

Practical Religion
LESSON 6: LOVE

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:13)

The Biblical Primacy of Love

- 1) *1 Corinthians 13:1-3*: “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels... if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains... [and] if I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body... **but have not love**, I gain [and I am] *nothing*.”
- 2) *Colossians 3:14*: “**Put on love**, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”
- 3) *1 Timothy 1:5*: “The *aim* of our charge is **love... from a pure heart**, good conscience, and a sincere faith.”
- 4) *1 Peter 4:8*: “**Above all, keep loving one another earnestly...**”
- 5) *John 13:34, 35*: “A new commandment I give to you... **love one another: just as I have loved you.**”
- 6) *Romans 13:8*: “Owe no one anything, *except* to **love each other....**”
- 7) *Ephesians 5:2*: “And **walk in love**, as Christ loved us and *gave himself up* for us...”
- 8) *1 John 4:7, 8*: “Beloved, let us love one another, *for love is from God*, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.”

What Love Really Is

- 1) Love *does not* consist in: **giving** to the poor; never disapproving of **anyone’s conduct**; or never disapproving anybody’s **religious opinions**.
- 2) Love *does* consist in: a) **love of God** as its first feature; and b) **love of man** as its second.
- 3) Love is *shown* in: a) a believer’s **doings**; b) a believer’s **readiness to bear evil**; and c) a believer’s **general spirit and demeanor**.
- 4) Love is *patterned* in Christ: a) His daily life was an incessant ‘going about’ **doing good**; b) He patiently **endured** all without anger or ill temper; c) He was always one and the same—**kind and patient to all**; d) He **never flattered sinners**; e) He **never hesitated to denounce false doctrine**; and f) He left an everlasting proof that perfect love does not require validation of everybody’s life choices and opinions.

The Origins of Love

Real love is never found except in a heart prepared by the Holy Spirit. This means the heart must be:

- 1) Changed, renewed, and transformed, restored into the image and likeness of God in *union with Christ*;
- 2) Convinced of sin, *hates it*, flees from it, and fights it daily, principally *selfishness* which chokes love; and
- 3) Sensible of its mighty debt to our Lord Jesus Christ such that we persistently desire to *show gratitude*.

Why Love Is the “Greatest”

- 1) *Because* love is **nearest in likeness** between the believer and God.
- 2) *Because* love it is **most useful to others**.
- 3) *Because* love **endures the longest**.

Personal Application

- 1) Do you have love?
 - a. You have knowledge, you have faith, but what of love? (1 Co. 13:3; 1 Th. 1:4).
 - b. Does your behavior reflect love? Are you slipping in some seemingly unimportant area?
- 2) Do you desire more love?
 - a. Practice the grace of love. (Pr. 31:26; 1 Co. 16:14; 1 Pt. 4:8)
 - b. Teach the grace of love.