

Love One Another

Key Verse: *“This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”*
—I John 3:11

Selected Scripture:
I John 3:11-24

flesh and its ways. Paul instructs us to “put off . . . the old man,” and “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Eph. 4:22-24) A key part of this work is accomplished through the development of love for one another, as spoken of in our Key Verse.

Love of the brethren is so important that Jesus put it into the form of a commandment: “That ye love one another; as I have loved you.” (John 13:34,35) We should be learning the importance and value of love every day as God’s consecrated children. Through our love for him we responded to the invitation—“present your bodies a living sacrifice, . . . which is your reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1) Indeed, the exercise of love is constantly urged upon Christians throughout the New Testament. Such actions are by no means confined to material things, although it may include them. Paul says we are to be “kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.”—vs. 10

THOSE WHOM GOD HAS called have the opportunity “by patient continuance in well doing” to “seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.” (Rom. 2:7) This prospect brings with it much responsibility and work if it is to be realized. Each individual thus called is to lay aside the fallen

Paul, in I Corinthians 13, gives us many important words concerning love, summarizing his thoughts with the statement, "Love never faileth." (vs. 8) In this account, Paul does not attempt to define love, but rather gives us many manifestations which would indicate its presence in our character. These evidences, given in verses 4-7, are the ingredients which, when properly understood, make up one great lesson concerning love which we must learn and apply in our lives. In short, it is a lesson of "Christ-likeness" and "God-likeness," for they are the ultimate examples of these manifestations of the quality of love.

One of these important elements which Paul mentions is that "Love suffereth long." (vs. 4) This should remind us of the words concerning our great example, Jesus: "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Heb. 12:3) Love also "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," Paul says. That is, it is humble and not boastful of self. In Philippians 2:8-13, we are reminded of the great humility of Jesus, and of the need that we "work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling." In harmony with the thought of humility, "love envieth not." It is not jealous when others prosper.

In all the various manifestations of love provided by Paul in I Corinthians 13, the Greek word used is *agape*. This word defines a completely unselfish love, disinterested in self, as is the love of God. It is a love which should inspire us to a willing, joyful sacrifice of every earthly interest, hope, and ambition, and which gladly would lay down even life itself for the brethren. It also is evidenced by a love for God's Word of truth, his holy law, and a desire to be of service to him and his people.

As we seek to fulfill the words of our Key Verse, may it be said of us, "Remembering . . . your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.—I Thess. 1:3,4 ■