

**A STUDY GUIDE TO**  
**Charity and Its Fruits**

**A Outline of Jonathan Edwards' Sermons  
from 1 Corinthians 13**



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# A Study Guide to *Charity and Its Fruits*

A Study Guide to *Charity and Its Fruits*

An Outline of Jonathan Edwards's Sermons  
on Love from 1 Corinthians 13

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Monergism

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Published by Monergism  
[www.monergism.com](http://www.monergism.com)

Direct quotes and page numbers are from Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1969, reprint, 2000.

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ISBN: 978-1-961807-56-3

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## Foreword

The complementary and reciprocal relations of Edwards's sermons to one another and to his major works are as striking as they are instructive. In 1724, serving briefly as pastor in Bolton, Connecticut, Edwards preached "Nothing Upon Earth Can Represent the Glories of Heaven." The twenty-one-year-old pastor anticipated major themes that would continually expand throughout his ministry. In that sermon, he spoke of the happiness of man and the possibility of its virtually endless expansion, the reason for creation as the glory of God, the excellence of God, the ravishing beauty of his moral excellence, and the experience of love in heaven. "Reason tells us that they that fully enjoy the love of God must be exceedingly happy beyond compare.... How much more happy, then, must they necessarily be in the enjoyment of the love of him who is infinitely greater, better and more excellent than any creature." [Works of Jonathan Edwards, Yale Edition, 14:148].

Fourteen years later, in 1738, Edwards preached a series of messages on 1 Corinthians 13 entitled "Charity and its Fruits." The final sermon of this expository adventure was entitled "Heaven, A World of Love." The same driving thesis of the inexhaustibility and fulness of happiness in the presence of divine love dominates the exposition: "There, in heaven, this infinite fountain of love—this eternal three in one—is set open without any obstacle to hinder access to it, as it flows forever. There this glorious God is manifested and shines forth, in full glory, in beams of love." [Christian Love, The National Foundation for Christian Education, 158]

The series on "Charity" came the year (1738) after he reported on the two-year awakening in Northampton entitled "A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God" (1737). The sermons were intended as an encouragement and as a warning for those who had professed conversion. For those who maintained the hope and forward energy of their profession, it was to be a means of further and more vigorous desires after holiness with instruction as to the character of such a pursuit. For those who seemed satisfied with the event of apparent conversion in itself, who felt secured by the emotion and intensity of the profession, Edwards was issuing a warning

that conversion was, among other things, a resistless communication of love that would not be satisfied apart from increasing conformity to its nature. It was to serve as a call to “self-examination.”

Craig Biehl has given us an excellent guide to a thorough study of this historically, theologically, and spiritually important part of the Edwardsean corpus. I have isolated five reasons that individuals should access this work for personal spiritual discipline and that churches should use it as a guide to study groups focused on “Charity and Its Fruits.”

First, the quality of the outline itself presents Edward’s thought in clear, straightforward terms with all the organizational accuracy in the original document. Headings and subheadings are easily followed and give an instructive flow to each sermon. The outline is succinct and helps the reader’s comprehension though certain places where Edwards’s argument is extended and requires a deep dive into the outline form.

Second, Biehl has followed Edwards’s insertion of supportive Scriptures for the different elements of the outline. Sometimes Edwards quotes the cited text and other times he leaves it simply as a reference. The outliner has given a massive number of texts based on Edwards’s citations and the effect is a powerful presentation of Scripture truth. That roll-out of verses constitutes a weighty argument on love and its effects even apart from the narrative. Biehl has included 315 full textual quotes.

Third, Biehl has punctuated the outline with brief explanations, sometimes in footnotes, sometimes as an extended point in the outline, of theological ideas. These precise doctrinal points arise from vintage Edwardsean construction and also clarify how Edwards is using ideas and words that are part of the Reformed confessional vocabulary. So, the reader gets lessons in common grace and special grace, extraordinary gifts and ordinary gifts, complacent love and benevolent love, rewards in heaven for the work of sovereign grace, the eternal flow of trinitarian love, the heavenly session of the Son of God in his dual natures, and other doctrines that are enmeshed in the discussion.

Fourth, the reader can use this discussion as an entrée into both earlier and later works of Edwards. It serves well as an introduction to his work on Religious Affections. Edwards’s discussion of The Nature of True Virtue has many points of contact with this series of sermons. Also, The End for Which God Created the World finds a sympathetic companion in Edwards’s

vision of the operation of Christian love and the manifestation of divine love in heaven as that which most fully expresses God's glory and excellence to the saints. The Freedom of the Will in its discussion of the will as determined by, or actually being the same as, the prevailing disposition of the soul, explains why heaven, as a world of love, has nothing sinful, nothing of envy, nothing of jealousy, nothing of covetousness, nothing of dissatisfaction, but a perfect and unchallenged disposition of soul to love. In Charity Edwards explained the utterly purifying effect of love in heaven by describing the operation of both benevolent and complacent love. "The love of benevolence is delighted in beholding the prosperity of another, as the love of complacence is, in beholding the beauty or perfection of another," [NFCE, 162]. Such a statement not only reflects the sinless preference of the will but distills the main thesis of The Nature of True Virtue. Biehl's outline prepares the mind for a profitable reading of the sermons on 1 Corinthians 13 and opens the door to serious interaction with other major works of Edwards.

Fifth, this outline helps put to rest caricatures of Edwards that see him as delighted in describing the "rotten covering over hell," or the slender thread by which a sinner hangs over the pit of hell. Those images are designed to warn the sinner of divine sovereignty and the danger constantly attending the movements of unrepentant sinners. The descriptions of wrath are powerful and, if I may say it, worthy of a God of incorruptible holiness and justice in his determination of how to dispose of sinners in a way that reflects his perfection of character and power. The picture of love that brought redemption, however, that is insinuated into the hearts of the regenerate and that awaits them in heaven is no less awesome than the exposition of wrath. The unregenerate are not suited for the employments of heaven nor the enjoyments of heaven. But the grace that saves grants a heart that relishes both the employments—endless, fervent, and unblemished praise to God—and the enjoyments—relishing the glory of God, the exaltation of Christ as Redeemer, partaking more fully of the fruit of the Spirit—has prepared a people for just such things as would be a disgust to the rebel. Edwards draws the contrast graphically in a way consistent with infinite perfection of the triune God. "In hell there will be no ordinances, no sabbaths, no sacraments, no sacred things, for them to profane and defile by their careless and hypocritical attendance; but

unceasing woe for their abuse.” [from “The Wicked Useful in Their Destruction Only”] On the other hand, “the saints will love God with an inconceivable ardency of heart, ... so they will know that he has loved them from all eternity, and still loves them, and will continue to love them forever. And God will then gloriously manifest himself to them, and they shall know that all that happiness and glory which they are possessed of, are the fruits of his love.” [NFCE, 163]

Craig Biehl has drawn attention to the divine love that graciously invites, qualifies, and prepares fallen sinful creatures for endless felicity in the presence of the unwearingly lovely God. This outline will have done an edifying service in promoting a deep knowledge of this important passage of Scripture, informing the readers of Edwards’s canonical exposition of it, demonstrating the power of an insistently biblical foundation for reasoning, and showing a path to a more expansive appreciation of Edwards’s passion for the divine glory.

Tom J. Nettles



## CHAPTER 1

### **All True Grace Is Summed Up in Love**

*“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”—1 Cor 13:1-3 (KJV)*

## **Introduction and Definition of Love (1-4)**

“Charity,” or “love,” is “that disposition or affection whereby one is dear to another.” Without Christian love, the most excellent privileges and deeds of unbelievers are worthless. Thus, all saving virtue “that distinguishes true Christians from others, is summed up in Christian love.”

### **I. Toward God or Man, Christian Love Is the Same in Principle. (4-6)**

1. All Christian love arises from the same Holy Spirit influencing the heart. (4-5)
  - a. **Rom 5:5:** “The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”
  - b. **Rom 15:30:** “Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me.”
  - c. **Phil 2:1:** “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy...”
  - d. **1 Jn 4:12-13:** “No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.”
2. True Christian love to God and man arises from the same work of the Holy Spirit to renew our mind and give the heart a “divine temper.” (5)

**Eph 4:23:** “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”

3. True Christian love to God and man arises from the love of God’s excellence and the beauty of His holiness. Saints love other saints for their holiness and relationship to God as His children. (5-6)

## II. Love Sums Up All True and Saving Christian Virtue. (6-16)

1. *Reason*<sup>1</sup> teaches that love is the sum of all Christian virtue. (6-11)
  - a. Love inclines people to “all proper acts of respect to both God and man.”
  - b. Without love, supposed acts of virtue “are unsound and hypocritical.”
2. Love is the sum of all duties required in Scripture and contained in the law. (11-13)
  - a. Love is the sum of what “the law” teaches *in general*—in Scripture.
    - i. **Mt 22:38-40:** “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”
    - ii. **1 Tim 1:5:** “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.”

b. Love is the sum of what “the law” teaches *in particular*—in the Ten Commandments.

i. **Mt 22:38-40** (See above. “Law” in this text refers to law *in general* and *in particular*.)

ii. **Rom 13:8-9**: “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he 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 bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

iii. **Gal 5:14**: “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

iv. **Jam 2:8-11**: “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.”

3. True faith produces works motivated by love. (13-16)

a. Love forms the most essential and distinguishing element of true faith.

i. Assent of the mind without consent of the heart—a consent that includes love to Christ as Savior—is no better than the faith of demons. In other words, light without heat (love) is worthless.<sup>2</sup>

ii. The first commandment requires faith, “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,” of which love is foremost.

iii. Faith works by love. (Gal 5:6)

iv. **Jn 5:40-43:** “But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.”

b. All Christian works of the heart and life flow from love.

i. We live by faith in Christ.

**Gal 2:20:** “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me,” and the obedience of Christians is called “the obedience of faith.” (Rom 16:26)

ii. Christian obedience is called “the obedience of faith.”

**Rom 16:25-26:** “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and

by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.” (KJV)

iii. Faith works by love. (Gal 5:6)

### III. Application (16-25)

1. Self-examination: Do we have a heart of Christian love? (16-17)

a. Do we love the brethren?

**1 Jn 5:1:** “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.”

b. Do we sacrificially serve the brethren?

**1 Jn 3:16-19:** “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.”

c. Do we worship, magnify, and rejoice in God?

**Rev 15:2-4:** “And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God

Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested.”

2. Instruction: The doctrine of Christian love teaches us the following: (17-24)

a. The proper Christian spirit is love.

i. **Lk 9:54-56:** “‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’ But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.’”

ii. Love in the Gospel provides a supreme motive for us to love.

1) The Gospel presents the eternal love between the Father and the Son, the Son’s love to the Father and His people in His suffering and obedience to uphold His justice and honor, and in the Father being well-pleased with the Son for His redeeming work.

2) The Gospel displays the “wonderful love” of the Father and Son for the saints on earth and in glory, even as God loved guilty, unworthy, and unlovable enemies.

a) **Jn 15:13:** “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

b) **Rom 5:7-10:** “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified

by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

3) Christ prayed that we be united to Him and the Father as He and the Father are united in a bond of love.

**Jn 17:20-23:** “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

b. As its sum, and as true knowledge of the excellence of God and the Gospel includes love to God and people, divine love reveals genuine Christian experience.

“Divine knowledge and divine love go together. A spiritual view of divine things always excites love in the soul, and draws forth the heart in love to every proper object. True discoveries of the divine character dispose us to love God as the supreme good; they unite the heart in love to Christ; they incline the soul to flow out in love to God’s people, and to all mankind.” (21)

c. The Christian spirit is a lovely spirit.

d. The Christian life is a pleasant life of peace.

**Pro 3:13, 17:** “Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding.... Her ways are ways of pleasantness,

And all her paths are peace.”

e. Contention ruins religion.

**Jam 3:16:** “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” (KJV)

f. Christians should guard against envy, malice, and bitterness toward others.

g. Christians should love their enemies.

3. Exhortation: We should seek to love and do works of love. (24-25)

a. As a fountain full of water produces streams, a heart filled with love will act.

b. **1 Jn 3:18:** “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” (KJV)



## CHAPTER 2

# Love Is Greater Than Extraordinary Gifts

*“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing nothing.”—1 Cor 13:1-2 (KJV)*

## **Introduction (26-28)**

As prophesied in the Book of Joel, the apostolic era was a time of great and abundant miracles. Yet Christian love, an “ordinary” work of the Holy Spirit, is “a more excellent blessing than any of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.”

