

Faith Requires Mutual Love

Key Verse: “*Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*”
—*I Corinthians 13:13*

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 13:1-3;
I Corinthians 13

THE WORD “CHARITY,” AS used in our lesson, is more properly translated “love.” Love can be defined and expressed in many ways. It can be a disposition of goodwill to men. It can be shown by an unselfish act of kindness. Love can move one to give to a charitable cause, desiring that their gift may be of some benefit to those in need. Our Key Verse is the conclusion of a beautiful discourse on the subject of love in which the Apostle Paul expounds on the nature of love. “Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity [love] envieth not; charity [love] vaunteth not itself [boasts not about self], is not puffed up, . . . thinketh no evil.” (I Cor. 13:4,5) Paul further points out to us that love “Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity [love] never faileth.”—vss. 6-8

How important is the quality of charity, or love? We are told in II Corinthians 9:7, “God loveth a cheerful giver.” This indicates to us what our disposition should be each day and how diligent we should be in “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (II Cor. 10:5) We must strive as much as possible to keep

our hearts full of love, for by so doing there will be little room for evil thinking and surmising toward others. One desiring to be a faithful child of God must realize that heart loyalty to the Heavenly Father requires much effort. Paul tells us to “be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” (Tit. 3:8) Love is our primary and continual duty, and it is the sum total and culmination of the development of the fruits of holiness. “Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (I Pet. 1:16) We must also have in our hearts and minds the motivation to “Let brotherly love continue.” (Heb. 13:1) “Honour all men. Love the brotherhood.” (I Pet. 2:17) To be pleasing to God, we must desire to conform ourselves to his will for us, so that our hearts may become richer still in the qualities of faith, hope, and love. When our hearts are enriched in these things, it leads to the realization that we should then act upon this heart desire, and manifest love, kindness, and consideration toward all. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” “A friend loveth at all times.”—Gal 6:10; Prov. 17:17

While we have studied faith in this month’s lessons, we have concluded the series considering the importance of love. Our Key Verse from I Corinthians 13:13 also follows this order, beginning with faith and ending with charity, or love. This shows us that every aspect of being pleasing to God must involve love. This development of a loving heart, based upon our faith in God, is shown in these words of our Lord and Master Jesus: “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.” “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”—Matt. 22:37-39; John 13:34,35 ■