

Does *Your* Love Fulfill The Law?

The woman's voice coming through the phone was emphatic and passionate, **"To obey God is simply to 'love'; for when you love, you have obeyed all his commands. Love fulfills the law!"**

Have you ever heard this before? This is the war cry of every liberal, feminist, and humanist who claims to be a Christian. Is it true? They wish to make a Pharisee out of every person who disagrees with them. It is astounding how much bold irreverence and disobedience to Scripture is applauded as long as it is from a "loving" person, or done for the "cause of charity". Since Satan's first tactic to deceive mankind was to masquerade as having a "loving" concern for their best interests; while he at the same time slandered God's love and intentions; we need to examine this issue in the light of Scripture, lest we be found no wiser than Eve. Well, why don't we put all emotion aside and look at what the Scripture says with a humble, teachable heart.

Mt 22:36 *Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, 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 neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Now, Jesus said one of two things:

#1 Either He was saying that God's law was based on (or hung from) Loving God first and our neighbor as ourselves; and therefore the individual commandments were meant to show us how to love properly in each situation; which would mean that the purpose of the law was simply to teach us **how** to love, and our sincere obedience to God's Law would be a demonstration of God's definition of love...Or...

#2 He was saying that the Jews really only had to be “**loving**” and God would have been pleased, whether or not they obeyed the specific commands. As long as they were “loving” or “nice” in their attitude toward others, they would have pleased God, even if they didn’t obey the law.

In deciding this question we first need to remember that when Jesus said, “**On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets**”; he was saying, “**It has always been this way**”, not just, “**From now on it will be this way**”. The “law and the prophets” is a term that applies to the whole Old Testament; and therefore what Jesus is teaching also applied to the Old Testament saints and Scriptures. Jesus also said this of the “Golden Rule”, which many believe *replaced* the Law of God.

Mt 7:12 *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

Notice that the “Golden Rule” so far from replacing the Law is actually said to **be** the Law – God’s Law and the prophets all taught this very rule; and Jesus is simply giving us the proper view of HIS Law. Yes, Jesus is the one who inspired Moses: and Jesus was the WORD made flesh. Jesus was the Law in the flesh. If you have any other concept of God’s Law, then you need to trade in the foundation stones of your doctrine. From this it is clear what God meant when the Bible says that Love fulfills the Law – it is the Law!

Since **#2 concept** is so popular i.e. *the idea that Jesus meant people only needed to be nice and loving, and this took the place of obeying the Law*; let us suppose it to be the case in the Old Testament. What if a man got the idea that he did not have to keep the Sabbath as long as he was nice to people, loved God, and was loving toward others. He understood that “love” fulfilled the Law, so he decided as long as he praised God, prayed and sang, and didn’t hurt anyone that he didn’t have to keep the Sabbath, which wasn’t hurting anyone – right? Well, fortunately for us, there was such a case in the Old Testament in

Numbers 15. A man who was caught gathering firewood on the Sabbath was set aside to see what God would say. God's verdict was that anyone who knowingly disobeys one of God's commandments, however small it may be; was, in fact, despising the Word of the Lord, and therefore should be stoned to death. This man was not said to be guilty of any other violations, but evidently was otherwise a good Israelite. So, no matter how much this man thought he loved God, God saw his deliberate disobedience to Scripture as the opposite of love. Rather than God seeing him as a nice guy, God saw him and his ideas as so dangerous to the congregation as a whole that God commanded them to stone him.

Another case may even be more pertinent to our subject. In 2 Samuel 6 we find King David and all Israel bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem with great joy, dancing, and singing out of **love** to the Lord. God had clearly instructed them to carry the Ark with staves through golden rings on the sides of the Ark, and not to touch it, lest they die (Numbers 4:15). On this occasion, however, due to carelessness and possibly assuming "**love fulfills the Law**"; they moved the Ark on an ox cart, like the heathen had done. They were full of **love** and **good intentions**, but they were not careful to obey the WORD of God. At one point the oxen stumbled, and out of **love** for the Ark, Uzzah, a Levite, put forth his hand and took hold of the Ark to protect it from falling. God, rather than seeing their love as fulfilling the Law, struck the man dead on the spot, as the Law warned in Numbers 4:15. If they really **loved**, as they should have, they would have carefully read God's instructions, and not presumed upon God's grace. Their carelessness manifested laziness and love for convenience - not love for God. Their actions, though "nice", "loving", "positive", etc. were seen as so dangerous that God made an example of Uzzah so others would not follow his error.