### **I. Definition of Ordinary and Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit (28-30)**

#### 1. *Common* versus *saving* gifts of the Spirit (29)

- a. *Common* gifts apply to believers and unbelievers, such as conviction of sin, prophetic revelation, sorrow, and gratitude.
- b. *Saving* gifts are only given to believers, such as saving faith, divine love, and other “graces of the Spirit.”

#### 2. *Ordinary* versus *extraordinary* gifts of the Spirit (29-30)

- c. *Ordinary* gifts are given “throughout all ages,” and include both common gifts *and* gifts given to saints only.
- d. *Extraordinary* gifts are reserved for special occasions and can be common, given to unbelievers or believers (most often to believers).

**Mt 7:22-23:** “Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?’ And then

will I profess unto them, ‘I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’” (KJV)

## **II. To Be Given Extraordinary Gifts Was a Great Privilege. (30-34)**

1. Old Testament prophets, such as Moses, Daniel, Elijah, and Elisha were honored by their having extraordinary gifts. (30-33)
2. The New Testament Apostles were honored by their having extraordinary gifts. (32-34)

## **III. The Spirit’s Ordinary Work of Love in the Heart Is a Far Greater Work and Privilege Than the Extraordinary Gifts. (34-42)**

1. Saving grace gives the heart an excellent nature, but the extraordinary gifts do not change the nature. (35)
2. In saving grace, the Holy Spirit imparts Himself to the soul. But in giving extraordinary gifts, by themselves, He does not impart Himself to the soul. (35-37)
3. Holiness, the “spiritual image of God,” is given to the heart by the ordinary gift of the Holy Spirit, not by the extraordinary gifts. (37)
4. Unlike extraordinary gifts, the Holy Spirit only gives divine grace in the heart to saints. (37-39)
  - a. The New Testament calls the prophet Balaam a wicked man.
    - i. **2 Pet 2:15:** “They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”

ii. **Jude 11:** “Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.”

iii. **Rev 2:14:** “But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.”

b. Judas was among the disciples that Jesus sent to preach and perform miracles. (Mt 10:1-8)

c. Neither David in the Psalms nor the Apostle Paul in his letters spoke of being a prophet as the evidence of God’s favor toward them. One can be a prophet and yet be “nothing.”

**1 Cor 13:2:** “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.”

5. Saving grace is infinitely more excellent than the extraordinary gifts. (39)

a. Salvation is associated with those who have the graces of the Holy Spirit, not with those who merely have the extraordinary gifts.

b. Christ noted that many who had the extraordinary gifts will be condemned to hell.

**Mt 7:22-23:** “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name,

and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

6. Happiness comes more from the Spirit’s ordinary influences than extraordinary gifts. (39-40)

a. Our *greatest* happiness lies in the Spirit’s ordinary influence of “knowing, loving, and serving God, and having the holy and divine temper of soul, and the lively exercises of it.”

b. We cannot be truly happy apart from the ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit.

7. The *goal* of extraordinary gifts is the divine temper of soul given by the Spirit’s ordinary saving and sanctifying influences. (40-41)

**Eph 4:11-12, 16:** “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.... from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

a. The goal of the Holy Spirit’s ordinary influences—salvation and holy love in the soul—is greater than the extraordinary gifts He uses as a means to achieve it.

b. Therefore, as salvation and sanctification are the end or goal of the Spirit’s ordinary influences, and the extraordinary gifts are a means to that end, so His ordinary influences are

superior to His extraordinary gifts as the end is superior to the means.

8. Without the saving grace of the ordinary influence of the Spirit, the extraordinary gifts “aggravate the condemnation of those that have them.” (41-42)

**Heb 6:4-6:** “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” (KJV)

9. The extraordinary gifts fail, but the Holy Spirit’s ordinary saving influence will never fail. Divine love remains forever. (42)

#### **IV. Application (42-49)**

1. Saving grace is the “greatest privilege and blessing” given to people since it far exceeds every blessing God gives to them, including great intellectual ability, learning, health, wealth, power, extraordinary gifts, and natural abilities. (42-44)

- a. **Lk 11:27-28:** “And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!’ But He said, ‘More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’”

- b. **Mt 12:46-50:** “While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, ‘Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with

You.’ But He answered and said to the one who told Him, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.’”

2. What appear to be extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit are not definite signs of saving grace. In his treatise, *The Religious Affections*, Edwards argues that many of the physical and emotional phenomena of the Great Awakening are “uncertain signs” of saving grace in the heart. (44-45)
3. Given the superiority of saving grace, the end-times glory of the church<sup>3</sup> does not require the extraordinary gifts or additions to Scripture. (Rev 22:18-21) (45-47)
4. Given the amazing grace we have received by the common work of the Holy Spirit, we have great reason to bless and serve God. (47-48)
  - a. The privilege of Mary bearing Christ, or of Paul being caught up to the third heaven, “are as nothing compared with the privilege of being like Christ, and having his love in the heart.”
  - b. “What could God have done more for you than he has done? What privilege could he have bestowed, better in itself, or more worthy to engage your heart in thankfulness?”
5. “The subject exhorts all...strangers to this grace, to seek this most excellent blessing for themselves.” (48-49)



## CHAPTER 3

# **All We Do or Suffer Is Worthless Without Love**

*“Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”—1 Cor 13:3  
(KJV)*

## **Introduction (50-52)**

Whatever we do or suffer can “never” compensate for a lack of “sincere Christian love in the heart” and are worthless before God without such a love.

### **I. Great Religious Deeds and Suffering Are Possible Without True Christian Love in the Heart. (52-54)**

1. Many perform great religious deeds without Christian love in the heart. (53)

a. **Lk 18:11-12:** “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’”

b. Many have earned great fame for their justice, integrity, or great deeds for the public good—some from a fear of hell and a desire to appease God, some from pride and the desire to receive honor from others. “It is hard to say how far such natural principles may carry men in particular duties and performances.”

2. Many have suffered greatly for religious motives without Christian love in the heart, including seclusion, great hardships, wars, death, and martyrdom for religion or country. (53-54)

### **II. No Deeds or Suffering, No Matter How Extreme or Benevolent, Can Offset a Lack of Genuine Love in the Heart. (55-60)**

1. Our external actions and suffering, *by themselves*, are worthless before God. (55)

a. God needs nothing.

i. **Ps 50:10, 12:** “For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills.... If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.”

ii. **1 Chr 29:14, 16:** “But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You.... O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own.”

b. God looks at the heart.

**1 Sam 16:7:** “For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

2. If done without a heart of love toward God, our actions and suffering are done for someone or something else and are therefore worthless to Him. (57-58)

3. Love “is the sum of all that God requires of us.” Nothing can compensate for the lack of it, just as a huge debt cannot be satisfied by repaying another small debt, or by paying nothing. (58-59)

4. To outwardly exhibit “respect and love to God,” without a sincere love in the heart, is “hypocrisy” and “lying” to God. Flattery and deceit do not make up for a lack of love. (59)

5. Everything done or suffered without a sincere love for God is offered to an idol. To try and compensate for a lack of love to God by loving an idol is absurd, like trying to make up for a lack of love to a spouse by committing adultery. (60)

### III. Application (60-65)

1. We should search ourselves to see if we have a sincere love to God in our heart, for God detests the best actions and intentions that lack sincerity, while He “accepts of and delights in little things when they spring from sincere love to himself.” (60-65)

Sincerity includes:

- a. Truth—The inward heart matches the outward actions.

**Ps 51:6:** “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts.”

- b. Freedom—Obedience offered freely “from love and delight.”

- c. Integrity—Service to God with the whole heart and soul.

- d. Purity—Holiness that opposes sin.

2. We should convince the unsaved of their guilty and lost state, the futility of their efforts to earn God’s favor, and their miserable future under God’s judgment and wrath.

3. We should exhort all to diligently seek and “cherish sincere Christian love in their hearts.”



## CHAPTER 4

# **Love Humbly Bears Injuries Inflicted Upon Us by Others**

*“Charity suffereth long, and is kind.”—1 Cor 13:4 (KJV)*

## **Introduction (66-67)**

True Christian love inclines us to do good to others and humbly endure the evil and injuries they inflict on us.

**Mt 11:28-29:** “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

**Gal 5:22:** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering...”  
(KJV)

**Eph 4:1-2:** “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”

**Col 3:12-13:** “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.”

### **I. We Suffer Various Types of Injuries From Others. (67-71)**

1. We suffer business and financial fraud, neglect, deception, bad faith, etc. (67-68)
2. We are injured by evil speaking, such as slander, false or unjust reports, etc. (68-69)
3. We are subject to contempt and evil thoughts and their verbal expressions. (69)

4. We experience disrespect of authority, the tyranny of authorities, hubris, and selfishness. (69-70)
5. We are subject to revenge, malice, and grudges, etc. (71)

## II. How Should We Humbly Suffer Injuries From Others? (71-76)

1. We should humbly bear and suffer injuries from others as follows: (71-75)
  - a. We should not seek revenge in word, deed, or demeanor.
  - b. Love should remain in the heart, without passions that destroy it.
  - c. We should not lose the quiet peace within our heart and mind.
  - d. “In many cases,” we should be willing to suffer loss for the sake of peace, even if we are in the right.

**1 Cor 6:7:** “Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?”

2. Bearing with injuries is called “long-suffering” for the following reasons: (75-76)
  - a. We should bear with small, large, many, and ongoing injuries from others.
  - b. “In some cases,” we should suffer a great deal before we seek redress.

### III. How Love Inclines Us to Humbly Bear the Injuries of Others (76-82)

1. Love to God and Jesus inclines us to humbly endure injuries from others. (76-81)

a. Love to God moves us to imitate His long-suffering toward us and the world.

i. Longsuffering is an attribute of God.

1) **Ex 34:6:** “And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering...” (KJV)

2) **Rom 2:4:** “Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”

3) **Mt 5:44-45:** “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

ii. God is long-suffering toward the wickedness of the world in general, and toward individuals.

iii. The Gospel displays God’s long-suffering.

**1 Tim 1:15-16:** “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all

longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.”

b. Given our great offenses to God compared to the relatively minor offenses of others toward us, love to God moves us to gratitude for His long-suffering toward us.

c. Love to God produces humility, a “main root” of a “long-suffering spirit.”

i. Love to God sees His infinite excellence and our smallness, our unworthiness for any good, the greatness of our sin against Him, and our deserving of every ill.

ii. Humility and long-suffering always accompany each other.

**Eph 4:2:** “With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.” (KJV)

iii. Pride is the root of “high and bitter resentment” and an “unforgiving and revengeful spirit.”

d. Love to God moves us to see and humbly submit to God’s wise providence in all things, including the injuries we suffer.

**2 Sam 16:5-10:** “Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came. And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: ‘Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house

of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!’ Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, ‘Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!’ But the king said, ‘What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, ‘Curse David.’ Who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’”

e. Love to God raises us above the injuries of others.

i. Since God is our protector, love to God puts us “above the reach of injuries from others.”

1) **Rom 8:28:** “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (KJV)

2) **1 Pet 3:13:** “And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?”

ii. The more we love God, the more our happiness resides in Him alone, while enemies can only touch our worldly interests.

2. Love to our neighbor moves us to forbearance and long-suffering—the “fruit of love.” (81-82)

a. The Christian life is a walk of love.

**Eph 4:1-2:** “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”

b. We are more forbearing with those we love.

**Prov 10:12:** “Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.”

#### **IV. Application (82-92)**

1. We should humbly bear injuries from others without anger, revenge, or bitterness. (82-92)

a. Consider Christ’s example in the face of contempt and injustice. (83-84)

i. **Jn 10:20:** “And many of them said, ‘He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?’”

ii. **Mt 10:25:** “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!”

iii. **Jn 10:33:** “The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.’”

iv. **Jn 5:16:** “For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.”

v. **Isa 53:7:** “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.”

vi. **2 Cor 10:1:** “I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.”

