

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

The Desired Christian Personality (#1)

1 - Why the Emphasis upon Love

2 - A Person of Kindness

3 - A Person of Truth

4 - A Person of Patience

5 - A Person of Faith

6 - A Person of Hope

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Lesson One

"Why the Emphasis on Love"

So much is said in the New Testament on love and its value. Why such an emphasis? What is it about this characteristic or quality that merits so much to be said about it? The Apostle ended his chapter on Love in 1 Corinthians 13 with **"The Greatest of these is love!"** Three things come to mind that can give insight as to why the emphasis is placed upon love and the greatness of love.

1. God is love! This alone is sufficient to show why it is so great. God is the embodiment of love (1 Jn. 4:8). The source of all He does comes out of love for His creatures. And He exemplified the extreme greatness of His love by sending His Son to earth as a human to take our place so we could be set free from the penalty of sin (1 Jn. 4:7-10). The greatness of His love is seen in:

- a) He loves the unworthy (Rom. 5:6-8);
- b) He loves all His creatures (Jn. 3:16; Acts 10:34);
- c) He is the source of love—without God, there is, or cannot be, love;
- d) God's love is just (Rom. 3:26). Sin had to be dealt with, but justly, if man was to be saved from the penalty of sin.

2. Love is greater than Faith and Hope! Faith apart from love is cold just like faith apart from works is dead (Jas. 2:24-26). Saving faith must be accompanied by love or it leaves faith empty (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Love is greater than Faith and Hope because:

- a) Without love there would be no gospel to be believed (Rom. 1:16) nor hope for the lost (Rom. 8:24);
- b) It is sacrificial (Jn. 15:13);
- c) It serves in the lowest places (Jn. 13:1, 4-5);
- d) It is practical (1 Jn. 2:17-18);
- e) It obeys (Jn. 14:15);
- f) It makes service easier (1 Jn. 5:3);
- g) It is willing to give (2 Cor. 8:1-5, 8);
- h) It is the foundation of a lasting marriage (Eph. 5:25-33).

3. Love is the greatest because it fulfills the Law of God! When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment, he answered that it was to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind (Matt. 22:35-40). But He didn't stop there and added that the second greatest is like the first; that is, we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. And then, He gave a significant statement: **"On these two**

commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." This same emphasis is given by the Apostle in his Letter to the Romans (Rom. 13:8-10). He states it twice in these three verses that love fulfills all of the demands of the Law of God.

There is another significant concept about this love—It is nothing if it is expressed only in word! It must be expressed in deed and in truth also (1 John 3:16-18). God showed us His love by the sending of His Son to earth; and we must show our love by keeping His Law (Jn. 14:15).

Love Clarified!

In our language, we use the word "love" in many different ways. We usually have to add another word or phrase in order to qualify what we are talking about. Do we mean the same thing when we say: "*I love my spouse,*" as when we say: "*I love my dog,*" or "*I love chocolate pie?*" In the Greek language three or a possible four different words are used to help clarify what they had reference to. See below:

Ερως—Our English word "erotic" is a transliterated word that we have a pretty good idea of what the word means. This is "sexual" love or physical passion. It is usually a desire to obtain gratification for one's self. There is nothing wrong with this concept because God has made us this way for not only propagation purposes, but also for pleasure. Godly love needs to have "Eros" under control as well as expressed correctly to one's mate in the marital relationship. It is interesting to note that this word is not used in our New Testament—but other terms are used to denote such.

Στοργη—This is "family love" that is natural and should exist between family members. The Gentile world was condemned by God for their lack of this natural affection (Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3). The term "kinship" is a way of referring to this natural affection that should exist in a family. This should automatically be there unless it is destroyed by wrong-doing.

Πίλεο—This has reference to warm, close companionship, friendship, or to a special relationship between human beings. The family should not only have Storge, but Phileo and agape as well. The usual use of this word would seem to be something that happens naturally; it is not something that you would command of a person. The only exception to this rule that I am aware of is found in Titus 2:4 where Phileo seems to be commanded.

