

Christian Characteristics

Love

Introduction

1. **Most think of love as the outward acts, but it is the prompting principle.**
2. **God's love is what prompted the gift of Christ.**
 - A. **The gift (Christ) was the act of love (John 3:16)**

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4:9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

3. **Charitable acts might exist without love, but love can't exist long without acts.**

The Importance of Christian Love

1. To understand how important love is we only have to turn to the epistle of 1 Corinthians, chapter 13.

A. Let us notice the first three verses.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

- 1) Without love one may speak all tongues - will be as sounding brass and still **be nothing!**
- 2) May have gift of prophecy - knowledge of the future - yet still **be nothing!**
- 3) Understand all mysteries and knowledge yet **be nothing!**
- 4) Have all faith - even a miraculous faith - yet **be nothing!**
- 5) May even make sacrifices but without love it is of **no profit!**

a) "bestow all my goods to feed the poor"

-- This seems impossible without love but it isn't.

-- Outward liberality may arise from motives of pure display.

Matthew 6:1-2

-- It may arise from a rigid sense of duty - but not prompted by love.

2. Let's look at the promises shown based on love.

A. God dwells in us.

1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

B. We will be heirs of the kingdom.

1) Do you really love Jesus?

James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which **He promised to those who love Him?**

C. We will receive a crown of life.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised **to those who love Him.**

Characteristics of Christian Love

1. **Patience** - "*suffers long*".

1 Corinthians 13:4

◆ Patience serves as a protection against wrongs, as clothes do against cold. If you put on more clothes as the cold increases it won't hurt you. As wrongs increase, grow in patience.

A. Patience is enduring love - when it ceases to be patient, it ceases to be love.

B. When we are persecuted we should suffer without complaining. But that is often a very difficult thing to do.

1 Peter 2:19-21

2. **Kindness** "*is kind*"

◆ **Kindness:** A woman always went to the branch post office because they were friendly. She would even stand in line to buy stamps instead of using the machine. She said she did not use the machine because it would not ask her about her arthritis.

A. Kindness is actually love at work.

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

B. We learned in our last lesson that to be kind to God is to be kind to God's children.

1 Corinthians 8:12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

3. **Liberality** "*Does Not Envy*"

A. The Greek word here is " *Zelos*" which means jealousy. This is not the same word used in other texts such as Matt 27:18 where they delivered Jesus up because of "envy." The Greek word there is "*phthonos*" and it is always used in an evil sense.

- 1) Here is the difference between "envy" and "jealousy":
"envy" desires to deprive another of what he has,
"jealousy" desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself"

◆ **Ben Franklin:** "It is the eyes of other people that ruin us. If all but myself were blind, I should want neither a fine house nor fine furniture."

- B.** Therefore, Love is not made unhappy by the good fortunes of others.
- C.** Love rejoices at the happiness of others as we learned in our last lesson.

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

4. **Humility** "*Does Not Brag and is not Arrogant*".

- A. **Makes no display of itself such as the pharisees did in Matthew chapter 6 to be seen of men.**
- B. **We have learned that pride will ruin a person.**
(Proverbs 18:12; 29:23; 1 Timothy 3:6)

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

C. **Humility - to be humble is the way to greatness. (1 Pet 5:6)**

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but **in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.**

- **What did Paul mean by this?**

- ◆ "I am the least of the apostles" (1 Cor 15:9 > AD59)
- "I am the very least of all the saints" (Eph 3:8 > AD63)
- "I am the foremost of sinners" (1 Tim 1:15) > AD64)

As the years pass – he goes lower, he goes downward. As this lowers, his praise and adoration for God who saved him rises!

Matthew 18:1-4

5. Courtesy - "Does Not Behave Rudely".

1 Corinthians 13:5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

- A. Courtesy is an action of love in the little things of life. It is not brutal or boisterous or hoggish.**
- B. Our behavior should be as "becomes holiness" (KJV - Titus 2:3).**

6. Unselfish - "Does Not Seek its Own".

- A. Man is selfish who neglects the goods of others.**
(1 Corinthians 10:24)

◆ Two men went out to dinner. They were served two pieces of fish. One man gave the other man the smaller piece. The other man said: "you've got nerve!" To which the other man said, "well, I've got it haven't I?"

Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

- B. Love is satisfied only in profit and salvation of all.**

1 Corinthians 10:33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

7. Good Temper - "Is not Provoked".

◆ "My life is in the hands of any fool that makes me lose my temper." (Joseph Hunter)

- A. Temper is not in itself evil, but the failure to control it is. It blots on an otherwise good character.**
- B. We must be slow to anger. (Titus 1:7; James 1:19)**

Proverbs 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

8. Justice - "Thinks no Evil".

- A. Love gives the benefit of the doubt.**
- B. It passes over sins - it doesn't tell everything.**

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.

Proverbs 17:9 He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends.

- C. Love NEVER invents or devises evil!**

9. **Righteousness** - "Rejoices In The Truth."

◆ One day the Devil was walking with one of his cohorts. He saw a man pick up something shiny. "What did he find?" The Devil said: "A piece of the truth." "Doesn't it bother you that he found a piece of the truth?" "No," said the Devil, "I will see to it that he makes a religion out of it." (Klyne Snodgrass, 1990)

1 Corinthians 13:6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

- A. Love does not rejoice in the misfortunes of the enemy nor in a wrong of any kind.**
- B. The wicked rejoice in sin - not the righteous. (Rom 1:32)**

2 John 4 I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.

10. **The Summary:**

1 Corinthians 13:7-8

- A. "Bears all things" - Not overcome by any.**
- B. "Believes all things" - It is not distrustful and suspicious.**
- C. "Hopes all things" - It looks for the improvement.**
- D. "Endures all things" - It perseveres in persecution and suffering.**
- E. "Never fails" - It is eternal in nature.**

Conclusion

- 1. The shortest route to any good is through love.**
- 2. Love will crown us victors - if we allow it to accompany us.**
- 3. At the conclusion of the 13th chapter Paul says:
1 Corinthians 13:13**
 - A. Why is LOVE the greatest?**
 - 1) Faith will turn into reality.**
 - 2) Hope will be realized.**
 - 3) Love will endure forever**
 - a) "It never fails"!**