Isn't "being loving" also the way that Balaam instructed Balak to overcome Israel? "Just be loving to them, invite them to your love festivals, etc." This nearly caused the destruction

of Israel by God's wrath. Read Numbers 25 and see what God thought of all their "love".

Therefore, we need to rephrase our question. Instead of, "Does love fulfill the Law?" we need to ask, "Does *your* concept of love fulfill the Law?" "Does *your* definition of love fulfill the Law?" "Do *your* actions of love fulfill the Law?" "Does **YOUR** love fulfill the Law?" In God's mind, the love that fulfills the Law is the love that **obeys** the Law in the fear of God with the "spirit" or attitude expected by the Law-giver - benevolence.

Obedience is doing what you're told, when you're told, with the right attitude. This is exactly what Jesus did in His walk on earth. Jesus never broke the least of the Law's commandments. This was necessary for Him to be a spotless lamb for His atoning sacrifice. Jesus lived in perfect harmony with God's Law and never taught or acted contrary to God's Holy Word. Jesus even taught that any preacher who told people they could disregard any of God's commandments would himself be disregarded in the Kingdom of God.

***Mt 5:19** Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Well, what about in the New Testament? Is it different in the New Testament? What if someone got the idea that, as long as they were showing love, they didn't have to be honest. As long as they were nice; had good intentions; weren't hurting anyone; but actually helping others, did they have to obey God's Law? Well, fortunately we have just that case in Acts 5. Again, the verdict of the Lord was that love which did not obey, wasn't really love; therefore, Ananias and his wife were actually given the death penalty for lying to God's Spirit. Everybody knows that their actions *appeared* loving on the *outside*, and surely would help the needy; but, no matter how loving they appeared, God saw double motives and dishonesty. Much "love" today is of the same character; Just as "Jezebel" at the church in Thyatira was "all about love" – the sensual, emotional

kind which led to fornication – God said the whole church was going to be judged if they didn't get rid of her.

God saw their “nice” and “loving” actions as dangerous when they were undermining the Moral Law of God. He saw this precedent as so subtle and damaging to His kingdom that He had to make an example of them in a very harsh way. Satan's most subtle deception and most powerful weapon is to use Scriptural principles in the **wrong context**. In this example the previous verse (Mt 5:19) was literally fulfilled.

Charity In Context

All the virtues spoken of in the Scriptures lose their virtue and become vile when placed in any context other than within the realms of God's Moral Law and His kingdom. Charity or love is no exception. People often bring up the “fruit of the Spirit” as stated in Galatians:

Ga 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance

Every one of these can be perverted when placed in any context other than that which Paul was speaking of. Paul is speaking of these in the context of God's **Holy** Spirit, and God's own holiness and attributes. If you take love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance and place them in the world view of the homosexual, lesbian, pedophile, thief, rapist, drunkard, Satanist, Buddhist, Muslim, Communist, Athiest etc. they become perverted and often vile.

If you rebuke the homosexual in the name of the Lord, and warn him of impending judgment; he may respond that, *‘You lack grace and the fruit of the Spirit because you are not showing love, joy, peace, gentleness,’* etc. Does he have a valid point? Of course not; the fruit of the Spirit is only virtuous and valid in the context of God's Law. Violators of God's Law are under judgment; and warning them of such is the only love they are eligible for. Those who are under God's Law, within the boundaries of God's ways, and full of God's Holy Spirit are the

only ones who can exhibit the fruits of God's Spirit in a right way. When God's prophets, the Lord Jesus, and the Apostles, rebuked sin, called men to repentance, and warned of judgment, they were exhibiting **God's** love, patience, and goodness toward sinful men. Joy, peace, and faith can **only** be right when in a right relationship with God and His holy law; otherwise they all become presumptuous and deceitful. Only those who love God's Law can understand the character, relations, and applications of the fruit of the Spirit.