Αγαπε—This is "Godly love!" This is the kind of love God embodies and has expressed to His creatures. This word is usually over-whelmingly in our New

Testament (about a twelve to one ration in relation to the use of Phileo). In Paul's writings it is in a much higher ration (36 to 2). The Greeks did not use this word much in their writings, so it was a fitting choice to use this word to denote "Godly love!"

Significant Comparisons

1. **Eros** is more physically driven and impulsive, while **Agape** is directed by a person's choice and will.

2. **Phileo** is more emotional and affectionate and mutual, while **Agape** does not necessarily have any of these three things—It is something that comes from the Will of the person.

3. **Agape** can be expressed not only to friendly people, but even to an enemy. It denotes the highest and most perfect expression of love—like God shows to us! **Eros** and **Phileo** are obviously connected with the idea of love or affection, but **Agape** goes even further and "loves" the unloveable! **Agape** (Love) comes from our mind and our will and is deeper and more stable than the other kinds of love.

Concluding Thoughts

This study on **The Desired Christian Personality** is to challenge us to the ultimate—to be the kind of Christian that would radiate the love of God to all around them. We need goals toward which to strive.....and there is no greater goal than to be "*perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.*" (Matt. 5:48). Or, it may be adequately expressed by saying: "**To love as God loves!**"

But if we are to really attain to such high goals, it is necessary that we fully understand what is meant by the word "Love!" The Bible does not attempt to define it so much as to illustrate it. God demonstrated it so that we could understand what it is like to love as God loves.

1 Cor. 13:1-8,13 is God's way of helping us to understand what it is like to love. You may have to dig down a little deeper in your study to fully grasp what is being communicated; but, it will certainly be worth the effort.....**SO.....Onward and upward towards "A Desired Christian Personality!"**

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Love should regulate our feelings, words, and actions toward others.
- _____ 2. Love is the church's most effective weapon in its fight against sin and its efforts to reach the lost.
- _____ 3. The New Testament puts more emphasis upon faith than on love.
- _____ 4. The Greatness of God's love has been shown in His beautiful creation.
- _____ 5. Without love there would be no reason to have faith or hope.
- _____ 6. God's Law is summed up in one word "love!"

- _____ 7. The English word "Love" is inadequate to explain what God's love is.
- _____ 8. Family love and friendship love is the same as Godly love.
- _____ 9. Phileo is a love that can be expressed to one's enemies.

- _____ 10. Eros is a sinful concept of love.

- _____ 11. Only God can love the unlovable.

- _____ 12. The ultimate goal of the Christian is to love as God loves.
- _____ 13. A correct understanding of Godly Love is a necessity in order to have the Desired Christian Personality.

Lesson Two

"A Person of Kindness"

The word "kind" has more than one usage in the Old Testament. There are about three different Hebrew words that are translated kind:

- a) **Zan**—Kind, similar, same group, close, family. See the following Scriptures to illustrate:
 Gen. 1:1 _____
 Gen. 1:12 _____
 Gen. 1:24 _____
 Gen. 6:20 _____
- b) **Tob**—Kindly
 Jere. 52:32 _____
- c) **Chesed**—Kind, Kindness
 Gen. 24:14 _____
 Gen. 24:49 _____
 Ruth 1:8 _____

The word "kind" is used to translate two Greek words in the New Testament:

- a) **Genos**—Kind, Same group, family.
 Matt. 13:47 _____
 1 Cor. 12:10 _____
 1 Cor. 14:10 _____
- b) **Chrestos**—Kind, Useful, Beneficial
 Lk. 6:35 _____
 Eph. 4:32 _____
 1 Cor. 13:4 _____

In the New Testament, in particular, there are combination of Greek words that are used to denote special kindness shown to certain people:

- a) **Philanthropia**—Love of Mankind
 Acts 28:2 _____
- b) **Philadelphia**—Love of Brother or brotherly love.
 2 Pet. 1:7 _____

The general idea in the Old Testament is that of kindness, favor, or mercy. In the New Testament, the general idea is that of being gracious or merciful. "Lovingkindness" is often used when it is God expressing or showing the concept. The Old Testament talks about "great kindness" to emphasize the unusualness of the act or acts:

- Neh. 9:17** _____
- Jonah 4:2** _____
- Joel 2:13** _____

Love and Kindness

Kindness is an expression of what we call "love." Love looks for ways of being constructive, useful, profitable, and encouraging to others. Mark's Gospel pictures Jesus as busily engaged in doing kindnesses for people. His life was filled with kind deeds and a sympathetic heart. He also taught that showing kindnesses, to needy people in particular, will help to determine our eternal destiny!

