

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

### *Part 3: 1 Corinthians 13:6-7*

The virtue that should be of utmost concern to every believer and every church is Christlike love. This is why the Apostle Paul constantly exhorted the churches he served to pursue biblical love (Col. 3:14; 1 Thess. 3:12; Phil. 2:2; 1 Cor. 12:31,14:1). A church which lacks the virtue of Christian love is subject to the threat of Christ's discipline and judgment (Rev. 2:5). Our prayer for our church family should be this: that in the succeeding years, the Lord will graciously sustain the life of our church by empowering us to be a genuinely loving congregation. It's crucial then for all of us to understand and exercise the following virtues and qualities of Christlike love.

**1. Christlike love does not rejoice at \_\_\_\_\_ but rejoices with the \_\_\_\_\_.**

Christlike love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, it does not take pleasure in sin and it does not celebrate unrighteousness and evil (1 Cor. 13:6). Instead of being grieved over the sin in their midst, the believers in Corinth turned a blind eye to the unrighteousness in their church (1 Cor. 5:1-2). Biblical love does not tolerate or excuse sin. Instead, genuine love graciously confronts sin and is always willing to restore a struggling and wayward believer (Gal. 6:1-2). Christlike love finds its joy whenever the truth of God is bannered in the life of a believer through his growth in righteousness and sanctification (2 Cor. 7:9; John 14:15; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Eph. 5:3; 3 John 4).

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**2. Christlike love always \_\_\_\_\_ and always \_\_\_\_\_.**

Biblical love protects or shields another person from the harmful exposure of his sins, errors and imperfections (1 Cor. 13:7). The Lord Jesus is always gentle and protective of those who are bruised and convicted of the guilt of their sins (John 8:3-11). Christlike love does not condone sin, but it shields the sinner from the shameful exposure and hurtful condemnation of other people (1 Pet. 4:8; Isa. 53:4-5). Furthermore, Christlike love always trusts. It renounces the sinful tendency to be suspicious and judgmental of the motives of others (1 Cor. 4:3-5). Christian love refrains from assuming the worst in people, but chooses to believe the best in them, that is God's work of grace in their motives and character (Phil. 4:8).

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**3. Christlike always \_\_\_\_\_ and always \_\_\_\_\_.**

Christian love constantly cultivates this hopeful confidence that a believer's failure is never final. Biblical love always perseveres and endures (1 Cor. 13:7). This persistent love is demonstrated by the Lord Jesus when He graciously forgives and restores Peter after his tragic betrayal of his own Master (John 21:15-17). Christlike love always restores a wandering sinner, because the love of God in Christ is a love that never gives up on His beloved people (Hosea 11:1-2,8; James 5:19). Biblical love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust and no fading of its hope. In sum, Christlike love never fails!

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