

## Fellowship of Love

### Int.

1. Aim: To show the fellowship we have is described by Paul in the verses about love.
2. I Jn.1:7 "...we have fellowship one with another,..."
  - a. Fellowship = means association, participation, communion, joint participation [Thayer p.352]
  - b. It implies fellowship or sharing with someone in something - denotes participation, especially with a close bond. [Kittel Vol. 3 P-797]
3. The church is a called out group of people who have accepted the call of the gospel of Christ. Acts 2:42
  - a. We have committed ourselves to Christ
  - b. We have all been "born again" - Jn.3:5
  - c. I Cor. 1:9 - fellowship of his Son
  - d. The church is to have this relationship or fellowship with one another.
  - e. Fellowship is more than just sitting in a church building together. It is living together, or working together for one common purpose or one common goal.
4. The way described by Paul in I Cor. 13 is the way of love that helps us have that fellowship
  - a. Love is more than an emotion or feeling.
  - b. It is a way of life - it is an attitude that is demonstrated by the way we treat one another.
  - c. I Cor. 13:4-5 describes precisely the fellowship of love between brethren

5. The first 8 qualities of love will shape our dealing with our fellow man
  - a. It will determine our attitude toward our friends and our enemies
  - b. It will chart the course of life we follow as we live in the presence of others.
  - c. Love changes people!
  - d. Love makes us better individuals with which to live, work and worship.
  - e. If a man claims to love but refuses to cultivate these qualities he is mocking God
  - f. I Jn. 4: 20-21.
6. How do we treat our fellow man?
  - a. Some people cannot get along with others because they do not have any love for man in their hearts. [Quarrel, fuss, argue]
  - b. The Bible plainly tells us how love is to act. If we do not do these things then we know we do not have love in our hearts.
7. Fellowship with one another can be expressed when we have genuine love or the kind of love described here.

## Discussion

### I. PATIENCE — “love suffereth long”

- A. The first thing that love does is to be “patient” -
  - 1. If there is love in our hearts, there is patience in our lives.
  - 2. There is something about love that enables us to suffer long.
- B. Love enables us to be patient
  - 1. The word suggests to our minds the ability to suffer without retaliation.
  - 2. Patience = the ability to endure and wait without complaint
- C. Christ is a Great example of patience
  - 1. Jesus suffered for you and me.
  - 2. I Pet. 2:19-24
- D. It is essential to our inheritance in eternity - In Heb. 10:36 the writer said, “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”
- E. Abraham patiently continued so that he might please God. “And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. ” Heb. 6:15
- F. Patience will enable us to keep on going. “And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.” Gal. 6:9
- G. It requires patience to Run the Christian race! Without patience we could not enter through those gates into heaven Heb. 12:1
- H. Patience is a command of God. “...be patient toward all men.” 1 Thes. 5:14
- I. “Love suffereth long”

## **II.** **KINDNESS** — “and is kind”

- A. Definition = means to be kind, loving, merciful — Gentle and considerate- good-hearted- proceeding from good-heartedness
- B. Kindness can be summarized as goodness in action.
  - 1. Kindness is an active part of love. — Patience is more a passive part of love.
  - 2. Kindness is visible to all of us.
- C. An example of kindness Abraham and Lot
  - 1. Gen. 13:7-8
  - 2. Abraham was a good man. His goodness was shown in the action he took toward Lot.
  - 3. Abraham gave his nephew the choice of the land. Lot was selfish and greedy, but not Abraham. He was not interested in just himself.
    - a. He could have said to Lot, “Lot I am going to go this way and you go that way.”
    - b. I am an important person and I must look out for my future.
    - c. But this would not have been the kind thing to do
- D. Kindness in Action
  - 1. Prov. 31:26 “...in her tongue is the law of kindness.”
  - 2. Kindness should guide our words, even the choice of words, Rather than being irritated and unkind in our speech to one another.
  - 3. If we have love in our heart then there will be kindness in our tongue. Because “Love is kind”.
  - 4. Kindness is love in action. It is love doing good.