- vii. **Lk 23:33-34:** “And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’”
- b. We are unfit to live in this wicked world and will suffer continual turmoil and misery if we cannot humbly bear injuries from others. (85-86)
- c. A humble, forbearing spirit rises above and conquers injuries, beyond the control of our adversaries. To the extent we allow others to vex us, we fall under their power. (86-87)
- d. Humble long-suffering exhibits “true greatness of soul.” (87-88)
- i. **Prov 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.”
- ii. **Jam 3:13:** “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.”
- iii. **Prov 13:10:** “By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised is wisdom.”
- iv. **Prov 29:8:** “Scoffers set a city aflame, But wise men turn away wrath.”
- v. **Prov 14:29:** “He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly.”

vi. **Eccl 7:8-9:** “The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.”

vii. **Prov 20:3:** “It is honorable for a man to stop striving, Since any fool can start a quarrel.”

e. Consider the example of great saints. (88-90)

i. When David had ample opportunity to eliminate his adversary, he allowed Saul to live (In the cave and in Saul’s camp, 1 Sam 24, 26).

ii. Stephen humbly forgave his murderers.

**Acts 7:59-60:** “And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

iii. The Apostle Paul was characterized by humble long-suffering.

**1 Cor 4:11-13:** “To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat.”

f. Humble long-suffering toward others leads to long-suffering toward us from God. (90-92)

i. **Ps 18:25-26:** “With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself

blameless; With the pure You will show Yourself pure;  
And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.”

- ii. **Mt 7:2:** “For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”
- iii. **Mt 6:14-15:** “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”
- iv. Consider how much we have sinned against God, how immeasurable His long-suffering is toward us, and how a spirit of grace and long-suffering would benefit us and others, producing kindness, harmony, and love.

## V. **Objections to the Doctrine (92-95)**

1. *Objection:* Some injuries are so unreasonable, unjust, and unwarranted, that they are “more than flesh and blood can bear.” (92-94)

*Answer:*

- a. Are the injuries we have received from others worse than those we have given to God?
- b. Do we not hope that God and Christ will have mercy on us, removing our sins, though we were once His enemies?
- c. Do we not appreciate that God’s long-suffering toward us and Christ’s dying for us are exceedingly glorious? Would we prefer He had not treated us this way?

- d. If long-suffering in the face of the insults and injuries of others is excellent in God, should we not imitate it?
- e. Would we no longer have God treat us with long-suffering in the face of our insults to Him?
- f. Have we been injured more than Christ in His earthly ministry, or been injured more than we have injured Christ?

2. *Objection:* Those who injure me persist in it. (94)

*Answer:*

- a. There would be no opportunity for long-suffering if others did not persist in their injuries to us.
- b. God was long-suffering with us when we persisted in sin against Him.

3. *Objection:* Long-suffering encourages others to persist in bad behavior. (94-95)

*Answer:*

- a. Only God knows whether others will persist, and vengeance is His.

**Rom 12:19:** “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

- b. Revenge provokes more opposition while humble long-suffering generally “puts an end to injuries.”





## CHAPTER 5

# **Love Moves Us to Do Good to Others**

*“Charity suffereth long, and is kind.”—1 Cor 13:4 (KJV)*

## I. The Nature of Doing Good, Including the Act, Object, and Manner (96-103)

1. The *act* of our duty to do good to others seeks their spiritual and earthly good, and includes suffering for them and bearing their burdens. (96-99)

a. We do good to others for their spiritual and eternal good.

i. We do to others a “greater good” than giving them “the riches of the universe.”

ii. We provide a good spiritual example to saints and sinners, along with “instructing, counselling, warning, and reproving.”

iii. We do as other saints have done.

**Dan 12:3:** “Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.”

b. We do good to others for their earthly good.

i. We do good to others by giving them things to meet their needs.

**Lk 6:38:** “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

ii. We do good to others by laboring to “promote their welfare.”

1) **1 Th 2:9:** “For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.”

2) **Heb 6:10:** “For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

iii. We do good to others by bearing their burdens and suffering for them.

1) **Gal 6:2:** “Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.”

2) **1 Jn 3:16:** “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

2. The *object* of our doing good to others is *our neighbor*. (99-101)

a. Christian love does good to *good* and *bad* people.

i. **Mt 5:45:** “Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

ii. “Be diligent to benefit them, that we may win them to Christ.”

b. Christian love does good to *friends* and *enemies*.

i. **Mt 5:44:** “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which

despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (KJV)

ii. **Rom 12:17:** “Repay no one evil for evil.”

iii. **Rom 12:21:** “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

iv. **1 Th 5:15:** “See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.”

v. **1 Pet 3:9:** “Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.”

c. Christian love does good to *thankful* and *unthankful* people.

i. We are to imitate our heavenly Father.

**Lk 6:35-36:** “He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.”

ii. As we look to Christ, it does not matter if the recipients of our goodwill are unthankful or repay our good with evil.

3. The *manner* of our doing good to others is *freely*. No good deed is a “proper kindness” if not done freely. (101-103)

a. We do not do good to others to receive a reward.

i. **Lk 6:35:** “Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return.”

ii. **Lk 14:13-14:** “When you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

b. We do good to others cheerfully and with goodwill.

i. **1 Pet 4:9:** “Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.”

ii. **2 Cor 9:7:** “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

iii. **Rom 12:8:** “He who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

c. We do good to others generously and abundantly.

i. **Dt 15:8:** “You shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.”

ii. **Prov 11:25:** “The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself.”

iii. **2 Cor 9:6:** “He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

## **II. A Christian Spirit Inclines Us to Do Good to Others. (103-105)**

1. The main part of Christian love is “benevolence, or good will to others.” (103-104)

- a. The love of *benevolence* desires good for others and is *unconditional*.
- b. The love of *complacence* loves the loveliness of another and is *conditional*.

[Note: The love of benevolence flows from God's nature as good, regardless of whether the object of this love is lovely and lovable. God's love of complacence derives from the object of this love as lovely and lovable. Thus, God set His benevolent love on sinners and enemies before He created the world (Lk 2:14, Jn 3:16, Eph. 1:4, etc.), but He loves us with the love of complacence once He has covered us in the righteousness of Christ, loving us for the perfect beauty of His Son that radiates in and through us, and that most perfectly in heaven.]<sup>4</sup>

## 2. The best evidence of Christian love is love in action. (104-105)

- a. The best evidence of the will is what it chooses to do.
- b. **1 Jn 3:18-19:** "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." (KJV)
- c. **Jam 2:15-16:** "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?"

## III. Application (105-110)

1. The truth that Christian love inclines people to do good to others indicts those who lack love and good deeds toward others. (105-

106)

2. We are thus exhorted to freely do good to others. (106-110)

- a. It is a great honor to be used by God to bring blessing to the world.
- b. To do good to others is “to do to them as we would have them do to us.”
- c. We should consider how good God and Christ have been, continue to be, and will forever be to us, though we deserve none of it.
  - i. **2 Cor 8:9:** “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” (KJV)
  - ii. **1 Pet 1:3-4:** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”
- d. We should consider the rewards God has promised to us for doing good to others.
  - i. **Ps 18:25:** “With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful.”
  - ii. **Acts 20:35:** “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

- iii. **Lk 6:38:** “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.” (KJV)
  
- iv. **Prov 11:24:** “There is one who scatters, yet increases more.”
  
- v. **2 Cor 9:6-8:** “He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you.”
  
- vi. **Lk 14:13-14:** “But when you give a feast, invite *the* poor, *the* maimed, *the* lame, *the* blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”
  
- vii. **Mt 25:34-36, 40:** “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.... inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”



## CHAPTER 6

# **Love Is the Opposite of an Envious Spirit**

*“Charity envieth not.”—1 Cor 13:4 (KJV)*

**I. Envy Dislikes and Opposes the Real or Potential Elevation, Prosperity, and Happiness of Others That Are Equal or Greater Than Our Own. (112-115)**

1. Envy is unhappy with the honor and advancement of others and may seek and rejoice at their losses. (115)
2. Envy is displayed in a dislike of others for their prosperity, such as Joseph's brothers' hatred when they heard his dream. (114-115)

**Gen 37:4-5:** “And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.” (KJV)

## II. How the Christian Spirit of Love Is the Opposite of Envy (115-116)

1. The Christian spirit hates and fights against the *outward* expressions of envy in the heart. (115)
2. The Christian spirit subdues the *inward* tendency to envy in the heart. (115-116)
  - a. Christian love ceases to be unhappy with the advancement and blessing of others.
  - b. Christian love inclines us to be content in our own state.

**Phil 4:11:** “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.”

3. The Christian spirit inclines us to “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” (Rom 12:15) (116)

## III. Reasons Why the Christian Spirit of Love Is the Opposite of Envy (116-121)

1. The New Testament rebukes envy in heart and practice. (117-118)
  - a. **Rom 13:13:** “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.”
  - b. **1 Cor 3:3:** “For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?”

- c. **Gal 5:19-21:** “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy.”
  
  - d. **1 Tim 6:3-4:** “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions.”
  
  - e. **Tit 3:3:** “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”
  
  - f. **Jam 3:14-16:** “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”
  
  - g. **1 Pet 2:1-2:** “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.”
2. The life of Christ and the truths of the Gospel oppose envy. (118-120)
- a. The Father freely gave His precious Son to save and exalt us.
  
  - b. The Son freely suffered all manner of humiliation and suffering to save us, deliver us from the Devil, and exalt us.

- c. The Son freely refused earthly position and exaltation, and promised the disciples that they should perform greater works than He performed.
3. Christian love inclines us to submit to precepts given against envy. (120-121)
- a. *Directly*: Christian love to others rejoices in their good, and love to God moves us to obey Him and follow His example and the example of Christ.
  - b. *Indirectly*: Christian love moves our hearts to humility, as pride is envious.
    - i. Love sees God's infinite excellence and thus our relative "nothingness and unworthiness."
    - ii. Love moves us to admit the excellence of others and to view them as deserving more honor and distinction than ourselves.

#### **IV. Application (121-127)**

1. We should examine our heart to see if we have an envious spirit. (121-126)
  - a. How have we viewed those who once were our inferiors in wealth and honor but have since advanced beyond us? Have we rejoiced in their success, or maintained an unkind spirit toward them and sought to lower them in our thoughts, words, and deeds? Have we secretly rejoiced at their misfortunes?

- b. Do we presently carry any grudges? Are we uncomfortable with the prosperity of others around us, or wish for the prosperous to be brought down? Do we speak against them? Do we pride ourselves as being above others and desire that they not advance to be equal or above us?
- c. In speaking of the faults of the prosperous, are we truly concerned for them and from compassion pray for their good and correction, or do we speak of their faults to put them down?
- d. Are you grieved because another's prosperity does them harm and from pity sincerely pray for their good, or does your concern hide envy of their prosperity?

2. We should "put away" envy in us. (126-127)

- a. Envy is evil and destructive to others.
- b. Envy is a self-destructive cancer, "the disposition of the Devil."
  - i. **Jam 3:13-16:** "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there."
  - ii. **Prov 14:30:** "A sound heart *is* the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones." (KJV)

c. We should hate envy and seek Christian love.

i. **1 Jn 4:7:** “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”

ii. **1 Jn 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.”



## CHAPTER 7

### **Love Is Humble**

*“Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly.”—1 Cor 13:4-5 (KJV)*

## **Introduction (128-130)**

Christian love neither envies what others have, nor exalts in what we ourselves have. If we are “below” others in “prosperity,” Christian love does not envy. If we are “above,” it is not proud or puffed up. Moreover, a humble spirit does not provoke envy from others as does a proud spirit.

### **I. Humility Defined (130-144)**

1. Humility involves a sense of relative lowliness before God with the inclination to act accordingly. (130-136)

a. Humility primarily consists in a sense of our lowliness relative to God.

i. True humility senses the infinite distance between us and God, that we are as nothing compared to God, as expressed by Abraham:

**Gen 18:27:** “Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.” (KJV)

ii. Though we might sense our lowliness compared to others, no true humility exists without humility before God.

b. Humility consists of a sense of our lowliness relative to many others.

i. A right view of ourself relative to God’s greatness tends to a right view of ourself relative to others.

- ii. If we have a wrong view of the greatest and source off all beings, we “cannot truly know anything aright.”
- c. Humility understands Adam and Eve’s *natural* smallness, weakness, and dependence—before they sinned—compared to God’s infinitely great *natural* attributes and authority.
- d. Humility sees our natural smallness and *moral corruption*—after Adam and Eve sinned—compared to God’s natural greatness and *moral perfection*.
  - i. **Isa 6:5:** “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” (KJV)
  - ii. **Job 42:5-6:** “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes.”
  - iii. **Ps 51:17:** “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise.”
  - iv. **Isa 57:15:** “For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’”
  - v. **Mt 5:3:** “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (KJV)
- e. Humility has a sense of God’s greatness and *moral beauty*.