If there is a real nice and sweet lady in the church who is always positive and smiling and friendly; but dresses immodest and insists on showing herself in a provocative manner; how do we categorize her? Is she righteous because she is "nice", "sweet", "helpful", "friendly" and "positive"? If she is full of "faith", "joy", "love", "gentleness", "patience" etc; but dresses ungodly; is she full of the fruit of the Spirit? No. She has the heart of a harlot that is showing through in her dress; and she is an enemy of God's Kingdom and government. She is "nice" because this is part of her snare – part of her appeal – part of her evil power over those whom she wants to impress and possibly seduce. "Nice" does not equal "righteous". The one who reproves her according to the Scripture and thus "hurts her feelings" is not the unrighteous one or "weaker brother"; but is actually the one showing forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God. When this is done, you will probably see another side of her as well. Most who love to quote Galatians 5:22 & 23 have not noticed Ephesians 5:8-11

Eph 5:8 *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*

Love in any context outside God's holiness is ungodly. "Hate" in the proper context is actually consistent with "Love":

Psa 139:17 *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! 18 If I should count them, they are more*

in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. 19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. 20 For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. 21 Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? 22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

You cannot Love God without *hating* what opposes God. God is LOVE, yet He hates sin – your worst enemy. The virtue of “love” is determined by **what is loved** – the object of the affection. The Bible clearly says:

1 Jo 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

In every instance in this verse the Greek word for love is the same. The object of love is what determines its virtue. The same goes for “Joy” – why are you joyful? Do you find joy in something God calls sin? Why do you feel “Peace”? Have you made peace with the Devil or your flesh? Is the peace from an ungodly compromise? Are you being “Longsuffering” toward that which is forbidden of God? This simply makes you an enabler to rebellion against God. Are you being “Gentle” to please man contrary to God’s commands? Are you defining “Goodness” from God’s Word? Are you having “Faith” in man’s idea or in God’s holy commandments? Is your “Meekness” actually compromise with evil? Is your “Temperance” according to your definition or God’s? Are you being “temperate” in your use of drugs and alcohol by just having a few beers and cigs every day? You just smoke a little dope, and so you are temperate? Or maybe your temperance is unrighteous asceticism?

Can you see that all *virtues* must be defined by God through His Holy Word, and not by man’s limited perception? Do you realize that everything Jesus did or said was a manifestation of the fruit of God’s Spirit? Do you realize that everything taught

and commanded in Scripture is a revelation of the fruit of God's Holy Spirit? Do you understand that the best you can do in exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit is to diligently obey everything taught to you in the Bible?

When Jesus was rebuking harshly He was showing forth the fruit of God's Spirit in its proper context and definition. When Jesus was cleansing the temple He was showing the fruit of God's Spirit – He was **loving God first** and *His neighbor as himself*; He was finding His **joy** in God's righteousness, He was maintaining His **peace** with God by executing God's wrath in the realm of His God given jurisdiction; He was being **longsuffering** by just driving them out and not sending them straight to hellfire; He was being **gentle** by becoming a man and trying to teach them before judgment came; His **goodness** was seeking to bring them to repentance and save them from hell; He was showing forth **faith** in God's Word and Ways; His **meekness** was seen in submission to His Father's will; His **temperance** was seen in the withholding of God's wrath and just giving them a good rebuke for the time being. If you want to truly show forth the fruit of the Spirit, then follow and emulate Jesus and his chosen apostles.

1Co 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

Why did Paul say this? Because he had just finished demonstrating to them how their supposed "knowledge" was completely contrary to God's will and way. Paul understood God much better than they, and so in order for them to be led of God's Spirit, they are instructed to follow the example of one who knew God's Spirit *better*. This applies to us today! You will not improve on Jesus or the apostles; but will be doing really good if you simply follow and obey what they taught and exemplified.