### III. **GENEROSITY** - "love envieth not" Does not envy = NKJV

- A. This is a negative characteristic of love. Love is noticed by the absence of Envy, because love is Generous.
- B. What is envy?
  - 1. Jealousy - to be filled with ill will, or look against.
  - 2. Envy is discontent at the excellence or good fortune of another.
  - 3. It is such a foolish sin! It hurts the one who possesses it. It is a waste of time and energy
- C. An example of Envy - Cain
  - 1. In Gen. 4 we read how "envy" caused Cain to hate Abel his brother and kill him.
  - 2. Cain was envious of his brother because God had accepted Abel's sacrifice while rejecting Cain's.
  - 3. Abel had done no harm to Cain, but envy hurt Cain and produced hatred to such a degree that he killed his own brother.
  - 4. I Jn.3:12
- D. What can Love do for us?
  - 1. It destroys envy! Envy desires to take or withhold, but love desires to give.
  - 2. Generosity is the trait that says, "What is mine is yours also, if you really need it."
  - 3. The good Samaritan [Lk.10:25-37] is an example of generosity.
    - a. After telling the story Jesus asked the lawyer, "Which of these three thinkest thou was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves?"
    - b. The lawyer answered that he which showed mercy on Him.
    - c. Then Jesus made his point "Go and do thou likewise."
  - 4. That is love in action because love does not envy and is not jealous.

#### **IV. HUMILITY** - "love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

- A. This is also a negative characteristic
  - 1. Love is noticed by the absence of pride
  - 2. The NASV says: "love does not brag and is not arrogant."
- B. The meaning of the phrases
  - 1. "vaunteth not itself" Greek word which means "boast, brag". In ancient Greek literature the noun form of this word meant "a braggart or windbag."
  - 2. "is not puffed up" which means to "become puffed up or conceited, put on airs." "proud and high-minded, of being filled with pride" \*\* To be proud is to be arrogant
- C. Love does not have these attitudes but is humble
  - 1. Mt. 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
  - 2. The kingdom is open to one of humble spirit
  - 3. But God rejects everyone who has a haughty and proud spirit
- D. Humility
  - 1. Is having a modest or meek spirit or manner, that is not proud or assertive.
  - 2. It is thinking soberly about oneself Rom. 12:3 "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith"
  - 3. "Humility is a quality that when you discover that you have it, you don't." Jean Thornton
  - 4. Christians are to "clothe themselves with humility" I Pet. 5:5 because this is the way of LOVE - not proud of their humility
  - 5. Jas. 4:10 "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

## V. **COURTESY** - "doth not behave itself unseemly"

### A. Love is not rude but courteous

1. A person with love in their hearts will not act ugly or rude to other people
2. But instead love will behave itself and act in a courteous way.

### B. Other translations

1. "Doth not behave itself unseemly" - KJV ASV
2. "It is not arrogant or rude" - RSV
3. "Love has good manners" - Phillips
4. "love is not rude" - NEB, SEB, and NIV
5. "Love does not behave rudely" NKJV

### C. Behave

1. To act well, do what is right
2. Behave means to act good, or act as we should

### D. Unseemly

1. Not suitable for time or place, inappropriate, offensive
2. Unseemly then means to not act as we should - misbehave

### E. Love Does not behave unseemly, but behaves itself seemly or in a courteous kind manner.

1. Christians do not have the right to be rude, unkind, hateful and mean to anyone!
2. But instead we are to follow the example of Jesus and behave our self as he did.
  - a. He was always courteous and kind
  - b. You never find an example of him being rude or ugly to anyone
  - c. Jesus was filled with love and love doth not behave itself unseemly.

### F. Courtesy, tact and respect are as natural to love as breathing is to us.

## **VI. UNSELFISHNESS** - "Love seeketh not her own"

- A. Love is not selfish
  - 1. She does not seek her own advantage
  - 2. Christian love lives not to get, but to give
- B. Scriptures teach us to practice unselfishness
  - 1. Rom. 12:10 "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;"
  - 2. Phil. 2:4 "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."
- C. Unselfishness is a very difficult trait to develop but a very needful one.
  - 1. How much more happiness we could enjoy if we practiced unselfishness
  - 2. Think of all the heartaches and pain that could be spared if we all practiced this demand of love - "love seeketh not her own. "
- D. An illustration of unselfishness Mother Gave herself for child Years ago, a mother was carrying her baby over the hills of South Wales in England, but she never reached her destination alive; a blizzard overtook her and a search party found her frozen body beneath the snow. The searchers were surprised that she had no outer garments on, but they soon discovered why. She had wrapped them around her baby. When they unwrapped the child, they found baby David Lloyd George alive and well. David Lloyd George grew up; he became Prime Minister of Britain during World War I and one of England's great statesmen. The vital contribution which he made to humanity was possible because he had a mother whose love caused her to seek not her advantage, but the advantage of her baby."
- E. Happiness is a by-product of making others happy.