- i. Though demons and condemned souls see the greatness of God's natural attributes, and will more so at and beyond their judgment, they see nothing of God's moral beauty and therefore can never be humble.

[Note: Edwards understood that unbelievers can and do see the moral perfection of God—His holiness—but they despise it. They do not see God's holiness as a beautiful thing, and in this way cannot see the moral beauty of God.] <sup>5</sup>

- ii. Though saints and angels in heaven will be perfect in holiness, they will nonetheless know the surpassing greatness of God's natural and moral excellence as compared to themselves.

2. Humility includes a heart inclined to humble action, without which there can be no true humility. (136-144)

a. Without a heart inclined to humble action, there can be no true humility *toward God*.

- i. Without a humble heart, we will not confess our smallness freely and happily before God.

- ii. Without a humble heart, we will not distrust self and depend on God alone.

- iii. Without a humble heart, we will not deny credit for what we have and do and give all glory to God.

**Ps 115:1:** "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."  
(KJV)

iv. Without a humble heart, we will not have a heart that desires to entirely submit to God's will.

v. Without a humble heart, we will not submit to God's providence ordering our circumstances.

- 1) We will not acknowledge that we deserve worse.
- 2) We will not trust God during difficult times.

**Job 13:15:** "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."  
(KJV)

b. Without a heart inclined to humble action, there can be no true humility *toward others*.

i. A humble heart prevents ambitious behavior.

1) **Jer 45:5:** "And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them."

2) **Rom 12:16:** "Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble."

ii. A humble heart prevents showy and self-exalting behavior.

1) The humble do not seek that their worldly or spiritual advantages, achievements, abilities, or superiorities be made known to others.

2) The humble do not showoff to others like the Pharisees.

**Mt 23:5:** "All their works they do to be seen by men."

iii. A humble heart prevents arrogant and overbearing behavior.

- 1) The humble do not act in a manner that expects attention to be shown to them when among others, or that display the thought that they are the best among them, or that others should bow to them and seek their advice.
- 2) The humble defer to others and do not presume to take on things that do not belong to them or that are beyond their status or capabilities.
- 3) The humble follow the Apostle's *teaching*.

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

- 4) The humble follow the Apostle's *example*.

**Eph 3:8:** "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given." (KJV)

iv. A humble heart prevents looking down on others with disdain, scorn, contempt, or ridicule.

- 1) The humble are courteous and kind to those "below them."
- 2) The humble sense their own "weakness and despicableness before God," and know that all they have is from Him.

v. A humble heart prevents self-willed and inflexible behavior.

- 1) The humble do not need to have their way. They seek peace rather than make a fuss to get what they want.
- 2) "A truly humble man is inflexible in nothing but in the cause of his Lord and Master," but is flexible in things

concerning his personal interests.

3) When others are unreasonable, the humble do not respond in kind, but leave the judgment to God.

**Rom 12:19:** “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

4) The humble are willing to be wronged.

**1 Cor 6:7:** “Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?”

5) The humble are willing to suffer loss.

**Mt 5:40-41:** “If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.”

vi. A humble heart prevents the “levelling” of others.

1) The humble do not seek to lower those above them, while they are content with those below them rising “so far as their diligence and worth of character entitle them.”

2) The humble honor their superiors and accept God’s arrangement of rulers and magistrates, et al, that they should honor and be subject to their authority.

vii. A humble heart prevents self-justifying.

1) The humble are willing, quick, and even happy to confess and take responsibility for their faults.

2) The humble kindly and gratefully receive correction.

**Ps 141:5:** “Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it.”

## II. Christian Love Is Humble (144-153)

1. True Christian love “implies and tends to humility.” (144-149)

a. Christian love *implies* humility.

i. Love without humility is not divine or Christian love.

ii. Knowledge of God as infinitely lovely produces humility.

[Note: God’s infinite loveliness and beauty consist of His perfect holiness, or moral perfection. Every attribute of God is lovely or beautiful as holy. For instance, God’s infinite power would be horrible without holiness, or His wisdom would be a subtle, scheming, and evil thing, such as the serpent’s approach to Eve in the Garden. But as holy they are beautiful. No true faith exists without a sense and love of God’s holiness, while our love of God’s holiness, as well as the holiness of all “divine things” (such as the church and the saints), forms the “beginning and spring of all holy affections.” True saints love and appreciate the blessings of God with a profound gratitude, yet all “love to God” without the sense to see and love the beauty of God’s holiness is not a true love of God Himself. This mercenary love of God’s benefits (absent a love of God’s excellence and beauty) is how Satan characterized Job’s love of God, a not-so-subtle insult of both God and Job. God rejected Satan’s claim as false and allowed Job to suffer to prove it.]<sup>6</sup>

- 1) Knowledge of God's excellent perfections produces grace in the heart and "is the foundation of all grace."
- 2) Knowledge of God as infinitely lovely "works humility in the heart."
- 3) Knowledge of God's greatness without knowledge of His loveliness as "infinitely above us" cannot produce true humility.
- 4) At the return of Christ and at the Day of Judgment, demons and unbelievers will be made to see God's infinite greatness and their smallness, but it will not produce true humility since they will not see God's holiness as beautiful.
- 5) As love to God is the "disposition of the heart toward God as lovely," and as seeing God as lovely produces humility, thus love to God implies humility.
- 6) As love to man arises from love to God, thus both love to God and love to man imply humility.

iii. Love of God as our infinite superior and the sovereign Lord of the universe is thus a humble love.

b. As Christian love *tends to* humility, humility is the fruit of true love.

i. Love "inclines the heart" to the demeanor and behavior appropriate toward God as our infinite sovereign, as we desire to honor those we love and view as our superior.

ii. To the extent that we love God we will hate sin against God, and thus be humbled before Him for our sin.

2. The Gospel prompts acts of love that imply and tend to humility. (149-153)

- a. The Gospel moves us to love God as One who condescends to an infinite degree for us.
  - i. God “stooped so low as to take an infinitely gracious notice of poor vile worms of the dust, and to concern himself for their salvation, and so as to send his only-begotten Son to die for them, that they might be forgiven, and elevated, and honoured, and brought into eternal fellowship with him, and to the perfect enjoyment of himself in heaven for ever.” (149-150)
  - ii. Though we sometimes speak of God as humble, He cannot be “humble” in a technical sense (as He is not lower than anything or anyone). At the same time, His condescension is “infinitely far from and hostile to pride.”
- b. The Gospel moves us to love and imitate the humility of Christ our Lord who, as God, condescended to become a man—the God-man.
  - i. **Phil 2:6-8:** “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (KJV)
  - ii. **Mt 10:24-25:** “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.” (KJV)

- iii. **Jn 13:13-15:** “You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.”
  
- iv. **Mt 20:26-28:** “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (KJV)
  
- c. Christ suffering the greatest humiliation as the “Saviour and Head” of the elect humbles us.
  
- d. Christ crucified *for us* humbles us.
  - i. Christ crucified gives the greatest display of the vile nature of our sin for which we should be humble.
  
  - ii. Christ crucified forms the best argument for loving the humility portrayed in the Gospel because it displays Christ’s excellence and love.

### III. Application (153-156)

- 1. The spirit of humble Christian love is excellent. (153)
  - a. **1 Pet 3:4:** “Let it [your adornment] be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”
  
  - b. As a humble spirit makes us like our Savior, so “the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.” (Prov 12:26 KJV)

2. Examine your heart to see if you possess such a truly humble spirit. (153-154)

a. **Hab 2:4:** “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him.”

b. **Jam 4:6:** “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

3. As unbelief is contempt and pride against God, His authority, and His way of salvation through Christ, unbelievers should seek salvation in Christ to also attain the spirit of humble love. (154-155)

a. **1 Tim 3:6:** “Lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.”

b. **Prov 16:5:** “Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Though they join forces, none will go unpunished.”

c. **Prov 6:16-17:** “These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look...”

d. **Prov 29:23:** “A man’s pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor.”

e. **2 Sam 22:28:** “Your eyes are on the haughty, that You may bring them down.”

f. **Isa 23:9:** “The LORD of hosts has purposed it, To bring to dishonor the pride of all glory, To bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.”

g. Consider how God severely punished the pride of Pharoah, Korah, Haman, Belshazzar, and Herod, and thus be warned to

“cherish” humility and walk “humbly with God, and toward men.”

4. Seek humility before God and men, the “most essential and distinguishing trait in all true piety.” (155-156)
  - a. “Know God. Confess your nothingness and ill-desert before him. Distrust yourself. Rely only on God. Renounce all glory except from him. Yield yourself heartily to his will and service. Avoid an aspiring, ambitious, ostentatious, assuming, arrogant, scornful, stubborn, willful, levelling, self-justifying behavior.” (155)
  - b. Strive to be like Christ.
  - c. Cherish humility and look to your reward in heaven.



## CHAPTER 8

# **Love Is the Opposite of Selfishness**

*“Charity...seeketh not her own.”—1 Cor 13:5 (KJV)*

**Introduction (157-159)**

By Adam's sin we lost our noble, generous, and outward looking nature and became corrupt and selfish. Divine love and concern for God and others became narrow—to the neglect of God and others—as self-love became the absolute master of the soul. God, however, initiated and accomplished through Christ our deliverance to participate in the divine nature, to gain the divine love by which we love God and others.

## **I. Selfishness That Is the Opposite of Christian Love (159-166)**

### 1. Not all self-love is contrary to Christian love. (159-160)

- a. Love of our own happiness is not contrary to Christianity and is as “necessary” to our nature as the faculty of the will. If the love of our own happiness is destroyed, our being would be destroyed.
- b. Those perfectly happy in heaven love their own happiness, or they would not be happy with the happiness that God gave to them.
- c. Scripture “makes self-love a rule and measure by which our love to others should be regulated.”

**Mt 19:19:** “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (KJV)

- d. Scripture continually appeals to self-love in its promises, threats, “calls and invitations,” in its exhortations to “seek our own good,” and in “its warnings to beware of misery.” Promises and threats are meaningless without “love of the former or dread of the latter.”

### 2. Christian love is contrary to “inordinate self-love.” (160-166)

a. Considered *absolutely*, improper self-love is not “too great in degree.”

i. In an absolute sense, self-love is not the result of Adam’s sin. God made us with self-love as part of our nature, a self-love (in an absolute sense) that does not increase or decrease, even after the fall.

ii. All people “love happiness” and “have the same unalterable and instinctive inclination to desire and seek it.”

iii. Salvation does not reduce our love of happiness, but changes its pursuits and objects and how it operates and influences us.

iv. To reduce our love of happiness is to reduce our enjoyment of happiness. Thus, if being made holy reduces our love of happiness, we will be less happy as we are progressively sanctified, and less happy in heaven.

v. Salvation, sanctification, and grace in our life increase and bring new happiness, though the love of happiness remains the same in believers and unbelievers.

b. Considered *comparatively*, self-love becomes sinful as excessive relative to God and others.

i. Self-love, though unchanged in degree, becomes proportionally excessive in its influence and “government” by the absence or deficit of love for God and others, both in unbelievers and saints.

ii. Though self-love remained the same in degree before and after the fall, the higher principle of divine love in Adam and Eve that “regulated and directed self-love” was lost when they sinned. Thus, self-love became out of balance in its influence, and reigned supreme where it should have been a servant.

c. Self-love is sinful as confined to self.

i. Scripture condemns as “selfish” that self-love that excludes others, as in our passage (“charity...seeketh not her own”), and in the following:

1) **Phil 2:21:** “For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.”

2) **2 Tim 3:2:** “For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.” (KJV)

ii. To love God or others is to place our happiness in them. Thus, we may love ourselves and our happiness greatly, while loving God by seeking our happiness in enjoying and exalting Him as our greatest happiness.

iii. The “noble spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ” is to love others as we love ourself. Such is contrary to a selfish spirit that merely loves that which serves our worldly gain.

## **II. How Christian Love Is Contrary to Selfishness (166-172)**

1. Christian love seeks the good of others. (166-171)

a. Christian love seeks to “please and glorify God.”

- i. **Phil 2:21:** “For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.”
- ii. **Phil 1:21:** “For to me, to live is Christ.”
- iii. **Rom 12:2:** “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (KJV)
- iv. **Eph 6:6:** “Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” (KJV)
- v. **1 Cor 10:31:** “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

b. Christian love seeks the good of others.

- i. **Phil 2:4:** “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”
- ii. **1 Cor 10:24:** “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.”
- iii. **1 Cor 10:33:** “I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.”
- iv. **Rom 15:2:** “Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.”
- v. Christian love has sympathy and mercy toward the needs, difficulties, and suffering of others, and is ready to help them.