In the realm of the unrighteous and ungodly rebel, God's Spirit is angry – not loving. It was God's Spirit who struck down Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. Ungodliness is a wrong relationship with God, and unrighteousness is a wrong

relationship with your fellow man. Listen to how God feels about this:

Ro 1:18 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

We can only experience God's love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, temperance, etc...when we are in submission to His will – when we are living in His favor.

Jas 4:6 *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God.*

1Pe 5:5 *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God,*

You are only eligible for God's grace when you humble yourself before Him, and seek to do your best in obeying His Word. The love of God to those outside His will and favor is that of calling them to repentance and warning them of impending doom if they don't. Our relationship with mankind must be the same if we are to exhibit God's love. We can only show love, joy, peace, to those who are seeking God with a humble heart. To all others our love is to call them to repentance and warn them of hell if they don't.

God's love is a matter of attaching proper value and priority to the *objects of love*, and then relating to that *object* according to the attached value in the light of what is best for that *object* in relation to the good of the universe as a whole. God loves man more than the animals and plants He created. This means He has attached a greater value to man than animals and plants, and He acts toward them according to what is best for them in relation to the good of the universe as a whole. The good of the universe as a whole is dependent on truth and righteousness being upheld and enforced. Though God values man highly, He has placed a higher value on holiness and righteousness. If man violates holiness and righteousness, God brings judgment and punishment; because man is not more valuable than holiness

and righteousness. If man wants to maintain his value in the eyes of God, he must support holiness and righteousness, otherwise he is devaluing himself and God will ultimately cast him away forever unless he falls in line with what is good for God's universe as a whole. If I had a cow that was supporting the good of the farm as a whole, she would be a valuable cow; but if she was continually trying to harm me or my children, she would be sold or eaten. A cow has intrinsic value, but they destroy that when they are rebellious against their lord and master. The same is true of mankind in God's kingdom. God wants to show you love, joy, peace, etc.; but He cannot and will not when you militate against things higher and more valuable than you are. Man is not the most valuable thing to God, *and he needs to figure that out fast.*

Charity or Carnality?

God's love is much different than what most men call love. Carnal men base their love on their value system. Their value system says that the happiness of man is the highest "good". Therefore to "love" is to do whatever makes people **happy**. They believe that they have the right to pursue their own happiness as the highest good; and must not interfere with others doing the same. However, man's happiness is not the highest good in God's eyes, and he has sacrificed man's happiness many times for a much higher cause. It is a shock and offense to most people to find out that they are not the biggest thing going, and that the world doesn't revolve around them. This is manifested in how they treat God when things go wrong. Look at this verse and tell me who the "loving" person is:

Pro 28:4 *They that forsake the Law, praise the wicked, but such as keep the Law, contend with them*

Who is the **"negative"** person? Who is the **"compassionate"** and **"loving"** person? Well, it depends on whose value system you use. The wicked will claim the person who has forsaken the Law as the loving person; but the righteous will say that the one contending is the one who loves God and man with a true love. The wicked see the contentious

person as "interfering" with another's right to pursue their own happiness, and do that which seems right in their own eyes.

God's love is a love that sees what is best for his entire universe, not what is pleasant to one at the expense of another. God's Law is a "win, win" situation that has potential for everyone to win; but man's ways are a "win, lose" situation where someone gains at another's expense. Any compromise or violation of God's Law causes someone to suffer loss, and thus is not a loving move. What was it that the Father saw in the Son that pleased him most? Listen to God's proclamation as he crowns the Son:

***Heb 1:8-9** Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows*

"God is love" was still true when God destroyed the earth with a flood and burned up Sodom. His love is not based on man's happiness being the highest good; but on the love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. The word iniquity comes from the Greek, anomia, which means "Lawlessness" and "anti-law". So, the love that fulfills the Law, really fulfills God's Law of righteousness. That is why Romans 8:4 says the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in the life of a believer who walks not according to carnal appetites, but according to the leading of the Holy Spirit within him. This is true love; and this is the real fruit of the Spirit. Obeying the specifics of God's Law was meant to expand your perspective of love to fit God's. The New Covenant is God's Moral Law written on our hearts – appropriate, mature, and divine love.