Matt. 25:31-46 _____

The Golden Rule states it clearly: *"Do unto others what you would have them do for you."* (Matt. 7:12). It is to do kind deeds to others because we would enjoy those same things ourselves.

God is the great example of showing kindness; and He is held up before us so that we can understand what it is to be kind to one another.

Eph. 4:32 _____

Rom. 12:19-21 _____

Kindness comes from a right attitude towards others, a good heart, or a heart of respect for fellow-humans.....that is, "LOVE!" There are terms that are identified with kindness, such as: **Gentleness, Graciousness, Tenderness, and affectionate.**

The idea of being kind or showing kindness to people is for the purpose of encouraging them, showing unselfishness, to spare people's feelings, or to show acceptance of people as they are.....just as we want acceptance!

The Opposite of Kindness

Several words are used to try to show a contrast between kindness and unkindness: **to be harsh, to be censorious, to be dejecting, finding fault, objecting, etc.** Instead of loving people, we attack people—desire to do them harm. The real test of kindness is not when someone is kind to us; but, it is when people are unkind to us, and we show mercy, goodness, kindness, forgiveness, etc. They may deserve to be punished, but we do not wish that on them. Rather, we go out of our way to show kindness to them. God's kindness is unmerited, and so should ours be as well. The **Desired Christian Personality** will show kindness to his enemy and thereby overcome evil by doing kind deeds or being gracious towards them.

We often think of "kindness" as only good or "positive acts." However, there are times when the greatest "kindness" for someone is to do something to wake them up to their true condition before God. The Church at Thessalonica had a problem with people who would not work and trying to live off the church (probably). The Apostle had warned them when he was in their midst the first time that they were to work and earn their own living.

1 Thess. 4:11-12 _____

Evidently, the word got to the Apostle a few months later that there were still some who would not work. The Apostle gave God's prescription for such people:

2 Thess. 3:6, 10-11, 14 _____

While this may sound harsh, it is in reality "love!" These people were in danger of losing their soul! They needed to make a change or else! This was the best action that the church could take to help awaken them to the gravity of their condition.

However, the Apostle also made another statement that helps to show the kindness.

2 Thess. 3:15 _____

This action of withdrawing fellowship from the non-repentant was not to be taken as a harsh act, nor as hatred for a fellow-Christian....but it was to be understood as "love" for the person—that is, expressing love as a great and kind act of mercy!

This same action was recommended for a brother in 1 Corinthians 5. He would not repent, so they withdrew from him to try to save his soul. It was done with the right spirit and actions and was able to bring the man to repentance.

2 Cor. 2:6-8 _____

Concluding Thoughts

The motive behind our actions, as well as, the spirit with which we express our actions will help determine whether the actions are kind or harsh. We are encouraged to make sure that our actions, as well as our words come across as "kindness!"

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. One Greek word for "kind" indicates that something is of the same group or family.
- _____ 2. Chesed is the Hebrew Word for Kindness.
- _____ 3. Chrestos is the Greek Word for Kindness.
- _____ 4. "Loving kindness" is used to translate the Hebrew words that refer to God's actions.
- _____ 5. Kind acts are our way of showing our love.
- _____ 6. Kind deeds will help determine one's eternal destiny.
- _____ 7. The "Golden Rule" is just another way of telling us that we should be kind to each other.
- _____ 8. Kind acts are a way of showing our concern for others and demonstrating our unselfishness.
- _____ 9. Withdrawing of fellowship from an unrepentant brother is an act of kindness, not harshness.
- _____ 10. We show kindness also by forgiving the repentant person.

