
Last time we were in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3: We looked at (4) different loves (defined) in the Word of God from (4) different Greek words.

Natural Love: Storgos. This is a love that naturally develops in families. If you recall we looked at natural love from the vantage point of those who have been so terribly affected by sin, to the point that they are without natural love/affection toward those that they should love. So as "Storgos" is to have natural love or affections, "Astorgos" is to be without natural love/affection.

Love: Phileo. This love is like natural love. It exists between those who are close friends who have developed warm affections toward each other. It is a "responsive love", which, if not returned in kind, will often wane. Remember that Jesus demonstrated "phileo" love toward Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and John, of whom it is written, he was the disciple "whom Jesus loved". This love is very closely tied to "brotherly or fraternal love": Philadelphia.

General love or Kindness: Courtesy: Philanthropia or Philanthropos. This is general love and kindness toward man.

Charity/Love: Agape. This is the highest form of love because it comes from God. It is NOT a reactionary love but an intentional, deliberate love; this is how God loves. It is what we SEE in the love of Christ, which He openly demonstrated in His earthly life and ministry.

This love is sacrificial and disinterested; it is a Christ-Like love. This is the love that should come forth from your life if you are "born-again" by the Spirit of God. Listen, when God puts His Spirit in us when we're saved, along with His Spirit comes His love! 1 John 4:7-8, 20-21, John 13:34-35

Remember THIS LOVE is foreign to this world; it is not natural to or inherent in ANY natural born human. Every other earthly love may fail, but NOT Agape; not this love that is from God! "Charity never faileth"

If you are born-again by the Spirit of God, if you have passed from spiritual death to spiritual life: THIS LOVE that is of God is in you; Romans 5:5

BUT now, this love is to be cultivated. If it's IN YOU, it WILL mature and become more and more apparent in your character and life. Just as newborn babies (after their born) begin grow and mature, as we see their little spirits and personalities begin to take shape, they learn to repeat words, until the time that their sin nature reveals in their willful rebellion and resistance your commands and your instruction as their parents.

The older they get, the more their sin nature is revealed!

In contrast, as newborn human babies are "NOT BORN" fully grown and mature, neither are "newborn baby Christians"; for you who are new Christians, your newborn faith in Christ is accompanied by a new heart and new Spirit which God has put within you. Ezekiel 36:26

You have a new nature which, given by God, which is designed to thrive, to grow, and to mature on the truth of God's Word!

As lost sinners are "inclined" toward sin and wickedness, so every child of God is "inclined" toward Christ and righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Peter 1:22-2:2

As you get older in the Lord; as you mature in the faith, the MORE your "New Nature" in Christ IS REVEALED! The more you grow in Christ, the effect is that more of the love of Christ is going to come forth in your character and life.

You SHOULD be MORE like Christ with each passing day! Listen: Paul spoke of "learning Christ" and "being taught by Him" in Ephesians 4, so every one of us should be "Learning Christ".

We are entering upon a scriptural passage that is filled with "indicative truths". An indicative truth is a Biblical fact stated by the writer.

These truths which Paul wrote about "Charity or Love" are written as Biblical facts that WILL BE REAL in every believer.

This is what Charity IS in the believer; therefore, when you read these truths as a child of God, your reaction should be that you acquiesce in them; the hearing of them brings a delight your soul, you desire them and seek to willingly cultivate them in your life as a Christian!

1 John 4:8: "Everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God"

THAT is an indicative truth, John is saying, the love of God is in every one that is "born of God". If you're a Christian, THIS Christ-Like LOVE is IN YOU! And if it's in you, it will be obvious and evident in your life. And how will the love of God be displayed in your life? By willing obedience to the imperative commands of Christ from the Holy Scriptures! John 14:15

(BUT) AND THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT: If you are (HABITUALLY) disobedient to the imperative commands of the Holy Scriptures, (here to love Christ and/or to love your neighbor), the indicative truth (that the love of God is in you) may indeed not be true of you. For HOW can God's love be in you, but you don't love? 1 John 3:14-19, 4:20-21

Another warning sign that the love of God is NOT in you is when you consistently resist the imperative commands of Christ to love when it doesn't align with your own ideas of love.