***1Jo 5:2-3** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.*

***2Jo 6** And this is love, that we walk after his commandments.*

***1Jo 2:15** Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

In contrast to this:

Joh 15:19 *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

...so, the world loves the worldlings -- are they fulfilling God's Law by their love? No.

...so, we are commanded to not love the world; are we in this violating the Law of God? No.

Charity or Conspiracy?

It is amazing how "loving" Absalom was when trying to win the hearts of Israel away from his father, David. He was the picture of "love", but it was only love of revenge and his own ambitions that drove him to act that way. **The motive of love is all important.**

The false prophet will usually appear more "loving" to the carnal man than the true prophet will – just ask old Ahab (II Chron. 18). The liberal compromiser is not grieved at your sin, pride, vanity, or worldliness; so naturally he will appear more "loving" – he is a good politician, and that's all. Concern about the leaven in your life, and its potential effect on his own family and church, as well as on your soul, is absent; because it doesn't affect his agenda. He is like the quack who gives you a clean bill of health, while ignoring your highly contagious disease; because he doesn't want to hurt the relationship – His "love" is fatal. ***Satan could afford to be really nice to Eve, but she couldn't afford to be nice to him.***

You see, the approach of the false prophet is to "allure through the desires of the flesh"; to "promise liberty"; and he "speaks great swelling words" (II Peter 2) to flatter and draw you into his error. This all sounds **"loving and kind"**; and that is why carnal men, who choose not to endure sound doctrine, will run to these false teachers with their humanistic "love" gospel (II Tim 4:3-4). The false prophet always sympathizes with the rebel, the worldly, the independent individualist, the feminist,

etc. The true preacher expects men to repent and align themselves with truth and righteousness – **but this is love**, because this is what is best for them and brings glory to God. However, no matter how nice one says it; and no matter how much sacrifice one puts into helping men do it; **“repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance”** does not have the “taste of love” that carnal men are looking for. They will say in their hearts, **“I want someone to love me, not try to change me”**. Therefore we see why “come as you are”, “we will accept you as you are”, and “God’s love is unconditional” are such popular concepts today. **They want God to be pleased, but they don’t want to please God** – Cain’s type of love. Cain brought to God what Cain wanted, and was angry when God was not pleased. He wanted God to be pleased, but he didn’t want to do what it took to please Him.

No Christian was ever persecuted for being “loving” in the eyes of carnal men; but for *truly loving* in speaking the truth in love and calling men to repentance. The Bible doesn’t say, “Love God and Love man”; rather it says, “love God first with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and then love your neighbor as yourself - not “as God”. Therefore, if I expect myself to love and obey God; and I love you as I love myself; it is only consistent to expect you to love and obey God also. Did Jesus expect men to love and obey God above all? Did the apostles expect men to love and obey God above all else? Of course they did. They loved their neighbor as themselves. By the way, have you ever looked at the Scripture Jesus was quoting?

Lev 19:17 *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. 18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*

Charity without Chastity!

“Charity” is the pseudo-spiritual cloak behind which the fleshly man hides while watering down the Faith once delivered to the saints. May God help all true saints to cry out loud and

clear; **“When charity has lost chastity it ceases to be a virtue!”** Charity without chastity is seduction. To be chaste is to be “pure from sensual appetites, modest, simple in style, refined, immaculate, holy and pure”. The idea is that the carnal appetites are crucified by the believer to produce a life separate from the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. It is a life stemming from a heart that loves righteousness and hates Lawlessness. When “charity” has lost this quality, it is simply humanistic love that opposes the love of God. This explains why men often call good evil and evil good – their value system is the opposite of God’s.