Lesson Three

"A Person of Truth"

"Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth." Every person is basically faced with the choice between truth or error! Which one do we desire—truth or error? Which one do we find joy in—truth or error? Love will cause a person to choose truth over error. It will be obvious that He:

- a) Wants truth;
- b) Seeks truth;
- c) Eagerly listens to truth;
- d) Gladly accepts the truth that can set him free (Jn. 8:32).
- e) Also rejoices in truth—when it is told, when it is desired by others, and when the truth is lived!

A contrast is drawn here between a person of truth or one who would rather accept error because it satisfies his wants. A **person of truth** does not want, seek after, eagerly listen to, or gladly accept iniquity or unrighteousness. Rather, he is saddened and disappointed to see people walk in the way of iniquity or unrighteousness.

1 Jn. 1:5-6 _____

The person of truth finds no pleasure, nor any reason to rejoice in error, sin, iniquity, or unrighteousness! It may have its pleasures for a "season," but the day of retribution will come to those who walk that way.

2 Pet. 2:15 _____

Rom. 1:18 _____

Lk. 13:27 _____

2 Tim. 2:19 _____

A Sad Day!

It is truly a sad day and a sad time when people:

- 1—Do not desire truth nor want to hear truth, but rather resists truth (Eph. 1:13; 2 Tim. 3:8);
- 2—Are deceived (Jer. 9:5) and destitute of truth (1 Tim. 6:5);
- 3—Will not speak only truth to each other (Isa. 59:4, 14-15);

4—Will not love the truth that can save their soul (2 Thess. 2:10-12);

5—Prefer to walk in darkness rather than light (1 Jn. 1:5-7).

In the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha there could not be found ten righteous people to save them from utter destruction.

2 Peter 2:6-8 _____

When people love error rather than truth, they turn things upside down and twisted:

Isa. 5:20 _____

Prov. 14:34 _____

What Truth Can do!

When making choices, questions need to be asked so that we can make the better choice. When we choose between truth and error, we need to ask about the fruit that each bears? **Truth can:**

1. **Exalt a nation, but sin or unrighteousness will bring it down** (Prov. 14:34).
2. **Make us free from sin and its penalty** (Jn. 8:32).
3. **Sanctify us** (Jn. 17:17, 19).
4. **Beget us unto God** (Jas. 1:18).
5. **Causes us to know that we are of the truth** (1 Jn. 3:19; 4:6).

We have good reasons to rejoice in truth! A soul is being redeemed and has the hope of Heaven some day. We will therefore gladly serve God in sincerity and truth (Joshua 24:14).

What can **Error Do?**

1. **Deceive us** (Jer. 9:5; Heb. 3:12).
2. **Blind us to the truth** (1 Jn. 2:11).
3. **Bring on swift destruction** (2 Pet. 2:1).
4. **Blaspheme truth** (2 Pet. 2:2).
5. **Promises the passing pleasures of sin** (Heb. 11:25).

A person of truth cannot rejoice in error because its fruit is terrible! Souls are being led into everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2 Thess. 1:9). If I rejoice in unrighteousness, I can only look

forward to hearing that awful sentence: "*depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.*" (Luke 13:27).

Love Rejoices in the God of Truth

Love not only rejoices in truth.....but even more, love rejoices in the God who is truth, who has given us truth!

Deut. 32:4 _____

He is the measurement of truth! Everything is judged by Him as the standard of truth.

Ps. 119:151 _____

He judges people by this truth.

Ps. 96:13 _____

He has sent forth His truth into all the earth.

Ps. 57:10 _____

His truth endures forever.

Ps. 117:2 _____

God sent His Son to earth in the likeness of human flesh so that we might come to know His truth in completeness.

