

Love Builds Up

Key Verse: “*Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.*”

—**I Corinthians 8:9**

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians 8

the subject of love as shown in the words, “[Love] suffereth long, and is kind; [love] envieth not; [love] vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; . . . Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. [Love] never faileth.”—I Cor. 13:4,6-8

In today’s lesson, contained in I Corinthians 8, the Apostle Paul uses an example from his day to illustrate the importance of love. Under the old Law Covenant arrangement, the Jews were commanded to observe certain ordinances with regard to the food they ate. In particular, certain foods were forbidden to be eaten. Paul explained that once a follower of the Law came into Christ, they need not follow these rules any longer. They were now free from such “bondage” and had “liberty in Christ.” Yet, as Paul says in our Key Verse, this liberty was not to be used if it might stumble others. In such cases, love was to be the overriding factor. As he states

LOVE IS MOST CLEARLY

defined in the Scriptures by its actions. The Bible speaks concerning acts of kindness, giving of alms to those in need, and general good will to men. Even among those in the world, many are genuinely moved by charitable causes and act generously as a result. We are reminded of the Apostle Paul’s discourse on

in verse 1, “Knowledge puffeth up, but [love] edifieth.”

The importance of love to the follower of Christ cannot be overemphasized. In order for us to have such a disposition each day, we must be diligent in “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (II Cor. 10:5) To the extent we strive to keep our hearts and thoughts obedient to Christ’s example of love, there will be no room for evil thinking toward others. To attain such a high standard requires much effort and practice. Paul tells us, “Be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”—Tit. 3:8

As children of God, the development of love is not only to be deemed our first responsibility and privilege, but also a continual one each day of our walk. Indeed, it will be the culmination of our privileges on this side of the veil. We must therefore keep before our hearts and minds such admonitions as: “Let brotherly love continue,” and “Honour all men. Love the brotherhood.” (Heb. 13:1; I Pet. 2:17) Brotherly love has at its core the quality of friendship, so we are also reminded: “A friend loveth at all times.” (Prov. 17:17) As our minds become enriched in these important principles of love, we will come to the realization that our words and actions also should be those of love, kindness, and consideration toward all, “especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”—Gal. 6:10

In the book of Jude, we read, “Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith.” (vs. 20) This is important, as it indicates that our character, embodied in the quality of love, must be “built” upon a firm foundation of faith, the “faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (vs. 3) Thus equipped, we are to follow obediently our Lord’s words, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”—Matt. 22:37-39 ■