1Jo 5:2,3 *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.*

Is it any wonder that John gave this criterion for determining whether we *are really loving* our brethren; **“By this we know we love the brethren, when we love God and keep his commandments”**. John knew all about “Jezebel” and her “love” in the New Covenant church at Thyatira. He had encountered Diotrephes’ good intentions. He knew all about the Gnostics who touted “love” as the justification for their disobedience to the teachings of Christ - *even unto fornication*. It was this John who said in I Jn. 2:4, ***“He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”***

We are seeing Jezebels on every hand – pastor’s wives who are immodest, painted, fixed in the latest fashion with gold, pearls and costly array all around us. They act “sweet” and “kind”; but are also impudent and assertive. They are a continual show to be sure. It wasn’t that long ago that their “fashion” would have been called the “attire of a harlot” even in this nation. Their bold, unchaste conduct better fits the description of the harlot in Proverbs 7, than that of a meek, modest, quiet, chaste, shamefaced, sober-minded, submissive, spiritual Christian lady called for to be the pastor’s wives in the New Testament.

These libertine Christians misinterpret Romans 14 so that the god-fearing man becomes the “weaker brother”, and the licentious is the “stronger brother”; and so that everyone can do as they please and nobody can *judge* them. They ignore the historic context of Jew and Gentile relations along with what the Apostle commands at the end of the previous chapter, which totally destroys their false interpretation.

Ro 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

These same people misinterpret I John 4:18 to say that the “stronger” believers with “perfect” love don’t fear God; but only those “weaker” brothers do. This is such a wresting of St. John’s meaning that only Satan could invent. The word in John means “dread”, not the proper and wise “fear of the Lord”, which is the “beginning of wisdom” Pr 9:10.

1Jo 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

When you are living HOLY, which means your LOVE is COMPLETE by walking in the Spirit and fulfilling the righteousness of the law; then you don’t DREAD meeting God; but long for it.

Charity or Quackery?

Paul, in describing the actions of the false teachers in Corinth, suggests in II Cor. 11:20 that if a man “exalts himself”, he is committing the same basic sin against his neighbor as if he “brought him into bondage, devoured him, took of him, or smote him on the face”- **He is gaining at their expense.** If you have ever been in the presence of one who is boasting and exalting himself above you, you have surely felt the smack in the face, the robbery, the devouring, and the bondage to vain competition that it brings. The people of Corinth were allowing themselves to suffer in this way; because, due to their immature minds, they were impressed with this vain show and carnal boasting. The carnal man feels secure with an arrogant, dogmatic, worldly wise man for a leader.

Pr 14:16 *A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.*

They were happier to introduce their worldly friends to this slick false apostle, than to the true apostle, who did not value the vanities of this world. Paul came not to them with “excellency of speech” or “enticing words of man’s wisdom”. People who are spiritually immature will gravitate to the boaster and the one excelling in carnal pursuits who sets himself as a spiritual leader, though they suffer bondage by it. Yet, they will flee from the true spiritual leader who is teaching them to observe apostolic faith and practice, since their false teacher calls *that* bondage. Just read Corinthians. Paul had abased himself among them to walk the road of humility; but his opponents labeled this a weakness. “Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own...” **The point is that the Corinthians couldn’t figure out who loved them – Paul or the false teacher.** Because they were too immature to recognize true love, we find Paul saying, ***“The more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved”***

If I live a chaste, humble life, then I love you by setting a proper example for you and convicting you to also live this way. I am not provoking you to excel in worldly pursuits, but only in spiritual graces by my example and teaching. I love you by honoring you and protecting your dignity in that I am holding myself in check and not exalting myself over you in the areas where I may be more fortunate. Everyone has strong points and weak points. If I keep my strong points veiled in your presence, then you will not feel the need to flaunt your strong points, and we can just love one another without competing to protect our dignity. In fact, we are free to praise each other’s strong points.

Pr 27:2 *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth;*

However, if I dress up in costly array, brag on my accomplishments, boast of my riches and abilities or (in the

woman's case) paint, polish, and perm in the latest fashion, I am not loving my neighbor for a number of reasons:

1. I am being a bad example, and example is the strongest moral influence.

2. I am leading you into the bondage of a carnal, self-glory, race and competition.

3. I may be attracting the eye of your mate to desire me or defrauding and offending their thought life by my immodest dress or conduct.

