 1 Corinthians 13:3, Paul then points out that making sacrifices without *love* will not profit anyone. (cf. Matthew 6:1, 2)
 6. Let's look at the importance shown by the promises based on love.
 - a. When we have love God dwells in us. (1 John 4:16)
 - b. If we have love, many things are prepared for us. (1 Corinthians 2:9)
 - c. We will be heirs of the kingdom of God. (James 2:5)

- d. We will receive a crown of life. (James 1:12)
- B. What are the characteristics of this love that Peter is talking about? Let us consider nine identified characteristics that we feel are important to possess if we truly have a love of God.
1. We must have patience. (1 Corinthians 13:4;)
 - a. Patience is enduring love. When love ceases to be patient, *love* ceases to be love.
 - b. When we are persecuted, we suffer without complaining. (1 Peter 2:19-21)
 - c. In patience God possess your souls. (Luke 21:19; cf. Hebrews 10:36)
 2. Kindness is another characteristic of love. (1 Corinthians 13:4)
 - a. Kindness is love at work, love in action. (Ephesians 4:32)
 - b. To be kind to God, we must also be kind to his children. (1 Corinthians 8:12; Acts 9:4; Matthew 25:31-46)
 3. Another characteristic of love is liberality. (1 Corinthians 13:4)
 - a. Love is not grieved because another possesses a greater portion of earthly, intellectual, or spiritual blessings. (Genesis 4:4-8; Acts 7:9; Daniel 6:3,4; Mark 15:10)
 - b. Love rejoices at the happiness of others. (Romans 12:15; 1 Corinthians 12:26)
 4. Another characteristic of love is humility. (1 Corinthians 13:4)
 - a. Love does not make a display of itself. Love does not sound a trumpet. (Matthew 6:2)
 - b. Pride will ruin a person. (Proverbs 16:18; 18:12; 29:23; 1 Timothy 3:6)
 - c. Humility is the way to real greatness. (Matthew 18:1-4; 1 Peter 5:6;

Philippians 2:3)

5. Another characteristic of love is courtesy. (1 Corinthians 13:5)
 - a. Love never acts out of its place or character. Love observes good manners. Love is never rude, bearish, or brutish.
 - b. Courtesy is love in little things. It is not brutal, boisterous or hoggish.
 - c. Our behavior should be as one that is holy. (Titus 2:3; 1 Timothy 3:2)
6. A sixth characteristic of love is unselfish. (1 Corinthians 13:5)
 - a. Love is not desirous of her own spiritual welfare only, but of her neighbor's also. Love is never satisfied but in the welfare, comfort, and salvation of all. That man is no Christian who is solicitous for his own happiness alone; and cares not how the world goes, so that he is comfortable.
 - b. Man is selfish if we neglect the good of others. (1 Corinthians 10:24; Philippians 2:4)
 - c. Love is satisfied only in the profit and salvation of all. (1 Corinthians 10: 32, 33)
7. The seventh characteristic of love is good temper. (1 Corinthians 13:5)
 - a. The meaning of the phrase in the Greek is, that a man who is under the influence of love or religion is not prone to violent anger or exasperation; it is not his character to be hasty, excited, or passionate. He is calm, serious, patient.
 - b. A temper is not evil but failure to control it is a blot on otherwise good character.
 - c. We must be slow to anger. (Proverbs 16:32; Titus 1:7; James 1:19)
8. The eighth characteristic of love is justice. (1 Corinthians 13:5)

- a. It means to put the best possible construction on the motives and the conduct of others. It means that a person under the influence of love, is not malicious, censorious, disposed to find fault, or to impute improper motives to others.
 - b. Love that does not judge will pass over sins and will not tell everything. (Proverbs 10:12; Proverbs 17:9; 1 Peter 4:8)
 - c. Love does not invent or devise evil.
9. The ninth and final characteristic that we have listed is righteousness. (1 Corinthians 13:6)
- a. Love does not rejoice over the vices of other men; does not take delight when they are guilty of crime, or when, in any manner, they fall into sin. It does not find pleasure in hearing others accused of sin, and in having it proved that they have committed it. It does not find a malicious pleasure in the report that they have done wrong; or in following up that report, and finding it established.
 - b. The wicked person will rejoice in sin. (Psalms 10:3; Romans 1:27-32)
 - c. The man with love will rejoice *“in the truth.”* Truth is everything that is opposite to falsehood and irreligion. (cf. 2 John 4)
10. Paul summarizes love in 1 Corinthians 13:7-8.
- a. Love *“bears all things.”* Love conceals everything that should be concealed; betrays no secret; retains the grace given; and goes on to continual increase. A person under the influence of this love never makes the sins, follies, faults, or imperfections of any man, the subject either of censure or conversation. He covers them as far as he can; and if alone privy to them, he retains the knowledge of them in his own bosom as far as he ought.

- b. Love “*believes all things.*” It must mean, that in regard to the conduct of others, there is a disposition to put the best construction on it; to believe that they may be actuated by good motives, and that they intend no injury; and that there is a willingness to suppose, as far as can be, that what is done is done consistently with friendship, good feeling, and virtue. Love produces this, because it rejoices in the happiness and virtue of others.
- c. Love “*hopes all things.*” Looks for improvement in the bad. Hopes that all will turn out well. This must also refer to the conduct of others; and it means, that there is a hope that matters may be explained and made clear; that the difficulties may be made to vanish; and that the conduct of others may be made to appear to be fair and pure. Love will hold on to this hope until all possibility of such a result has vanished, and it is compelled to believe that the conduct is not susceptible of a fair explanation. This hope will extend to all things--to words, and actions, and plans; to public and to private intercourse; to what is said and done in our own presence, and to what is said and done in our absence. Love will do this, because it delights in the virtue and happiness of others, and will not credit anything to the contrary unless compelled to do so.
- d. Love “*endures all things*” – Bears up under, sustains, and does not murmur. Bears up under all persecutions at the hand of man; all efforts to injure the person, property, or reputation; and bears all that may be laid upon us in the providence and by the direct agency of God.
- e. “*Love never fails*” – This love never fails, because it bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things; and while it does so it cannot

fail; it is the means of preserving all other graces; indeed, properly speaking, it includes them all; and all receive their perfection from it. Love to God and man can never be dispensed with. It is essential to social and religious life; without it no communion can be kept up with God; nor can any man have a preparation for eternal glory whose heart and soul are not deeply imbued with it. Without it there never was true religion, nor ever can be; and it not only is necessary through life, but will exist throughout eternity. What was a state of blessedness if it did not comprehend love to God and human spirits in the most exquisite, refined, and perfect degrees?

CONCLUSION.

- A. The shortest route to any good is through love.
- B. Love will crown us victors – if we allow it to accompany us.