Jn. 1:17 _____

Jn. 14:6 _____

It is no wonder then that God admonishes us in many ways about truth:

1. Buy it and do not sell it (Prov. 23:23).
2. Believe the truth (1 Tim. 4:3).
3. Walk in truth (Isa. 8:3; 2 Jn. 4; 3 Jn. 4).
4. Teach God's ways in truth (Matt. 22:16).
5. Worship in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23).
6. Obey the truth (Rom. 2:8).
7. Be established in truth (2 Pet. 1:12).
8. Tell the truth to others (Gal. 4:16).
9. Not to walk in darkness (error), but walk in light (truth) (1 Jn. 1:5-7).

Concluding Thoughts

When people do not want the truth or love the truth, they will be sent lies and delusions that will cause them to be condemned by the God of truth. A person of truth will absolutely rejoice in truth and not in iniquity or unrighteousness. He will want to encourage everyone to listen to truth, believe truth, and obey truth;

so that they can be saved eternally. He definitely will not rejoice in iniquity or unrighteous living on the part of others. His heart is set on truth and he strives to live it to the best of his ability.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Every person is faced with a basic choice between truth and error.
- _____ 2. People choose to believe error because they are not able to understand truth.
- _____ 3. People who do not desire truth will resist truth.
- _____ 4. People can be so deceived that they can become destitute of truth.
- _____ 5. Love of truth will save a person's soul.
- _____ 6. Sodom and Gomorrha were cities that did not love truth.
- _____ 7. When people say that immoral and ungodly actions are okay, it shows that they do not know the truth.
- _____ 8. Sin exalts a nation, but unrighteousness is a reproach.
- _____ 9. Those who blaspheme truth will receive swift destruction from the Lord.
- _____ 10. A person of truth cannot rejoice in error.
- _____ 11. Jesus came to earth to make God's truth fully known.
- _____ 12. The Old Testament states that God had sent forth His truth into all the earth.

Lesson Four

"A Person of Patience"

"Love suffers love.....Bears all things.....Endures all things." Godly love is expressed in many different ways. We have combined three expressions that we feel go together well, but have their own separate concepts. We will look at each one separately.

Love Suffers Long

There are some things that cannot be corrected quickly or right away; so, we need to learn to live with the situation until it can be solved. Love can help us to be patient or suffer long with people or our situation. As long as things go well, we don't need patience. It is when they go wrong that we need love.

Luke 6:32 _____

Our challenge comes from people not thinking or acting like we think they should. Such actions can become very irritating and annoying to us. This is when we need to love (be patient) with people and their "faults." God looks down upon your life or mine and doesn't like our attitudes or our actions. He would like for us to change, but knowing man—it may take some time. God is longsuffering with us, hoping for that change to take place.

2 Pet. 3:9 _____

Love helps us to make allowances for peoples' weaknesses. Someone has expressed the following thought in regards to our subject:

*"I do not quite understand why you are as you are, but
I cannot understand myself; and sense there is ONE
who understands us both, let us extend to each other
the patience He extends to us both."*

Love can help us to be patient with people—no matter how they may treat us. We are admonished to treat them with kindness, gentleness, and patience. Christians enjoy God's grace (patience); and we need to see the need for us to be patient (gracious) with others.

1 Pet. 3:20 _____

Through patience lost souls can be saved!

Rom. 12:21 _____

Bears All Things

Love enables us to bear up under far more than we may even think that we can! It is hard for us to bear up under undesirable circumstances, but love gives us the motivation and strength to do so. It is hard to bear with those we do not like—especially our enemies; but, love helps us to bear all things!

Matt. 5:44 _____

Rom. 12:18-21 _____

Love blesses us with the determination to love people who are not very likeable. It is something we have to will to do—not a question of "feeling like it!"

Gal. 6:2 _____

Gal. 6:5 _____

Love has no real limits to what it can do that is good and right!

Eph. 4:2 _____

1 Pet. 4:8 _____

Love does not break under injuries or provocations, but bears up under all things that come into our lives. Love even helps us to search for the good in men—not the disagreeable! Love never gives up on God, or men, or on circumstances in life—for we have hope that gives us the strength to bear all things.

Phil. 4:13 _____

God's love for us allows things to come into our lives that can serve as a means of chastening us. We are encouraged to bear up under such chastening by remembering that love chastens for our good.