4. I may be causing your wife to be discontent with the money you make when I flaunt or boast of my vacations, possessions, fun, etc.

5. I may be building dangerous appetites in your children to dress up, live it up, gratify unholy desires, pursue pleasure or vanity, etc. I am leading others into my bondage to the flesh.

6. I am ultimately gaining at another's expense and loss. I am insulting your dignity by exalting my strong points.

7. I am promising liberty, and promoting a prosperity gospel, when in fact I am enslaved by my own pride. I am promoting the fruits of pride and worldly values.

...And all the time I am smiling, speaking sweet words – yea, swelling words of vanity (2Pe 2:18). All the time I am being so “sweet” and “friendly”, and telling how much I “love”. This Charity is quackery. The worst part of it all is that this is done by those who attempt to represent Christ to a lost and dying world. God hates it.

Any time I exalt myself, I smack you in the face. This is not love. The world sees these pleasure and glory seeking “Christians” and the convicting work of the Holy Spirit is thwarted because sinners justify their broad-road pursuits by the “Christian's” example. It is obvious to them that you live by the same values they do – though you claim to add Christ to it. And indeed much doctrine today simply teaches that all they have to do is add Christ to their present way, and they are sure for heaven without changing from the broad road to the narrow road.

1Jo 3:18 *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*

Charity or Charm?

If you read the Scripture, you will find it was the false prophets whom “all men spoke well of”, because they spoke “smooth” things that sympathized with the people’s sinful attitudes. They made them “feel” loved by God, by their “ear tickling fables”, though they had not fully submitted and obeyed God’s Word. This has always been one of Satan’s best tactics – **the false libertine prophet** (2 Peter 2; 2 Timothy 4; 1 John; Jude, etc.).

2Pe 2:19 *While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption*

If I speak good things, yet live wrong; I am simply leading you to believe good things while you live wrong. This is the most subtle form of deception – To convince you that your **performance** does not affect your **position** with God – “**Ye shall not surely die.**”

This applies to many Christian books on the market. Much of the contents may be profitable, but the context is poison – I mean the connection to the author’s doctrine and lifestyle on the whole.

Ro 16:18 *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

The good words in the book endear you to the author so you will swallow his entire package – *rat poison is 99% good food*. Love is that which provokes me to urge you onward to reach your potential, not by my boasting of myself, but by washing you with the Word of God, and teaching you true doctrine. Yes, true doctrine will spur you on to perfection, whereas Antinomian heresy (*Unconditional eternal security*) only dulls you down and makes you feel secure, thereby putting you into greater danger than you were already in. True doctrine sets you to overcoming, enduring, holding fast, humbling down,

running with patience, and laying hold on eternal life by a living faith in the **conditional** love and grace of God.

Joh 15:10 *IF ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*

Maybe this section should be called “Charity or Charmin” (as in, “Don’t squeeze the Charmin”). Many people are proud to be “softies”; but that is not “true Christian love”, only misplaced priorities and *jelly spine syndrome*. Read how Nehemiah loved his nation so much that he dealt severely with transgressors who hindered God's blessings on the nation. Read how much Jesus loved God's house when he drove out the moneychangers. ***When Jesus returns to rule with a rod of iron, it will be in the purest love.***

Carnal minded people often live for the acceptance and safety of their “camp”, and don’t look at truth objectively. They cannot decide right from wrong objectively, because they can’t get around the real question in their heart: **“What about me?”** The big question of **“how will this affect my wellbeing?”** is so intrinsically connected to their perspective of right and wrong, that it becomes their acid test for life’s issues. The very beam in their eye that blinds them to matters of right and wrong is the beam called “self-preservation”. They are so concerned about “feelings”, and so prone to “feel” their way through issues, rather than “thinking” through them, that they interpret doctrine and actions according to what they deem “best”; rather than what God says is “right”. You need to love from the heart; but only if at the same time, you are thinking with your head according to Bible principles with “self” dethroned and Christ enthroned in your heart and mind. The Word of God must be the acid test for life’s issues, not your feelings or the feelings of others. *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”* (Lu 14:26, 27) Jesus knew that only those who

live and love by eternal principles, rather than feelings, will make it in the Christian life.

