

## ***THE VIRTUES OF CHRISTLIKE LOVE***

### *Part 2: 1 Corinthians 13:5*

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 not \_\_\_\_\_.***

To be rude means to behave indecently, to act shamelessly and to treat others disgracefully (1 Corinthians 13:5). Rudeness involves behavior and speech that fails to regard the dignity and welfare of another person. The Christians in Corinth exhibited rudeness through their ill-mannered behaviors during their love feasts and congregational assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:20-22; 14:40). In contrast to this sinful attitude of rudeness, our Lord Jesus perfectly models the virtue of graciousness, courtesy and loving acceptance (Luke 2:52; Luke 7:36-50). Christlike love behaves and speaks graciously, courteously and considerately towards people, always thinking and caring about others' interest and well-being.

#### ***2. Christlike love is not \_\_\_\_\_.***

Christlike love is not self-seeking (1 Corinthians 13:5). The overwhelming natural tendency of the human heart is to seek after one's own interests. The believers in Corinth were rebuked by Paul for their misuse of spiritual gifts to promote spiritual superiority at the expense of edifying the whole church (1 Corinthians 14:12; 10:24; Phil. 2:3-4). Christlike love is willing to suffer the worst in order to give the best for the people one loves. The Lord Jesus, out of His loving obedience to the Father and sacrificial affection for God's people, suffered the agony of bearing the holy wrath of God on the Cross in order to provide eternal life to those who trust in Him for salvation (Matt. 26:36-46). To love as Jesus loves means to constantly put God first, others second, and ourselves last.

#### ***3. Christlike love is not \_\_\_\_\_.***

Christlike love renounces irritability and resentment (1 Corinthians 13:5). To be irritable means to be easily angered and to be quick to take offense. This sinful attitude runs contrary to the character of God who is slow to anger and abounding in love (Psalm 103:8; James 1:19-20). Christlike love is never resentful because the Lord does not keep a record of our transgressions and does not count our sins against us (Romans 4:7-8). Christlike love graciously gets rid of all bitterness and is always willing to forgive (Ephesians 4:31-32).