Heb. 12:5-6 _____

The withdrawal of fellowship by the Church is a means of chastening for our good and is expressed out of "love" for my soul. So, if it comes to this for you or me, let's love those brethren who try to awaken us to our serious lost condition and bear up under their chastening!

Endures All Things

"Love has the patience to endure the fault it sees but cannot cure." Love will help us to endure the evil and false accusations without being filled with resentment or revenge. We are called upon to endure persecution, trials, and tribulations and to look for the good that can come out of such.

Jas. 1:2-4 _____

Matt. 5:10-12 _____

Love also will not stoop to the level of the unrighteous; and it will cover the faults and weaknesses of others when possible. Love endures the misunderstandings of others.

Eph. 4:31-32 _____

Unfortunately, all wrongs cannot be set right! But love will do its part in helping to set them right by its patience and endurance; and not allowing hate, bitterness or malice to corrupt our hearts.

"With God's help, we can endure fire, water, devils, lions, evil men, losses, grieved hearts; and, even a world that does not seem to understand us."

However, in the strict sense of the world there are some things we should not and will not tolerate. The Apostle Paul protested against wrongful treatment at times.

Acts 23:1-5 _____

Love will not endure: **false teaching, blasphemy against God, the Church, or the Word of God.**

The Apostle Peter, by inspiration, spoke out against the Jews that had Jesus crucified unjustly.

Acts 2:23 _____

Love will help us to endure whatever is brought into our lives!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. To suffer long, bear all things, and endure all things are all talking about Patience.
- _____ 2. We just have to live with some things or people that may never change.
- _____ 3. A reason for needing patience is because of the way people act or think that is different from me.
- _____ 4. Love does not require that we make allowances for peoples' weaknesses.
- _____ 5. One big danger that the Christian faces is that of stooping to be like those who differ with us.
- _____ 6. There is a limit to what we can bear up under.

- _____ 7. Loving some people is not a matter of the will but a question of how I feel.
- _____ 8. To bear all things indicate that there is no limitation to what we can bear with in our lives.
- _____ 9. Proper withdrawal of fellowship of an unrepentant Christian is not being patient with people.
- _____ 10. Chastening is love being shown.

- _____ 11. Love helps us to endure the faults we see in others.
- _____ 12. Love helps to set things right because it is patient.
- _____ 13. There are some things that love must not endure.

Lesson Five

"A Person of Faith"

"Love believes all things!" The word "belief" or "faith" carries with it the idea of "trust" or to "put confidence in." To believe in someone is to have confidence in them. In this context, the word seems to take on a little different connotation. It is the attitude of being eager or desirous of wanting to believe the best about others. We put our trust in people and believe their intentions are good, noble, sincere, just, etc. Love helps us to believe the best about people, not the worst! Love helps us not to be quick to censor or condemn people without first knowing the facts. We believe the best until the facts say otherwise.

Prov. 10:12 _____

1 Pet. 4:8 _____

Love helps us to find a possible good explanation for things or peoples' actions. It is to be charitable in our interpretations of another's actions or words.

God's Belief in Us

Even though God knows all about mankind and their weaknesses; yet, He still believes in us and the possibilities of what we can become. This is the reason why He sent His Son. This is the reason for His willingness to forgive. Was God naive to believe in human-kind? I believe the answer has to be "NO!" He knows that the majority of people would not believe and obey His Son; but He still did it for the ones who would do so.

We also know that not everyone we put our trust in will do right and that only a few will live up to the faith we have in them. We must not let the people who let us down destroy our ability to trust in people or we will become very negative in our outlook towards people. Trusting and believing in people can bring great rewards even from the few.

Matt. 7:13-14 _____

Jn. 8:47 _____

God's love for His creatures caused Him to **dare** to put His trust in us; and it has paid big dividends to the saving of many souls. God is our example to follow. We, too, must put our trust in our fellow-human beings.

Jesus and Man's Faith in Him

Jesus came to earth as a Savior for man, not a Judge to condemn us for all eternity. He believed in us or He never would have come and died like He did! His great challenge was not only to be the sacrificial Lamb of God, but to get men to put their trust in Him and His ability to save them. It is obvious that His death would have been worthless without man's faith in Him.