- 1) **Col 3:12:** “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness.”
- 2) **Jam 3:17:** “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits.”
- 3) **Ps 37:26:** “*He is ever merciful.*”

vi. Christian love is a generous spirit.

- 1) **Heb 13:16:** “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”
- 2) **Gal 6:10:** “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

vii. Christian love is concerned for the public good.

- 1) **Jer 29:7:** “And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it.”
- 2) **Est 4:15-16:** “Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: ‘Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!’”
- 3) **Rom 9:1-3:** “I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh.”
- 4) **Ex 32:11:** “Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: ‘LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?’”
- 5) **Ex 32:32:** “Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if

not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.”

6) **1 Cor 9:19:** “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more.”

7) **Acts 13:36:** “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption.”

2. Christian love often moves us to give up our own interests and material possessions for the progress of Christ’s kingdom and the good of others. (171-172)

a. **Acts 21:13:** “Then Paul answered, ‘What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’”

b. **1 Jn 3:16:** “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

### **III. Evidence That Christian Love Is the Opposite of Selfishness (172-180)**

1. Christian love reaches out beyond self to seek and promote the interests and good of others. (172)

2. Christian love is beyond the nature of natural love. (172-175)

a. Christian love is supernatural and above the “selfish principle” that forms the main root of natural love.

b. Christian love derives its life from the Holy Spirit in the heart.

c. Christian love is rooted in Jesus Christ.

d. Christian love even goes out to enemies.

3. Christian love to God and man is unique. (175-180)

a. Christian love is wholly devoted to love God as supreme, whereas selfish love puts self in the place of God.

**Mk 12:30:** “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” (KJV)

b. Christian love loves one’s neighbor.

i. Christian love loves others as one’s self.

**Mt 22:39:** “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

ii. Christian love loves others as Christ has loved us.

**Jn 13:34:** “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”<sup>7</sup>

1) Christ loved His enemies.

a) **Rom 5:8:** “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

b) **Rom 5:10:** “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” (KJV)

2) Christ viewed us as Himself.

a) He united Himself to the elect in eternity past, made

their interests His own, took on their guilt, and suffered in their place that He might unite them to Himself as members of His body.

b) **Mt 25:40:** “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (KJV)

3) Christ denied Himself and suffered for our sake.

“He gave up his own ease, and comfort, and interest, and honour, and wealth; and became poor, and outcast, and despised, and had not where to lay his head,” and “shed his own blood for us, and offered himself a sacrifice to God’s justice, that we might be forgiven, and accepted, and saved!” (179)

4) Christ sought nothing in return.

a) He needs nothing.

b) He knew we were “poor, miserable, and empty-handed outcasts” who could not repay Him.

c) We should treat others as Christ treated us, expecting nothing in return.

#### **IV. Application: Seek, by His Love, God’s Glory and the Good of Your Neighbor, Even as Christ Has Loved You. (180-185)**

1. We are not our own.

a. God made and preserves us for Himself and His glory.

b. We were purchased for Him by the blood of Christ.

i. **1 Cor 6:19-20:** “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were

bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

ii. **1 Pet 1:18-19:** "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

2. We are united to Christ and other believers.

a. **Rom 12:5:** "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (KJV)

b. **1 Cor 12:13:** "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." (KJV)

c. As with a physical body, all its members work together for the good of the entire body. And when one member suffers, the others come to its aid.

3. Seeking God's glory and our neighbor's good promotes our own good.

a. God will bless us and look out for our interests as we seek His glory and the good of others.

i. **Mt 19:29:** "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (KJV)

ii. God's infinite resources will be ours and He will use them for our good.

b. If you seek yourself as your idol above all, "God will leave you to yourself, and let you promote your own interests as well as you can." In the end, "you shall lose all, and be driven out of the world at last, naked and forlorn, to everlasting poverty and contempt." (184)



## CHAPTER 9

# **Love Is the Opposite of an Angry Spirit**

*“Charity...is not easily provoked.”—1 Cor 13:5 (KJV)*

**I. While Anger Is Sometimes Proper (Eph 4:26: “Be ye angry, and sin not”), an Angry Spirit Is Contrary to Christian Love. (186-196)**

1. Anger is unchristian in its *nature* when it contains “ill-will or a desire of revenge.” (187-189)

a. **Mt 5:44:** “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (KJV)

b. **Rom 12:14:** “Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.” (KJV)

c. **Lev 19:18:** “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.” (KJV)

d. **Rom 12:19:** “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” (KJV)

e. **Eph 4:31:** “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.” (KJV)

f. **Col 3:8:** “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.” (KJV)

2. Anger is unchristian in its *occasion* when it lacks a just cause. (189-194)

**Mt 5:22:** “Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.”

a. Anger is unchristian when it is toward those who are not at fault.

i. Anger is unchristian when toward those without fault through unintended ignorance, inability, or because they had no choice in a matter.

ii. Anger is unchristian when against God and His providence, for example:

1) Israel wrongly grumbled in the wilderness.

2) Jonah was wrongly angry at God for His mercy toward the Ninevites.

3) We wrongly complain when things go contrary to our wishes.

iii. Anger is unchristian toward others who are doing well and doing their duty before God.

1) Anger is wrong when toward God’s children for doing right.

2) The anger of the Pharisees against Christ for doing the Father’s will was wrong.

3) Anger is wrong when toward those who rightly exhort us or rebuke our sin.

4) Anger is wrong when toward civil or religious authorities for maintaining order and discipline.

b. Anger is unchristian when it arises for trivial things.

- i. Except on important occasions, “God does not call us to have our spirits ceaselessly engaged in opposition, and stirred up in anger.”
  - ii. Those who get angry at every little fault in others will never be at peace (and we have plenty of faults of our own).
    - 1) **Jam 1:19:** “Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”
    - 2) **Prov 14:17:** “A quick-tempered man acts foolishly.”
- c. Anger is unchristian when it is toward others’ faults as they affect us but not because they are sin against God.
  - i. We should only be angry at sin.
  - ii. We should be more concerned for God’s honor than our own personal interests.
  - iii. We should imitate Christ, who was silent concerning His personal injuries, but zeal consumed Him for God’s honor (e.g., as when he cleared the temple).

3. Anger is unchristian in its *end*. (194)

- a. Anger is unchristian when it is without a reasoned purpose or motive, when nothing is to be gained by it. Such is the blind passion of a beast.
- b. Anger is unchristian when we are angry “for any wrong end,” with no honor to God or benefit to us.

4. Anger is unchristian in its *measure*. (195-196)

- a. Anger is unchristian when excessive in *degree*, beyond what is appropriate for the occasion.
- b. Anger is unchristian when excessive in *duration*, continuing beyond what is appropriate. Lingering anger can become hate and malice.
  - i. **Ecc1 7:9**: “Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.”
  - ii. **Eph 4:26**: “Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath.”

## **II. How Christian Love Is Contrary to an Angry Spirit (196-198)**

- 1. Christian love is good-will and contrary to *undue* anger that tends to revenge and ill-will. (196-197)
- 2. All the fruits of Christian love are contrary to an angry spirit, and contrary to pride and selfishness as its source. (197-198)
  - a. Christian love is contrary to pride, a “chief cause of undue anger,” and is more concerned with God’s honor than personal affronts.
  - b. Christian love is contrary to selfishness, a cause of undue anger.

## **III. Application (198-203)**

- 1. Self-examination: Do we have an angry spirit? (198-200)

- a. Are we often angry or full of ill-will? Do we allow them to fester?
  - b. Are we as angry with dishonor to God when it does not concern our personal interest as when it does?
2. Given we are full of pride and selfishness, we should avoid all undue and sinful anger. (201-203)
- a. Consider how often we have given God and others a reason to be angry with us.
    - i. We continually have occasion to ask for God's mercy to not be angry with us.
    - ii. We should spend more time in concern for the beams in our own eyes than the splinters in others' eyes.
    - iii. The faults in others that anger us most are often those that are equal or greater in us.
    - iv. Rather than get angry at provocations, we should reflect on how or when we have been guilty of the same.
  - b. Anger destroys our own comfort and peace.
  - c. An angry spirit makes us unfit to serve and enjoy God.
    - i. **Mt 5:24:** "Leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

ii. **1 Tim 2:8:** “I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

d. An angry spirit makes us “unfit for human society.”

i. **Prov 22:24-25:** “Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul.”

ii. **Prov 29:22:** “An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression.”



## CHAPTER 10

# **Love Is the Opposite of an Overly Critical Spirit**

*“Charity...thinketh no evil.”—1 Cor 13:5 (KJV)*

**I. An Uncharitable, Censorious, or Overly Critical and Condemning Spirit Tends to Think the Worst of the State, Qualities, and Actions of Others. (205-213)**

1. A censorious spirit tends to think the worst of another's *spiritual state*. (205-207)

a. A censorious spirit is quick to condemn professing Christians as hypocrites.

i. An overly critical spirit condemns others based on insufficient or no evidence.

ii. An overly critical spirit condemns by misinterpreting God's providence, such as Job's counselors presuming Job's suffering was payback for wickedness in Job.

iii. An overly critical spirit condemns others based on defects or failures that are no greater than those typical in believers or in themselves.

iv. An overly critical spirit condemns others as unconverted who hold different opinions on nonessential matters.

v. An overly critical spirit does not make allowances for another's disadvantages in education, upbringing, circumstances, etc.

vi. An overly critical spirit makes his own experience the standard for everyone else, ignoring the often mysterious and differing ways the Holy Spirit brings people to faith and new life.

2. A censorious or uncharitable spirit tends to think the worst of another's *qualities*. (207-208)

a. An uncharitable spirit ignores or minimizes good qualities in others.

b. An uncharitable spirit magnifies bad qualities in others.

c. An uncharitable spirit imputes bad qualities in others where none exist.

3. A censorious or condemning spirit that tends to think the worst of another's *actions* is displayed two ways: (208-210)

a. A condemning spirit judges evil of actions without evidence.

i. A condemning spirit condemns when actions are unknown.

ii. A condemning spirit condemns when motives are unknown.

iii. A condemning spirit condemns based on gossip or questionable reports.

1) **Ps 15:1-3:** "LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend."

2) **Prov 17:4:** "An evildoer gives heed to false lips; A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful tongue."

- b. A censorious or condemning spirit assumes evil about another's actions when they could just as easily assume good or better.

#### 4. Caveats (210-213)

- a. Some are appointed to be judges of civil and church affairs.
- b. We are not to deny reason by *always* judging well of others.
  - i. We are to judge when the evidence of evil action and or motive is clear.
  - ii. Loving others is compatible with being reasonable in how we interpret things.
- c. The evil of judging improperly lies in two things:
  - i. Judging is wrong when we judge ill of someone without evidence or when a good explanation is possible.

**Prov 18:13:** "He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him."

- ii. Judging is wrong when we enjoy judging ill of others.
  - 1) Judging quickly with minimal evidence gives evidence of an uncharitable spirit.
  - 2) Being quick to speak and think evil of others gives evidence of an uncharitable spirit.

## **II. How Christian Love Is Contrary to an Uncharitable and Censorious Spirit (213-216)**

1. An uncharitable and censorious spirit is contrary to loving our neighbor. (213-215)

a. Since we love ourselves, we are slow to judge ill of our own state, words, and deeds. Therefore, if we love others, we shall also be slow to judge ill of their state, words, and deeds.

b. We are slow to judge ill of those we love and quick to judge ill of those we dislike.

2. An uncharitable and censorious spirit is a proud spirit, while the humble are quick to see their own faults. (215-216)

a. If we were aware of our own faults, we would be slow to judge others, since the same judgment would apply to us.

i. **Mt 7:1-5:** “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite!”

ii. **Rom 2:1:** “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.”

b. A conceited spirit exalts himself above others as their lord and judge.

i. **Jam 4:11-12:** “Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?”

ii. **Rom 14:4:** “Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls.”

### III. Application (216-220)

1. Scripture rebukes all who freely speak evil of others. (216-217)

a. **Ps 50:19-20:** “You give your mouth to evil, And your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother’s son.”

b. **Tit 3:1-2:** “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.”

c. **1 Pet 2:1:** “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking.”

d. **Ps 15:1-3:** “LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend.”