Every one of these graces, these excellent virtues of Charity or Love should be IN YOU Christian. Agape Love IN YOU should cause you to be what Paul wrote to us: 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Something that will help you when you read this passage is, put Christ every place that you read the word "Charity". God is love, Christ is love, therefore Christ IS CHARITY! (4-7)

Another thing to see here is that these characteristics of Charity are all in the "present tense", meaning that they are to ALWAYS be present in your life and character. This "agape" love is to be in you in such a way that it is one of YOUR Christ-Like identifiers! It "identifies you" to be a Christian!

"Charity Suffereth Long and IS kind"

Charity or Love which comes from God IS ALWAYS patient and kind! And yes, there will be times when you are NOT yourself, when you find yourself in the world, behaving like the world and NOT like a child of God.

When you've sinned, and you become soon angry, (or you had a short fuse rather than a long one), instead of mortifying your sin, you've embraced it.

Instead of being swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, you don't let others finish speaking, you're fast to react to them, and quickly angered; or you're easily offended!

Yes, you will have days in which you fail, when you sin against God; when you're woefully impatient and short-fused; but this will not be the norm for you child of God!

If you're genuinely saved, born-again by the Spirit of God, (AND THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT), it will matter to you that you've sinned against God, it will grieve and hurt you in your heart that you've hurt your Lord and dishonored His Name, and you won't stay there!

1 John 1:5-10, Psalm 37:23-24, Proverbs 24:16

As a learning "newborn" Christian, you might be saying, I didn't know all of this! THAT is why it is SO important for you to assemble and gather with the saints on the Lord's Day! THE church is the primary means of grace by which God will speak to you and teach you! Matthew 4:4

FIRST: Charity IS LONGSUFFERING!

Charity is patient and long spirited. If when you were lost you were short-tempered, short fused, quick to get angry, easily provoked or offended; this is NOT who you should be in Christ. But if this is WHO you still are, something is wrong, but there is nothing wrong with God or with His love.

The effect of "agape" love here is that you will be being patient, longsuffering or long spirited; LISTEN: So often people know us by what we openly say, by how we say what we say, but this "agape love", this grace in you will make you to

be known more by what you DON'T DO, by what you DON'T SAY, and in how you DON'T REACT!

Charity or Love DOES NOT retaliate or avenge itself when provoked, but it will enable you to gladly and comfortably restrain yourself from sinful and unbecoming insults or provocations. You will be long spirited and not mean spirited. Ephesians 4:1-3, Colossians 3:12-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Galatians 5:22, 2 Timothy 3:10, 2 Timothy 4:2

1 Corinthians 13:4: "Charity is kind"

What powerful yokefellows! "Longsuffering and Kindness" beautifully complement each other. You cannot truly be patient and longsuffering if you are not kind. And you will NOT be kind without being longsuffering.

It is the 5th fruit of the Spirit. Translated "gentleness" in Galatians 5:22, but literally meaning "kindness"

Charity in you WILL make you a "gentle and kind" person. Like patience and longsuffering, so you ought to wear kindness as a garment.

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, KINDNESS, humbleness of mind, meekness, LONGSUFFERING"

Mark Twain called kindness the language the deaf can hear and the blind can read. You remember Paul Harvey; he told a story about a woman who got in an accident with the new car her and her husband just purchased."

Proverbs 31:26, Acts 28:1-2, Ephesians 4:31-32, 1Peter 3:8, 2 Peter 1:7, Luke 6:35-36.

If you're NOT Born-Again, if you're not a Christian, see this great love of God toward a fallen and sinful world. Romans 5:6-11