Jn. 3:16 _____

Of all the beings in this universe, the one that man should obviously believe in should be God! But most people really do not trust in Him and show it by rejecting His Son and His Word. But Jesus had an even greater challenge to get people to believe in Him as the Son of God—even though He is Deity as well.

John 14:1 _____

John 14:11 _____

Jesus challenged men to believe in Him!

Matt. 8:13 _____

Matt. 9:28 _____

Matt. 21:22 _____

We all could say along with the father of the demon possessed son: *"Lord help my unbelief!"*

Mark 9:23-24 _____

Why is it so hard for people to put their full trust in Jesus' Deity, His ability to save, or His promises of eternal life? Why won't people believe in his intentions being good, as well as, His ability to carry out every promise? We believe the answer is a simple one—they simply do not have "love" in their hearts for God, nor His Son! The reason we say this is because love "believes all things!" It is eager and anxious to believe the best about a person—unless the facts show otherwise.

Are Christians to be Naive?

Should a Christian "fall for" everything a person says or believe everything he is told? We believe the answer is a positive "NO!" God does not expect us to be naive, but He does expect us to put trust in men.

1 John 4:1 _____

1 Thess. 5:21 _____

Eph. 4:14 _____

While Love helps us to believe the very best about a person; yet, facts can become know that will make it impossible to believe that his intentions are honorable. It is love that helps us to find a possible good explanation for things or peoples' actions until the full facts are made known. We should never want to believe the worst about a person. We should be slow to criticize, but quick to praise. We need to see the bright side, not the dark side. We are to be like little children—they tend to put trust in every one until their hearts are corrupted by men's untrustworthiness.

Prov. 29:20 _____

Christians certainly must not wink at sin, but we should strive to put the best interpretation on things as much as possible and not be too quick to assign wrong motives for others' actions or words.

The following Scriptures certainly show that we have to draw a line with some people concerning our trust in them.

1 John 4:1 _____

1 Thess. 5:21 _____

Eph. 4:14 _____

Concluding Thoughts

We want to believe all things, we strive to believe all things, and we tend to believe all things unless there are concrete reasons not to do so. But we are convinced that this expression is dealing more with believing in people even when they haven't been honest or dependable. They need someone to believe in them to motivate them to keep on trying to do things that are right. If God had not believed in us.....where would we be now? Thankfully He and His Son did have confidence in us and gave us an opportunity to have life and that more abundantly!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Love helps us to believe the best about people, not the worst.
- _____ 2. I should want to believe the best about people even though they are not perfect.
- _____ 3. People can so act that they are considered "untrustworthy."
- _____ 4. "Love covers a multitude of sins" means that we should accept people in spite of their sins.
- _____ 5. God has trusted in us even though we have proven ourselves to be untrustworthy.
- _____ 6. Of all the beings in this universe, the one that man should obviously believe in should be God.
- _____ 7. Believing in Jesus should be easier than believing in God.
- _____ 8. Is it correct to say: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief?"
- _____ 9. Christians are so "naive" and fall for everything others say.
- _____ 10. To be exhorted to "try the spirits" should tell us that it is not wrong to disbelieve some people.
- _____ 11. If we have confidence in people, we will wink at their sin.
- _____ 12. The irresponsible are in greater need of our faith in them than the responsible people.

Lesson Six

"A Person of Hope"

"Love Hopes all things!" This statement needs to be seen in contrast to what is often called "Murphy's Law"—*"If anything can go wrong, it will."* Another saying that has existed for a long time is similar—*"Always expect the worst and you won't be disappointed."* A wrong outlook on life or the future can contribute to one's misery and unhappiness. We need to have a positive outlook, not a negative one....thus, **"Love hopes all things."** Learn to expect the best outcome in life, and in our fellowman, and in the future; rather than, looking at the future with anticipating evil and foreboding.