2. Scripture warns against thinking or speaking evil against others if we desire to be worthy of the name Christian. (217-220)

a. Things often turn out to be better than we first thought. For example:

i. Israel wrongly assumed that the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh built an alter at the Jordan for idolatry. (Josh 22:9-31)

ii. Eli wrongly assumed Hannah was drunk. (1 Sam 1:12-16)

iii. David wrongly believed Zibah's lie regarding Mephibosheth. (2 Sam 16:1-4)

iv. Elijah wrongly assumed he was the only remaining worshiper of God in Israel, when 7,000 had not bowed the knee to Baal. (1 Ki 19:14-18, Rom 11:2-4)

b. We have little reason to judge another's state, qualifications, or actions that do not concern us.

i. We should be much more concerned for our own godliness before God.

ii. Some things are God's concern and are best left to Him.

**1 Cor 4:5:** "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God."

c. God warns us to not judge and condemn lest we also be judged and condemned by the same standard we apply to others.

**Rom 2:3:** “And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?”



## CHAPTER 11

# **True Grace in the Heart Leads to Holy Practice in Life**

*“Charity...rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.”—1 Cor 13:6  
(KJV)*

## **Introduction (221-222)**

Here the Apostle sums up what he has said thus far concerning love and our actions, as Christian love opposes sin and tends to good. It “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” The word “truth” has a range of meaning in Scripture, including doctrine, knowledge of doctrine, faithfulness, and holiness, “including both the knowledge and reception of all the great truths of the Scriptures, and conformity to these in the life and conduct.” Such is the sense in the present passage, as in 3 Jn 1:3, “I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth.” Grace in the heart leads to holy living.

## I. Arguments Showing That True Grace in the Heart Tends to Holy Living (222-230)

1. The purpose of eternal election, the “first ground” of saving grace, is holy works. (223)

a. **Eph 2:10:** “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

b. **Eph 1:4:** “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

c. **Jn 15:16:** “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”

d. Since God intends holy works to flow from election—the ground of saving grace—this grace is effective and fitting to produce holy works.

2. Christ’s merits purchased grace and holiness for us in order that we should produce holy works. (224-225)

a. **Jn 17:19:** “And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.”

b. **Col 1:21-22:** “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.”

- c. **Mt 1:21:** “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”
- d. **Tit 2:13-14:** “Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”
- e. **2 Cor 5:15:** “And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”
- f. **Heb 9:14:** “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”
- g. **Lk 1:68, 74-75:** “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people...to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.”

3. God effectually called us to do holy works. (225-226)

- a. **1 Th 4:7:** “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” (KJV)
- b. **1 Pet 1:15:** “But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.”

4. True spiritual knowledge of God tends to holy works. (226-227)

- a. True, saving knowledge of God is more than mere speculative knowledge (“head” knowledge). It includes the sight of God’s holiness as beautiful, and thus views sin as hateful and has the will to avoid it.
- b. **Ex 5:2:** “And Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.’”
- c. **Ps 14:4:** “Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, Who eat up my people as they eat bread, And do not call on the LORD?”
- d. **Jer 22:16:** “‘He judged the cause of the poor and needy; Then it was well. Was not this knowing Me?’ says the LORD.”
- e. **1 Jn 2:3-4:** “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
- f. **Prov 17:27:** “A man of understanding is of a calm spirit.”

5. All Christian grace leads to holy works. (227-230)

- a. The *will* governs our actions and is the “immediate seat” of grace.
- b. Grace is a “principle of holy action,” or a principle or root from which acts of grace flow.
- c. Since grace is real and not a mere image, it is active and productive.

- d. Grace is a “vital principle” of life and thus acts to produce spiritual fruit, whereas those without grace are said to be spiritually dead and unable to produce spiritual fruit.
  
- e. Grace is an “exceedingly powerful principle” as divine, “the power of godliness.” (2 Tim 3:5)

## II. All Grace Leads to Holy Works. (230-244)

1. Saving faith works by love, and good works display true faith. (230-234)

**Gal 5:6:** “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.”

**Jam 2:18:** “I will show you my faith by my works.”

- a. We act according to our convictions. The more we believe things to be true, important, and in our interest, such as the promises of the Gospel, the more we will act upon them.
  - b. The act of the will that receives Christ as supreme Lord and Savior from sin, acts accordingly with holy works.
  - c. Trust in God leads to holy works.
    - i. If we trust and rest in the character and promises of God, we are willing to act on them.
    - ii. If we trust and rest in the character and promises of God, we will be willing to suffer pain and hardship for Him, knowing He has promised us great rewards that will more than make up for our losses in serving Him.
2. True love to God is active and thus leads to holy works. (234-237)
    - a. Love is the chief motive for all action.

b. Action is the best test and evidence of love.

c. Love to God tends to holy practice in various ways.

i. Love to God leads to holy works from a high reverence and regard for God.

ii. Love to God leads to holy works from choosing God above other things.

iii. Love to God leads to holy works from desires to seek after Him.

iv. Love to God leads to holy works from finding our happiness in Him.

3. True, saving repentance (change of mind regarding sin) tends to holy action. (237)

4. True humility leads to holy action. (237-239)

a. When we are aware of our smallness and unworthiness, we tend to act accordingly.

b. Humility makes us submissive to God's will.

c. Humility makes us kinder and more respectful to others, content with our own situation, calmer and more peaceful, and less resentful of others who cross us.

5. A true fear of God leads to holy action. (239-240)

- a. **Dt 28:58:** “If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name.”
  - b. **Prov 8:13:** “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way.”
  - c. **Job 31:23:** “Destruction from God is a terror to me.”
  - d. **Job 1:8:** “Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?’”
6. Sincere thankfulness and praise to God lead to holy action. (240-241)
- a. We tend to do good to those who do good to us.
  - b. We tend to seek the good of those who have invested and sacrificed much to help us and have pity on us.
7. To be heavenly-minded and not worldly-minded tends to holy action. (241-242)
8. Christian love to people leads to holy action. (242-243)
- a. **1 Jn 3:18-19:** “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.”
  - b. **Jam 2:15-16:** “If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be

warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?"

- c. **Rom 13:9-10:** "And if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

9. True hope leads to holy action. (243-244)

- a. **1 Jn 3:3:** "Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."
- b. The object of hope—holy happiness—encourages holy action.
- c. The source of hope—Christ—encourages holy action by love and gratitude to Him.

### III. Application (244-250)

- 1. Good works are the main evidence of true grace in the heart. (244-245)
  - a. **Mt 7:16-20:** "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them."
  - b. **Jn 14:21:** "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me."

c. **Jn 14:23-24:** “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words.”

d. **Eph 5:5-6:** “For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”

e. **1 Cor 6:9-10:** “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” (KJV)

f. **Gal 5:24:** “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

g. **Rom 8:13:** “For if you live according to the flesh you will die.”

2. Examine your heart to see if true grace and faith reside there. (245-250)

a. Are the times you fail to walk in holiness disgusting and humbling to you?

b. Do you usually dread sin as an enemy of your soul and offense to God?

c. Are holiness and holy works beautiful and pleasant to you?

- d. Do you value and delight in Christian practices, those “implied in a meek, humble, prayerful, self-denying, self-renouncing, heavenly walk and behaviour,” above mere worldly virtue?
  
- e. Do you “hunger and thirst” for a holy life?
  
- f. Do you seek to live in a holy manner in every area of your life?
  
- g. Do you desire to know and do all that God would have you to do?



## CHAPTER 12

# **Love Is Willing to Suffer for Christ**

*“Charity...beareth all things.”—1 Cor 13:7 (KJV)*

**Introduction (251-253)**

The phrase “bears all things” refers to suffering for the cause of Christ and not to bearing injuries from others, given the following:

1. “Love is long-suffering” and “not easily provoked” have already been addressed in the chapter.
2. The chapter has already dealt with and summed up conduct toward neighbors in the previous verse, “rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.”
3. Suffering for Christ is often said by the Apostle Paul to be a fruit of Christian love.
  - a. **2 Cor 5:14:** “For the love of Christ compels us.”
  - b. **Rom 5:3, 5:** “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance.... Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”
  - c. **Rom 8:35:** “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”
4. The phrase “believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things” shows that Paul has finished addressing the fruits of love with respect to our neighbor.

## **I. Explanation of Love as Willing to Suffer for Christ (253-255)**

1. Christian love is willing to work *and* suffer for Christ, whereas unbelievers may boast of sacrifice but do works that entail little to no difficulty or suffering. (253-254)

**Lk 14:27:** “Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

2. Christian love is willing to suffer all *kinds* and *degrees* of suffering to which love to Christ may expose them. (254-255)

a. We suffer all *kinds* of suffering because of doing our duty.

i. **2 Cor 12:10:** “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake.”

ii. **Mt 10:22:** “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.”

iii. **Phil 3:8:** “I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.”

iv. **2 Cor 6:4-5:** “But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings.”

v. **Heb 11:35-36:** “Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.”

vi. **Mt 10:39:** “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”

b. We suffer all *degrees* of suffering because of doing our duty.

- i. **Lk 14:26:** “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”
- ii. **Heb 11:37:** “They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.”

## **I. Evidence That Love Is Willing to Suffer for Christ (255-263)**

1. Reluctance to suffer for Christ shows that we have not unreservedly embraced Christ.
  - a. True believers know and consent to Christ having purchased them and that they are not their own. (256-257)
  - b. To love God is to love Him as the supreme good, placing all other things below Him.
2. A true fear of God sees God’s displeasure and wrath as “far more terrible” than earthly suffering. (257)
  - a. **Lk 12:4-5:** “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”
  - b. **Isa 8:13:** “Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.” (KJV)
3. Christian faith sees that God’s excellence and promise of glory far outweigh and more than compensate any suffering for Christ. (257-258)

- a. **2 Cor 4:17:** “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”
  - b. **Heb 11:24-26:** “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”
4. Those unwilling to accept the cost of embracing Christ will ultimately suffer rejection with shame. (258-259)
- a. **Lk 14:31-33:** “What king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”
  - b. “He that does not receive the gospel with all its difficulties, does not receive it as it is proposed to him. He that does not receive Christ with his cross as well as his crown, does not truly receive him at all.”
  - c. To receive Christ is to receive “rest and the yolk,” the “cross and the crown.”
5. Those unwilling to suffer for Christ have not forsaken all for Christ. (259-260)

6. Those unwilling to suffer for Christ have not denied self as Scripture requires. (260)

a. **Mt 16:24-25:** “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.’”

b. **Mt 10:33:** “But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”

c. **2 Tim 2:12:** “If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.”

7. True followers of Christ follow Him in everything, including difficulties and suffering. (261)

a. **Rev 14:4:** “These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.”

b. **Mt 8:19-20:** “‘Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’”

c. **2 Sam 15:21:** “And Ittai answered the king and said, ‘As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be.’”

8. True Christians overcome the world. (261-262)

- a. **1 Jn 5:4:** “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.”
  - b. Believers overcome the world’s “flatteries,” “frowns,” “sufferings,” and “difficulties.”
9. Sufferings from our obedience are often called trials as they test the nature of our heart. (262-263)
- a. **1 Pet 1:6-7:** “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
  - b. **1 Pet 4:12-13:** “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”
  - c. **Zech 13:9:** “I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; And each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”

## II. Application (263-267)

1. Are you willing to suffer all things for Christ? (263-264)
2. We should “cherish” a ready spirit to suffer for Christ. (264-267)

a. Scripture notes the happiness of those who are willing to suffer and who actually suffer for Christ.

i. **Mt 5:10-12:** “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

ii. **Lk 6:21-23:** “Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man’s sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.”

iii. **Phil 1:29:** “For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

iv. **Jam 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.”

v. **1 Pet 3:14:** “But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed.”

b. Great rewards await those who suffer for Christ.

- i. **Mt 19:29:** “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.”
  
- ii. **2 Th 1:4-5:** “We ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer.”
  
- iii. **2 Tim 2:11-12:** “This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him.”
  
- iv. **Rom 8:16-17:** “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”
  
- v. **Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21:** “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.... He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.... I will give some of the hidden manna.... To him I will give power over the nations—‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron’... I will give him the morning star.... He...shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.... I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God... I will grant [him]

to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

c. Scripture gives numerous examples of those who have suffered for Christ.

i. *The Psalmist*

**Ps 119:51, 157, 161:** “The proud have me in great derision, Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.... Many are my persecutors and my enemies, Yet I do not turn from Your testimonies.... Princes persecute me without a cause, But my heart stands in awe of Your word.”

ii. *Jeremiah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.*

iii. *The Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, Saints, and Christ*

**Heb 12:1-2:** “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”



## CHAPTER 13

# **All Christian Graces Are Related and Mutually Dependent**

*“Charity...believeth all things, hopeth all things.”—1 Cor 13:7 (KJV)*

## **Introduction (268-270)**

This text *does not* speak of love believing and hoping the best of others.

