

We've learned much about "agape love", its characteristics and excellent virtues from 1 Corinthians 13: What it looks like in the life of one who has it.

The Christian life without agape love is like Christianity without Christ. "Agape Love" does not originate in this world but from God; it is given to every believer at the new birth, and then TO BE individually & deliberately cultivated in your life, Christian! Agape Love is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit, therefore, if you're a Christian, you MUST possess agape love in your spirit! 1 John 4:7-12

In our text, Paul describes agape love for us by what it is, and by what it is not; agape love LOOKS LIKE THIS, and it DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THIS!

Agape love is patient (longsuffering) and kind, agape love is not full of envy and jealousy, which leads to malice and hatred, agape love does not vaunt (or brag about itself), and it is not puffed up or arrogant.

Agape love does not behave itself unseemly (or in ways that are indecent, rude, or unbecoming), agape love is not selfish (or self-centered and self-serving), it is not easily provoked to anger, (not short fused or easily exasperated); agape love thinks no evil, (but it thinks of righteousness, holiness, and of the excellent things of the Kingdom of Christ)! Agape love does not rejoice in iniquity and sin, (it weeps and grieves), but it rejoices and acquiesces truth and holiness.

This is a lot to take in and consider, but if the Spirit of God is in you, your natural response should be that you want this love that comes from God to dwell in you richly, but also, that this love would be openly manifest in your conduct and character, (TO THE HONOR AND GLORY OF CHRIST!)

Your Christian life is about NOT ONLY about learning truth and knowledge from the Holy Scriptures, (it is that), but you must also be determined to believe, obey, and practice what you know/believe from God's Word.

How often do we believe so much but practice so little!

"Agape Love" is either going to "BE SEEN" in you Christian; or the lack of it "WILL BE SEEN" in you. HOW?

By what you proactively say and do, and how you behave and react toward THOSE that God has providentially and skillfully put in your personal space for you to socialize with and practice this love!

If you want to see and learn about proactive/reactive "agape love" look at the life the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His humanity, in the midst of a sea of fallen and sinful humans, and you will see agape perfection!

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:7: Charity or Agape Love
"beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all
things, endureth all things"

Agape Love "Beareth all things": What does this mean?

"To bear" is the Greek word "stego", which means to roof over or cover with silence. It also means to endure patiently or to hold up in the face of what or who is coming at you, Christian. This doesn't mean that "Agape Love" is NOT stern and tough at times! But what it does mean is, "Agape Love" lasts and goes the distance.

First, if agape love is IN YOU, you will "cover" rather than "expose" the sins of others. In fact, Peter wrote this: 1 Peter 4:8:

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins"

Who are the ones whose faults and sins you must most frequently cover but those who exists within your personal society? Now let me just say that neither I, nor do the scriptures advocate covering and concealing sins that need to be dealt with and reprov'd; Paul taught us this in the earlier chapters of this letter.

But EVEN WHEN those sins might be true, love does not advertise, expose, and spread gossip about the sins and faults of others, but covers them with loving silence! Proverbs 10:12, 16:27-28, 17:9

And then, agape love patiently bears with others in their sins and shortcomings.

What IS YOUR RESPONSE when you have to deal with a sin in one who is close to you, (a family member, a brother or sister in Christ), or when you're irritated by something they did to you, whatever the case?

Do you hold on and bear with them? Or do you say, I'm through with them! I am so glad that God in His love for me will NEVER say of me, I'm through with him, look at him he did it again! He sinned against me AGAIN!

Hebrews 13:5: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee". If that is WHO GOD is to you, and God is in you, that is WHO YOU should be in love toward those that God has put into your life.

Christian: Have you ever considered that there are humans that God has put into your life that you CAN'T be through with? God has given them to you TO bear with and to hold on to, and TO SHOW THEM the unfailing LOVE of Christ! But you don't know how they irritate me!

Understand there are times when you are irritated with someone, but "in reality", you're irritated because YOU have

the problem, NOT them! The things that we view in others as "faults" may not "IN FACT" be faults, they just don't behave and conduct themselves the way you think they should!

Beloved: Agape love bears all things and continues to love!

Romans 15:1-2, Ephesians 4:1-3, Colossians 3:12-13

Questions: Do you stir up, expose, and converse about faults in others? Or do you cover them with loving silence? And then when someone close to you has sinned against you, do you (in love) forbear with them? Or do you keep that person at a distance (avoid them) because you don't want to put up with them?

John Newton wrote this hymn, listen to a few words from it:

"One there is, above all others, well deserves the Name of Friend; His is love beyond a brother's, costly, free, and knows no end". (Bears all things)

"Could we bear from one another what He daily bears from us? Yet this glorious Friend and Brother loves us, though we treat Him thus: though for good we render ill, He accounts us brethren still. O for grace our hearts to soften! Teach us, Lord at length to love".

"Agape Love bears all things"; it "covers with silence" and doesn't expose the faults, shortcomings, and sins of others, it doesn't backbite or slander! And then, this beautiful agape love that is NOT of this world, holds up, it lasts, and it continues to love even after it was sinned against; even after it is battered with ill will, rudeness, or unkindness.

Agape Love "Believeth all things": What does this mean?

When Paul wrote that agape love "BELIEVES ALL THINGS", he did not mean that we are to be without wisdom and discernment and that we are to believe "anything and everything" that we hear.

Don't forget that Paul is teaching us about a characteristic/virtue of "Agape Love". THIS IS HOW IT LOOKS in the life of one who has it!

When Paul wrote Charity/Love believes all things, I believe he was teaching us that it keeps us from ALWAYS being suspicious and wary of others; it keeps you from having the attitude of: "I don't trust or believe you".

NOW, there will be cases in which you don't trust or believe someone who has consistently deceived and lied to you or hurt you; that is where wisdom and discernment from God must guide you.

THINK ABOUT THIS if you are balking in your mind at "love believes all things"! How often are you and I so ready to believe "hearsay, rumors, or bad things" about others rather than turning away from hearsay and bad news and holding out for the best?

But aren't we SO PRONE to believe all the "unsubstantiated bad things" that we hear! Agape Love doesn't do that!!

When Paul said Agape love "believeth all things", I believe he was teaching us to think the best of others, those in your personal society. Lean toward giving them the benefit of doubt rather than always thinking the worst of them. WHY? Because that is what agape love does!

Agape love is not full of suspicion, doubt, and pessimism; but agape love "TRUSTS GOD" with that person (whom GOD has brought into your life) for you to love! Allow me to illustrate "Love believeth all things"

Luke 9:49-50, Philippians 1:16-19, John 8

But KNOW that when YOU DO "in love" give people the benefit of the doubt, make yourself vulnerable, and think the best of them, there are times when you are going to be wrong/hurt. But is that a reason to stop loving?

Christian, do you possess "agape love"? Well, if you're in Christ, you must!

If that is the case, then you will love as did Christ, and the love of Christ IN YOU will "bear all things" in those with whom you company. It will not fail, but it will hold up and endure even after being trampled and battered with ill will, rudeness, and unkindness.

One thing that you will learn/and know when you agape love others; there will be times when you will be hurt emotionally by those that you "agape love"! By your husband, you wife, your CHILDREN, especially when they begin adulting.

But what are you going to do child of God? Are you going to keep them at arm's length, be through with them, LET THEM IN no more? No Christian, you will (at times) be hurt, but you must "Agape ~ Love" them!

And then, agape love doesn't expose and advertise the sins and faults of others but covers them with silence!

Finally, agape love thinks the best of others, not the worst!

Philippians 1:8-10