

## **THE VIRTUES OF CHRISTLIKE LOVE**

(1 Corinthians 13:4)

The distinguishing mark of a true believer is Christlike love for others. Our Lord Jesus himself said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-45). Jesus is the perfect model of what it means to truly love because he himself is the very incarnation of love. Every aspect of love finds its perfection in the person and character of Jesus. Since the Apostle Paul captures this crucial truth, he then exhorts believers to exercise Christlike love which is characterized by the following essential virtues:

### **1. Christlike love is \_\_\_\_\_.**

The word patient literally means to be long-suffering and to be long-tempered. Patience is willingness to suffer injuries, hurts and offenses without doing anything to get revenge. Kindness means being ready to help, to relieve burdens, to be genuinely sympathetic and then actually doing something to address and meet the needs of others. The perfect example of patience and kindness is the Lord Jesus. Under the worst kind of provocation and humiliation, Jesus never retaliated, nor made threats. Instead he humbly and submissively entrusted himself and his cause to his Father. Instead of cursing and getting back at his enemies, Jesus extended the grace of forgiveness (1 Corinthians 3:4; 6:7-8; 4:12-13; Luke 6:35; 1 Peter 2:20-23).

### **2. Christlike love \_\_\_\_\_.**

The word envy literally means to have a strong desire. Envy is this attitude which covets what other people have. Envy grudges and hates the thought that someone else seems to be ahead of us, or superior to us in honor, position, success, possessions or effectiveness. The love of Christ conquers jealousy and envy in our hearts. It gives us the power to delight in and celebrate the goodness of God in the life of another. It empowers us to overcome our insecurities and enables us to find our sufficiency and contentment in Christ (1 Corinthians 13:4; 12:25-26; James 3:14-16; Rom. 12:15; Philippians 4:4,11-12).

### **3. Christlike love is \_\_\_\_\_.**

The word boast means to heap praise on oneself or to behave as a braggart. The word arrogant literally means to be puffed up. Arrogance cherishes inflated opinion of oneself. We begin to be arrogant when we stop thinking of ourselves as undeserving recipients and beneficiaries of the manifold grace of God. As believers who have the love of Christ, we should not delight in self-glory nor assert our self-importance. Instead, we should glory in Jesus alone and seek to cultivate the humility of Christ (1 Corinthians 13:4; 1:26-31; 4:7, 6,18-19; John 3:27; James 1:17; 4:6; Philippians 2:5-8).