1. The passage, “thinketh no evil,” already taught this.
2. The previous text, “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth,” summarizes and concludes Paul’s teaching concerning love to our neighbors.
3. Faith, hope, and love are mentioned together three times in the chapter, each having the same “immediate” object of God and Christ.
4. The meaning of the text is that Christian love “cherishes and promotes the exercise of all other graces,” more particularly faith and hope. This interpretation fits the aim throughout the chapter “to show the relation of charity to the other graces, and particularly to faith and hope,” concluding that love is superior to faith and hope, as it is the chief catalyst in producing them.

### **I. How Christian Graces Are Connected (270-275)**

1. Christian graces always exist together. Where one is absent, all are absent. (270-271)
  - a. **Ps 147:11:** “The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy.”
  - b. **1 Jn 4:20:** “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?”

c. **1 Jn 5:2:** “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.”

2. Christian graces depend on each other and promote each other. (271-273)

a. Love to God is at the heart of faith in God, while love to God depends on faith that He exists.

b. Love increases faith as we are more likely to trust and run to those we love.

c. Faith produces hope as we trust God and His promises of future blessings.

d. Love produces hope.

i. **Rom 8:15:** “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’”

ii. **1 Jn 4:18:** “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.”

iii. **Rom 5:3-5:** “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

e. Faith produces humility and trust in God’s all-sufficiency. Humility promotes faith because seeing our own insufficiency moves us to trust God’s sufficiency.

- f. Love promotes humility as a view of God's loveliness highlights our wickedness. Humility promotes love as we see God's relative beauty and excellence.
  - g. Love promotes repentance as we seek to honor the God we love. Repentance tends to humility as we are sorry for our sin and its ugliness.
  - h. Faith, love, and repentance all produce gratitude.
  - i. Love to God inclines us to love people who bear His image.
3. Christian graces, "in some respects," imply each other. (273-275)
- a. Humility is essential to true Christian faith, love, submission to God, repentance, gratitude, and reverence.
  - b. Love is essential to faith and produces works of faith.
    - i. **Gal 5:6:** "Faith which worketh by love." (KJV)
    - ii. **Jam 2:26:** "Faith without works is dead." (KJV)
  - c. Faith is implied in love as it must be a "believing love."
  - d. Saving faith and repentance are inseparable and implied by each other, since one must turn from darkness to embrace Christ.
  - e. Love is implied in gratitude to God and a childlike fear of God as our benevolent Father.

- f. Submission to God's will implies love, humility, and repentance.
- g. To be heavenly-minded implies faith, hope, and love.
- h. Justice and truth toward others imply love toward others.
- i. Love, faith, and humility underlie contentment with God's providence.

## II. Why Christian Graces Are Connected (275-278)

1. Christian graces have the same source—the Holy Spirit acting on the soul. (275-276)

**1 Cor 12:4-6:** “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.”

2. All Christian graces come from the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration and conversion. (276)
3. All Christian graces are founded on the knowledge of God's excellence. (276-277)

a. **Ps 9:10:** “Those who know Your name will put their trust in You.”

b. **1 Jn 3:6:** “Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.”

c. **1 Jn 4:7:** “Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”

4. Christian graces all have respect for all of God's commandments as established by God and as reflecting His holiness. (277)
5. Christian graces all have God's glory as their ultimate goal. (277-278)
6. Christian graces are all related to and summarize "Divine love." (278)

### III. Application (278-284)

1. The nature of Christian graces helps explain the old and new in 2 Cor 5:17. (278-280)

**2 Cor 5:17:** "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (KJV)

a. As a newborn has all the proper parts, though immature and undeveloped, so at conversion we receive *all* the "gracious dispositions" and "holy principles" possessed by Christ, having received "of His fulness."

i. **Jn 1:14, 16:** "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.... And of His fulness we have all received, and grace for grace."

ii. **Col 3:10:** "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." (KJV)

iii. **2 Cor 3:18:** "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed

into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

- b. Though imperfectly in this life, all corruptions corresponding to each grace received are “mortified.”
  - i. Faith-unbelief, love-enmity, humility-pride, meekness-revenge, gratitude-ingratitude, etc.
  - ii. As every grace arrives in the heart of the new man, or “new creation,” the old give way to the new in the same way that light dissipates darkness.
- 2. As all Christian graces are connected, those examining if they have grace in the heart can test the presence of one grace by the presence of another. (280-284)
  - a. True faith includes repentance, a coming to Christ with humility and a heart willing to renounce self-exaltation, with a sense of the ugliness of sin and unworthiness before God.
  - b. True faith includes light and warmth, or understanding and love.
  - c. True faith believes the truth concerning Christ and the Gospel, including the divinity and sufficiency of Christ. False affections lack this conviction.
  - d. True hope is founded on faith in Christ and His worthiness alone, and is accompanied by humility, a sense of unworthiness, a desire for obedience, self-denial, and detachment from worldly things. A false hope indulges and is hardened in sin and a love for the things of the world.

e. Deliverance from love of the world can be tested by a superior love of the things of God.

**Jn 21:15:** “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?”

f. Love to God can be tested by a love to believers.



## CHAPTER 14

# **Love, or True Grace, Endures Despite Opposition**

*“Charity...endureth all things.”—1 Cor 13:7 (KJV)*

## **Introduction (285-287)**

Though interpreted by some as having the same meaning, “suffers long,” “bears all things,” and “endures all things” are different fruits of Christian love. The love that “suffers long” refers to bearing with injuries received from others. The love that “bears all things” refers to a willingness to suffer for Christ’s sake, while the love that “endures all things” perseveres in the face of ongoing opposition. These interpretations best fit the context and the intent of the passage to display both the universal benefit of Christian love and how it is the “sum of all good in the heart.”

### **I. True Grace in the Heart Has Many Subtle, Powerful, and Constant Enemies. (287-289)**

1. *Externally*: Demons and the world with its many temptations and attractions oppose true grace in the heart.
2. *Internally*: Sinful thoughts and desires oppose true grace in the heart.

### **II. Nothing Can Overthrow True Grace in the Heart. (290-299)**

1. True grace has qualities that promote perseverance that false grace lacks. (292-293)
  - a. True grace permanently changes our nature, opposes and destroys sin’s power, and dethrones sin as ruling over the heart, whereas false grace is temporary and does not destroy sin’s power or reign over the heart.
  - b. True grace diligently seeks God in prayer for strength and support, while false grace often neglects prayer.

c. True grace inspires perseverance and is diligent to avoid dangers to perseverance, while false grace lacks diligence and care in perseverance.

2. God defends and upholds the grace He implants in the heart. (293-299)

a. God's promises give evidence that He will defend and uphold the grace He implants in the heart.

i. **Ps 37:24:** "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand."

ii. **Jer 32:40:** "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me."

iii. **Mt 18:14:** "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

iv. **Jn 4:14:** "The water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

v. **Jn 6:39:** "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."

vi. **Jn 10:27-28:** "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

- vii. **Rom 8:29-30, 35:** “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”
  
- viii. **Phil 1:6:** “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”
  
- ix. **Jude 1:24:** “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”

b. Reasons why God defends and upholds grace in the heart:

- i. Our redemption by Christ would be incomplete without God securing our perseverance against all forces that would defeat it, without which we would be as vulnerable to fall as Adam was before he sinned.
  
- ii. The covenant of grace supplies the “ground of perseverance” that was absent in the first covenant, the success of which depended on the free will of Adam alone.
  
- iii. It is not fitting that the reward of eternal life in a covenant of mercy and grace should depend on the power of our will.
  
- iv. Unlike Adam who failed as our representative, Christ has already persevered in our place and justified and

confirmed us in eternal life, making sure that we will persevere.

v. As the believer has been justified and already possesses “a full title to eternal life,” such cannot be “suspended on an uncertain perseverance.”

vi. The believer partakes of Christ’s “immortal and unfading” resurrection life.

1) **Col 2:13:** “And you...He has made alive together with Him.”

2) **Eph 2:4-6:** “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

3) **Gal 2:20:** “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.”

4) **Rev 1:18:** “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.”

5) **Rom 6:9:** “Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.”

vii. God implanted grace against great and powerful enemies and will therefore defend and uphold it against those same enemies.

### III. Application (299-303)

1. The believer’s eternal security is one reason why Satan opposes conversion. (299-300)

2. Those who fall away were never saved. (300-301)

a. People may be convicted of sin and moved by God's mercy for a time, without a change of nature.

b. All the blossoms on a tree appear promising, but not all bear fruit.

3. Evidence of true grace in the heart brings great comfort and joy. (301-302)

4. Knowing that victory is sure gives great encouragement to those in battle. (302-303)



## CHAPTER 15

# **The Holy Spirit and Grace of Divine Love Will Indwell Saints Forever**

*“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”—1 Cor 13:8 (KJV)*

## **Introduction (304-307)**

The divine love that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit not only endures in the present life, but remains forever in the life to come. The extraordinary gifts given to the church at her inception, however, will cease, including the special gift of knowledge—an ability to interpret mysteries and types of Scripture—a gift distinct from the knowledge of God that believers now possess and will increase forever.

### **I. The Holy Spirit Is Given to Inhabit and Influence the Saints Forever. (307-308)**

1. “The chief and sum of all the good things in this life and in the life to come, that are purchased for the church, is the Holy Spirit.”
  - a. **Acts 2:32-33:** “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”
  - b. **Jn 14:16-17:** “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”
2. Adam and Eve had the Holy Spirit but lost Him by their sin. He is now given to saints permanently.

### **II. The Holy Spirit Has Given Other Gifts to the Church Besides Love. (308-309)**

1. The Holy Spirit has given *extraordinary* gifts to the church. (308-309)
2. The Holy Spirit gives *common* and *ordinary* gifts to believers and unbelievers, such as “common convictions of sin,” “common illuminations,” and “common religious affections.” (309)

### **III. The Extraordinary and Ordinary Gifts Have Ceased or Will Cease in the Future. (309-313)**

1. Individually and collectively, the means of grace (ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit) were given “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man” (Eph 4:12-13). These cease in heaven where we will be perfect. (309-310)
2. Prophets exercised the extraordinary gift of prophecy from time to time prior, during, and after the life of Christ on earth, but ceased exercising this gift with the completion of the canon. (310-312)
3. The apostolic gifts ceased with the passing of the Apostles. (312-313)

### **IV. Love Is the Holy Spirit’s Unfailing Gift that Displays His Ongoing and Eternal Indwelling and Influence in the Church. (313-317)**

1. Love, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, remains forever in individual members of the church and can never be lost. (313-314)

**Rom 8:38-39:** “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2. The Spirit’s gift of love remains forever in the church collectively. (314-317)

- a. Extraordinary gifts and those who receive them are intermittent in the history of God’s dealings with His people, while the Spirit’s fruit of love has and will always be present among God’s people in any age.
- b. In glory, the ordinary and extraordinary gifts for the building up of the church will cease while the heart of every saint will be “a blaze of divine and holy love” that will grow forever.
- c. God gave extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit to reveal and confirm His word and will, that by believing we might be conformed to his will.
- d. The main reason the great fruit of love will remain is because “love is the great end of all the other fruits and gifts of the Spirit,” and is not a means of grace but “grace itself,” the “sum of all grace,” and the “sum of all holiness.”
- e. When the highest end is achieved, the means to that end are no longer needed, as they are “no further good than as they tend to promote that grace and holiness” that is divine love.

**V. Application (317-322)**

1. Given the excellence and superiority of love, the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit are not needed and will not enhance the latter-day excellence of the church as they operated during the apostolic age. (317-320)

[Note: Here, again, we see Edwards's postmillennial perspective where Christ returns at the time of the "latter-day excellence" of the church, after the true church becomes prominent and glorious in the world through the transforming power of the Gospel.]