## **VII. GOOD TEMPER** — “is not easily provoked”

A. A good temper is a part of love

1. We cannot take a pill to control our temper
2. We must fill our heart with love because love is not easily provoked.

B. Provoked:

1. To irritate, roused to anger
2. To incite to anger, vex, stir up
3. But love is not easily provoked - We can be made angry, but we must not be of a disposition to easily fly off the handle.
4. Jas.1:19-20 “slow to wrath”

C. Scriptures

1. Pro. 14:17 “He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.”
2. I II. Police in Iowa City, Iowa responded to reports of a stabbing, but instead they found a man who lost a fight with a pay phone. The man tried to call a friend from pay phone and got angry when there was no answer. He jerked the receiver, trying to tear it off the phone. He managed to stretch the wire webbing that covers the phone cord, but the cord did not break. The man became even more angry and threw the receiver. The cord still did not break. What it did was snap back and wrap around the man's neck, cutting him. The more he struggled to free himself, the deeper the webbing cut. So there he was, injured, embarrassed, and captured, all by the wire on a pay telephone. Of course, what really had gotten the best of the man was his own anger. He had vented his rage, only to find rage has a way of turning on its source.

3. Pro. 16:32 "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

#### D. Righteous Anger

1. Mt. 21:12-13 - Jesus had a righteous kind of anger or righteous indignation.
2. Paul was provoked when he went into the city of Athens. Acts 17:16

#### E. How to Control our Anger

1. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath : " Eph.4:26
  - a. Don't stay angry
  - b. Settle it by sunset
2. Col. 3:8 "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. "
  - a. A person can control their anger
  - b. A person can turn their anger off if they have the desire.
  - c. Ill. A person may be "blowing their stack" and the telephone rings. When he answers he talks in a perfectly calm voice.
3. Eph. 4:31-32 "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. "
  - a. We sometimes try to excuse our anger by saying it is a family trait, or that's just the Irish in me.
  - b. That is no excuse for having a bad temper. God tells us to put it away and we can do it. God does not ask more than we are able to do.

## **VIII. THINKETH NO EVIL** - or guilelessness

- A. Definition of guile
  - 1. Guile = skillful deceit, shrewd, the use of tricks to deceive
  - 2. Crafty
- B. It means that love is guileless or innocent-minded
  - 1. One man translated it this way — “imputed not evil”
  - 2. That means that he did not blame others for the bad.
  - 3. Because love forgives those who have erred and has no suspicion that they have done so with a bad motive.
- C. Children have this attitude “Of such is the kingdom of heaven”
  - 1. Mt. 19:13-14
  - 2. The kingdom will be made up of people who have some characteristics such as little children.
  - 3. We are to have the mind of a child in some things. We are not to think as a child. Because in understanding we are to be mature.
  - 4. I Cor. 14:20 Paul admonished... “Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice, be ye children, but in understanding, be men.”
  - 5. “In malice be ye children” - that means we are to imitate the way children do about malice and getting mad.
  - 6. They generally do not hold grudges. They forgive and forget. They “think no evil”.
  - 7. This is the kind of love that puts the best possible construction on the conduct of others.

#### D. It will blind us to little faults

1. "...for love covereth a multitude of sins." I Pet. 4:8 ASV
2. Love will blind us to little faults, mistakes, weakness, etc. in others.
3. Love is not picky.
4. When sin is found, love does not crush the sinner, but tries to save him.
5. Love believes the best, not the worst about people.

### **CONCLUSION**

1. The fellowship of love is the greatest way of life - 1 Cor. 12:31 "a more excellent way"
2. Love can change you and make you what God would have you to be.
3. When we are born again we are to start living as a new creature a new person. This means we are to improve and be better. The only way we can do this is to follow the instructions given to us by God in his book.
4. These instructions about love will help you develop and maintain that kind of personality that will please God.
5. When we have been a Christian for a number of years and have not grown in love then we are not pleasing God.
6. If you are under the influence of love then you will develop:
  - (1) Patience - "love suffereth long"
  - (2) Kindness - "and is kind"
  - (3) Generosity - "love envieth not"
  - (4) Humility - "love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up"
  - (5) Courtesy - "doth not behave itself unseemly,
  - (6) Unselfishness - "seeketh not her own"
  - (7) Good temper - "is not easily provoked"
  - (8) Guilelessness - "thinketh no evil"
7. Col. 3:14 "And above all these things, put on charity or love, which is the bond of perfectness."

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