The usual use of the word "hope" is that of expectation, anticipation, and confidence. In this context in 1 Cor. 13:4-8, it seems to be emphasizing how we look at things, people, and events. It emphasizes the need to expect the best things in life to happen, not the worst! We are called upon to put our trust in God, even though things may look bleak at the moment. Those who lack love usually anticipate the worst to happen and the future to be dim and foreboding.

Our Hope Needs to be in God, 1st!

We cannot have a more solid foundation to build on than having our hope set on God!

Ps. 78:7 _____

Joel 3:16 _____

The righteous have this hope, but the unjust man's hope will perish and is in vain; and so also is the hope of the hypocrite.

Prov. 10:28 _____

Prov. 11:7 _____

Job 8:13 _____

Our Hope Comes Through Christ

To Jesus, Heaven is a sure thing, a fact, a reality, a certainty, and therefore has no doubt about it. Jesus did not even use the word hope in regards to the Christian's future reward—it is a done deal! We hope for an ultimate reward in

heaven because we have not seen it nor experience it. Man hopes, but Jesus knew! Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension on high has given man an assurance upon which to build our hope.

Rom. 8:20-24 _____

Col. 1:5, 27 _____

2 Cor. 3:12 _____

1 Jn. 3:2-3 _____

1. This hope is based on the message of the Gospel (Col. 1:23).
2. Our assurance is in the resurrection of Christ (Acts 23:6).
3. It is a hope of being glorified some day (Col. 1:27).
4. It is called a "living" hope (1 Pet. 1:3).
5. It is laid up in heaven for us (Col. 1:5).
6. It is a hope of eternal life (Tit. 1:2).
7. We need to rejoice in this hope (Rom. 12:12).
8. Not be ashamed of this hope (Rom. 5:5).
9. We must lay hold onto this hope (Heb. 6:18).
10. We need to abound in this hope (Rom. 15:13).

Encouragement in this Hope

Please notice in the following passages the encouragement that is given to us concerning our hope as a Christian.

Rom. 8:28 _____

Rom. 8:32 _____

Rom. 8:35 _____

Rom. 8:37 _____

Phil. 4:13 _____

1 Pet. 2:5 _____

1 Pet. 2:9-10 _____

God wants His people to have a good outlook on life and what the future holds for us. Generally speaking, all should turn out well. We need to have a positive anticipation for the future ahead of us. Even if we suffer persecution or become martyrs for the cause of Christ, the future for us is bright! He definitely does not want us to be "dooms-dayers" or have a gloomy outlook on life, or to anticipate the worst.

Concluding Thoughts

Just as love "believes all things," "bears all things," "endures all things;" love also "hopes all things." With God on our side and for us, who can successfully be against us? Why shouldn't we have a good outlook on life and what the future has in store for us? It is to hope for the best for all. Notice the following translations in their efforts to understand this verse:

Moffatt—"always hopeful"

Berkley—"hopes under all circumstances"

Williams—"it keeps up hope in everything."

Simple English—"always hopes for the best."

Quote: *"The Christian will apply the principle of positive anticipation to all associations, public and private, to what is said and done in his presence and to what is said and done in his absence, especially, to those things which he has 'only heard.'"*

God has given us every reason to have a positive anticipation about people, events, and the future.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. A person can hold to "Murphy's Law" and still hope all things.
- _____ 2. It is great comfort to expect things to go wrong and thereby not be disappointed.
- _____ 3. It is wrong to have a negative outlook on life.
- _____ 4. Real hope is based on a firm belief and hope in God.
- _____ 5. The unjust man's hope will perish as well as the hypocrite's hope.
- _____ 6. Jesus never used the word for "hope" in all of His discourses.
- _____ 7. Hope is not something that we see or experience, but rather we anticipate such.
- _____ 8. Our hope is based on Jesus and the Gospel.
- _____ 9. Christians are told to abound in this hope.
- _____ 10. Our hope is a "dead" hope now, but will become a "living" hope when we get to heaven.
- _____ 11. God's promises make our hope "more real" if we believe in Him and His promises.
- _____ 12. A gloomy outlook on life is not what the Christian should have.