- a. Means to support the infant church are unnecessary to support the established church, such as when "the imperfect gives way to the perfect" in the completion of Scripture.
  - b. Miraculous gifts are called "childish things" relative to the superiority of love.
  - c. As the miraculous gifts are not needed and will not be in operation in heaven—the most glorious state of the church—so they are not needed to enhance the latter-day glory of the church on earth. The church will be most glorious when only divine love remains.
  - d. There might be further use for the miraculous gifts today if Scripture and the common operation of the Spirit were inadequate to bring people to saving faith and sanctification.
2. We should be highly cautious of that which appears to be new revelation or claims to be an extraordinary gift of the Spirit. (320-321)
  3. We should highly value and seek the fruits of the Spirit that give evidence of God's greatest work in the soul—holy love. (321-322)



## CHAPTER 16

### **Heaven Is a World of Love**

*“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”—1 Cor 13:8-10 (KJV)*

## **Introduction (323-326)**

The church in the world exists in a twofold imperfect state. First, as it was prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture. And second, as it exists on earth prior to perfection in heaven. There also exists a “twofold failing” of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. First, at the end of the apostolic and infant age of the church when the canon was completed, when “childish things” were put away. And second, both individually when we die and collectively at the end of the world, when the church experiences perfect love in heaven. The present text applies to both, though more particularly to the heavenly state. From this we see that heaven is a world of love, where the only gift of the Holy Spirit will be love—given in perfection and glory to all the saints. The temporary gifts given on earth will be needless.

### **I. God Is the “Cause and Fountain of Love in Heaven.” (326-328)**

1. Though God is everywhere and fills all things, He specially dwells in some places above others, such as in Israel, the Temple, the Holy of Holies, etc. These are but types of God’s eternal dwelling, created to be the place of His abode and display of His infinite excellence forever. (326)
2. As God is the “cause and source of all holy love,” and as He eternally dwells in heaven, heaven is a world of love. (326-327)
3. As God is infinite, all-sufficient, and unchanging, so He is an infinite, inexhaustible, and unchanging fountain of love. (327)
4. The Trinity, with perfect and eternal love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, dwells in heaven. (327)

- a. The Father of love, who so loved the world that He gave His Son to die for it, dwells in heaven.
  - b. The Son of love, who gave Himself over to death for us, who displayed, purchased, and gives His love to the hearts of His people, dwells in heaven.
  - c. The Holy Spirit of love, who is given to dwell in and fill the hearts of God's children with holy love, dwells in heaven.
5. The hearts of saints are "deluged with love" in heaven as they "bathe" in a divine ocean of love. (328)

## II. The *Objects* of Love in Heaven (328-332)

- 1. Everything and everyone in heaven is holy and lovely. (328-329)
- 2. Everything and everyone in heaven is *perfectly* holy and lovely, with no moral or natural defect. (329-330)
- 3. The supreme and dearest objects of our love on earth will join us in heaven. (330-332)

[Note: Edwards is not saying, nor has he ever said that unbelievers will be in heaven. Included in a long list of horrors Edwards believed would accompany such a travesty, a travesty opposed to "all that is good," unbelievers in heaven would ruin it and change the "world of love to a world of hatred, and pride, and envy, and malice, and revenge." In speaking of heaven's many blessings, he exhorts unbelievers to "consider that none of this belongs to you." (358)]

## III. The *Subjects* or Hearts in which Love Dwells in Heaven (332-334)

1. God is the source of all love, thus the infinite and unchangeable love between the Father and Son flows outward to everyone in heaven. (332-333)
2. The Father's love flows to Christ and the members of His body, who God loved from "before the foundation of the world," a love made explicit toward them in Christ's sufferings and forever displayed in heaven. (333)
3. Saints and angels are subjects of God's love as they reflect that love back to God—the fountain of all love. (333)
4. Christ loves every member of His church who, along with the angels, love Christ and each other. (333-334)
5. Everyone in heaven overflows with love to God and each other, with love that is "mutual, and full, and eternal." (334)

#### IV. The *Principle* of Love in Heaven (334-338)

1. The *nature* of love in heaven is “holy and divine.” (334)
2. The *degree* of love in heaven is perfect. (334-338)
  - a. God’s love is infinite and perfect.
  - b. The love of angels and saints toward the Father, Christ, and each other will be sinless, sincere, and perfect, with no envy, pride, malice, revenge, contempt, selfishness, or anything contrary or destructive to perfect love.
  - c. All will delight in the blessedness of others, and the greater the blessedness of others, the greater the delight.
  - d. Those with a greater capacity for glory will have more humility and will not look down on others with a smaller capacity for glory, while all will be entirely satisfied and happy.

[Note: Edwards held to a highly nuanced view of rewards in heaven for the faithfulness and obedience of saints on earth. The greater our faithfulness and obedience on earth, the greater will be our capacity for happiness in heaven, though everyone in heaven will be filled to the full and lack nothing of perfect happiness. The size of the vessels may differ, but they will all be filled to the brim. Further, God gives rewards by sovereign grace, not for merit in the recipient. Believers cannot earn merit before God since the minimum we owe Him is perfect obedience. Moreover, as all good comes from God, and as all our faithfulness and obedience come from God the Holy Spirit working in and through us—purchased

for us by Christ—God rewards His own work even as He rewards our obedience. In the giving of rewards God adds grace to grace.]<sup>8</sup>

## **V. The Excellent Setting and Ways Love Will Be Expressed and Enjoyed in Heaven (338-348)**

1. Love will always be mutual, appreciated, and “fondly returned” in the same magnitude as one’s love is for others. No one will be slighted or be less than completely fulfilled. (338-340)
2. The joy of love will never be disturbed or hindered by jealousy. (340-341)
  - a. All love will be sincere and without hypocrisy or flattery.
  - b. No one will doubt God’s love or the love of others.
  - c. Unfaithfulness or fickleness will not exist in heaven.
  - d. No one will ever fear the loss of love from God or others.
3. Nothing within the saints will hinder love to God and others. (341-342)
  - a. Bodily limitations will not exist to limit our love and its expressions.
  - b. Corruption of the heart will not exist to limit our love and its expressions.
4. Love will always be expressed with perfect discretion, wisdom, and decency. (342-343)

5. Nothing external to us in heaven will hinder the mutual and “most perfect enjoyment of each other’s love.” (343)
6. All shall be united as family, as children of God and as the bride of Christ. (343-344)
7. All shall belong to God as His “peculiar treasure.” All shall belong to each other, to God, to Christ as our redeemer, while the angels shall belong to the saints. (344)
8. Love to one another will be enjoyed in perfect and unhindered prosperity. (344-346)
  - a. The poverty, difficulties, afflictions, sorrow, and opposition that hinder love in this life will be gone in heaven.
  - b. The wealth and glory of the greatest princes on earth are as “poverty and destitution” compared to the prosperity in heaven.
  - c. All will rejoice in the blessedness and prosperity of others.
9. Everything in heaven promotes the mutual enjoyment of love. (346-347)
  - a. God created heaven as a paradise to fully enjoy His and each other’s love.
  - b. All things will radiate the beauty, loveliness, and love of God and Christ.
10. All will know they will be loved by God and others in perpetual, increasing, and mutual love forever. (347-348)

## **VI. The Fruit of Love in Heaven (348-353)**

1. Love will create perfect behavior toward God and each other, as divine love “is the sum of all good principles” and the fountain from which all good behavior flows. (348-349)
  
2. Love will create perfect peace and joy in the soul. (350-353)
  - a. No hindrances or anything contrary to perfect peace and joy will exist in heaven.
  
  - b. God’s presence will fill heaven with His love.
  
  - c. There will be “no enemy and no enmity,” just “perfect love in every heart and to every being.”
  
  - d. All will be filled with uninterrupted, unfading, ever-increasing, and unending love, and everything will promote it.
  
  - e. As a holy and joyful chorus, all love and praise echoes back to the Great Fountain from which it flows, in a bliss we cannot fathom this side of glory.

**1 Cor 2:9:** “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

## **VII. Application (353-368)**

1. Contention and strife reduce the evidence that we are citizens of heaven. (353-354)

- a. Contention, strife, and ill-will dampen and disturb the saint's peace, comfort, and hope of heaven.
- b. Contention within the family hinders the saint's prayers.

**1 Pet 3:7:** "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."

- c. Given that heaven is a "world of love," the more contrary we are to divine love, the less assurance we have that we belong there and the less comfort we have that this assurance provides.

2. Happy are those "who are entitled to heaven." (354-357)

**Rev 22:14:** "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (KJV)

Who are they and what are they like?

- a. Those entitled to heaven are characterized by their new birth by which the love that reigns in heaven resides in their heart.
  - i. **1 Pet 1:22-23:** "Love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."
  - ii. **Jn 1:13:** "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

- b. Those entitled to heaven have freely chosen, above all other possible happiness, the happiness that is the fruit of divine love that resides and is enjoyed in heaven.
    - i. They know and have experienced it as the best happiness.
    - ii. Their new nature loves and relishes the happiness that is the fruit of the love of God, Christ, and the saints.
    - iii. Though they know the world cannot bring true happiness and that it often brings pain and sorrow, saints choose and love the happiness from God for the sake of its own excellence.
  - c. They are those who, from love in the heart to God, thirst and strive after holiness in life.
3. Heaven as a world of love should alarm and awaken unbelievers. (357-363)
- a. Heaven as a world of love shows unbelievers they are not entitled to this love and happiness.

**Rev 22:15:** “Outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.”

- i. Unbelievers in heaven would ruin it, changing it from a world of love to a world of “hatred, and pride, and envy, and malice, and revenge.”
- ii. Haters of God in heaven would be “nauseous” to those who deeply love God.

- b. Heaven as a world of love shows unbelievers “they are in danger of hell,” an eternal world of loneliness, misery, and unrestrained hatred, without mercy, love, or possibility of relief.
4. Heaven as a world of love should spur us to zealously seek its eternal and immeasurable joys and blessings rather than content ourselves with the evil, ill-treatment, and troubles of the world, and hell in the hereafter. (363-368)
- a. Do not seek the things of the world “as your chief good,” and humbly quench the desires for “vain-glory.”
  - b. In thought and deed, engage with “heavenly persons, and objects, and enjoyments.”
  - c. Be content with trials and troubles. Be willing to labor and toil to overcome obstacles on the way to our heavenly city.
  - d. Fix your eyes on Jesus as our forerunner to heaven, as glorious in heaven, as our example, mediator, savior, and intercessor.
  - e. If we seek heaven, love God and man on earth.

AMEN.

## Notes

[←1]

For Edwards, *reason* teaches us as we view the world and all of reality as it really is, as God designed, created, and sustains it to be. Unbelief, however, suppresses the obvious. Unbelievers do not view the world rightly because the inclination of the fallen heart overrules the understanding and interprets the world in a way that supports enmity toward God and His authority. That God designed, created, and sustains all things should be seen and embraced by all, but people choose to believe irrational things because they dislike and reject the implications of what reason should teach them. Believers, however, possess a new sense that sees and loves the beauty, excellence, and authority of God, and thus can view God's world as it truly is, according to right reason.

[←2]

Edwards often calls this “speculative knowledge,” or head knowledge without heart knowledge. Unbelievers may admit that Christ lived and was crucified, and might even believe as a historical fact that a miraculous resurrection took place. Yet, such knowledge does not constitute saving faith without a change of the inclination, without a change of heart and will that embrace Christ in love and gratitude for His beauty and excellence, and for what He has done on our behalf.

[←3]

Edwards was postmillennial in his eschatology, believing that the Gospel would usher in a great and worldwide period of glory for the church just prior to the return of Christ.

[←4]

For a discussion of God's love of benevolence and complacency in the theology of Jonathan Edwards, see Craig Biehl, *The Infinite Merit of Christ: the Glory of Christ's Obedience in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Reformed Academic Press: Jackson, MS, 2009; reprint, Carpenter's Son Publishing, 2015), 68-70.

[←5]

See Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1961, reprint, 1986), 179-192; or, Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections*, Ed. John Edwin Smith, vol 2 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 253-266.

[←6]

See Edwards, *The Religious Affections*, Banner of Truth, 179-192; or, Edwards, *The Religious Affections*, *WJE*, Yale University Press, 2:253-266.

[←7]

See also Jn 15:12, where Christ calls this command “His command.” Edwards viewed the “newness” of the command to be the new “rule and motive” concerning the Gospel, namely, “as Christ loved us.” The new rule and motive go beyond that of Moses’s command of Lev 19:18, “as we love ourself.” See p. 177.

[←8]

For a more detailed discussion of Edwards's view of rewards in heaven, and how God giving a greater capacity for happiness for greater earthly obedience is consistent with justification by grace alone, by the merits of Christ's obedience and death alone, and the full and perfect satisfaction and happiness of every saint in heaven, see Biehl, *The infinite Merit of Christ*, 188-195.