

Christian Love: Living It Out In Loveless Times

1 Corinthians 13:6-7

Beloved, I want to encourage you to find your full value in the love of Christ. No more striving. No more comparing yourself to others. No more putting yourself down or living inside your insecurities. None of that. That's the old creation, and the Bible says this about your old identity:

2Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

So, it follows that every day we need to put off the old creation—put it to death—and put on Jesus.

Romans 13:14

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

This daily death of who we used to be is necessary because we still live in the flesh and the flesh remembers who we were and will want to express its old carnal nature. Best then to crucify the old self first thing every day—take up our crucifixion cross—and follow Jesus.

Luke 9:23

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. It's important to remember that Jesus died for you and I specifically and individually.

If you have not yet entered into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, I encourage you to pray this prayer, even in your own way—sincerely from your heart:

God in heaven, I believe what the Bible says about calling out to You and being saved. My sin deserves the penalty of death, an eternity without You in hell. But I want to be saved through Jesus Your Son and I accept His death on a cross as payment for my sin right now. I also accept His resurrection life as my own through the Holy Spirit. Today is the day of my salvation. Jesus You are my Saviour, Leader and Lord. Thank You for my new identity and life in You! Amen.

It is so critical that every believer find their full value and worth in Jesus alone. The Holy Spirit will give you a revelation of God's love if you ask Him. To settle with just an intellectual understanding of salvation and subsequent sanctification will not transform your life. As Jesus said to Nicodemus, a teacher of the Law and religious zealot—"ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

And note well, loving your neighbour as yourself is not be possible if you are not living in Christ and loving Him fully.

Mark 12:30-31

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Have you ever tried in your flesh to love a seemingly unlovable person? How did that turn out? What then is the “more excellent way” that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 13?

*STUDY POINT: Conduct a personal study of Jesus and His interaction with those society might reject or despise. Pray and ask God to show you from these Biblical examples what God’s love really does.

1 Corinthians 13:6

*(KJV) Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
(NIV) Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*

The only reason we would separate off from the goodness of God is temptation. In the garden of Eden, God provided a perfect life for Adam and Eve—His provision and care was never questioned by His first human creation. But it was Satan’s tempting (Genesis 3:1-5) that raised doubt in Eve’s mind about the goodness of God.

Freewill given of God was exercised to devastating ends:

Genesis 3:6

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

So, understand then that agape unconditional love hates rebellion and sin—rejects it altogether—and instead loves the truth of God’s Word. In fact, rejoicing in the truth is an instrumental phrase in the original Greek and speaks of musical worship.

God seeks worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24). Beloved, saturate your mind and heart with Scripture, meditating on it day and night (Psalm 1:2). Study it (2 Timothy 2:15), declare it (Psalm 118:17), sing it (Ephesians 5:19-20), and hide it in your heart (Psalm 119:11). Obey it (James 1:22). And worship God with all you are!

1 Corinthians 13:7

*(KJV) Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.
(NIV) It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

Since agape love is others-centred, the terms in this verse speak of what love does more than what love is:

Beareth speaks of protecting our brothers and sisters in Christ through prayer and encouragement.

Believeth refers to believing the best about someone until given reason to believe otherwise—this kind of love is not suspicious.

Hopeth is all about Jesus, is positive and not critical. Hope is contagious to our fellow brethren—it's real and is realized by our faith in the fulfillment of God's great promises in His Word. Hope gets us out of bed in the morning!

Endureth is actually a military term and calls to mind going to battle for our brothers and sisters in Christ—getting in the trenches and fighting for those brethren who are weak and vulnerable on the battlefield.

So, the context of each of these action words is others, others, others!

Find your full value, worth, and identity in Jesus and watch the fruit of God's others-centred love become more and more real in your everyday life.

Amen!

~ Reverend Darren McClelland