Charity or Sensuality?

We know that the Spirit of God, who labors to write God's Law in our hearts, and thereby sheds abroad God's Love in our hearts, is not the same as the sensual spirit of many churches. The Apostles warned of this difference numerous times in various ways.

Jude 1:19 *These be they who **separate** themselves, **sensual**, having **not** the **Spirit**.*

Many today want "pastorless" churches where there is no leadership, order, structure, or form; but all is "spontaneous", "led of the spirit", and left to each individual's feeling and impulse. They think this is spiritual and that this is what the Holy Spirit desires; but God's Word shows that when God organized worship and spiritual instruction, it was very orderly and strict with properly ordained leaders. God's Law was full of order with attention to detail, and whenever there was revival among God's people, it was always in the form of getting BACK to the "due order" of God's Law and following the instructions more carefully. The *feely squeely* movement ignores Paul's command that all things be done "*decently and in order*". The early church was set up in the order of the Jewish synagogue, and in that God ordained order you would not find the casualness, rash, impulsive, spontaneous, sensual, pastor-less, and humanistic worship that many are sporting today as "true spirituality". They have separated themselves from God's Spirit of orderliness and are following their appetites, thinking that this is the Spirit of God talking to them; and they glory in their disorderliness, lack of structure, lack of leadership, and lack of submission to order.

Php 3:19 *Whose **end is destruction**, whose **God is their belly**, and whose **glory is in their shame**, who **mind earthly things**.*

Charity with Character.

1Jo 2:3-5 And hereby we do know that we know him, **if we keep his commandments**. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, **is a liar, and the truth is not in him**. 5 But whoso **keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected**: hereby know we that we are in him.

Ro 8:4 That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit

Ro 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.

Yes! Love fulfills the Law, because true love indeed fulfills the Law by making us **“doers of the righteousness of the Law”** – we are speaking of God’s eternal Moral Law presented to the Jews in the Old Covenant and written on Christian’s hearts in the New Testament. We New Covenant believers are called to prepare for Christ’s Kingdom and live under the “Law of Christ” (Ga 6:2) – fulfilling the spirit and intent of God’s Law through Moses. We are now the true worshippers who worship God in spirit and in truth seeking for spiritual and eternal riches; not just physical worship in carnal ordinances for temporal blessings. We are called to live by God’s standard of action and attitude. Attitude never takes the place of action – you must have both.

Yes! Biblical Love works no ill to his neighbor; but **your concept** of love may be doing exceeding ill to your neighbor – *Spiritually and eternally!* Jesus told His disciples to teach, baptize, and teach the converts to observe **ALL** things whatsoever he commanded – **not just go love everybody**. Why? Because every ordinance and principle taught in the Word of God teaches you **HOW TO LOVE PROPERLY**. You don’t know how to love until you are doing it God’s way! Until you are obeying every command and precept in God’s Word, your “love” is lacking important ingredients that keep it from fulfilling God’s Law.

1Jo 2:5 *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected (completed)*

The seven churches of revelation had different ideas about love. We need to observe well, and not emulate what Christ rebuked. Notice that those who were **not** rebuked, were suffering persecution for their love. Many today who think they love Christ are really in love with their denomination, ism, dogma, or lifestyle – all which they wish to defend with sanctified sophistry. Those who truly love Christ, also love all truth, and hunger and thirst after righteousness. They are willing to leave the leeks and garlics of old Egypt and “tough-it” for the sake of following truth. The world’s reaction to this move out of the “camp” or “herd” is usually some form of persecution.

Heb 13:13 *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come*

Have you ever seen the parents who just “loved” their children so much they never told them “no” or disciplined them? The Bible calls this “hate”, not love (Pr 13:24). The Bible says this will send your child to Hell, not lead them to Heaven (Pr. 23:13,14). Now, if the Bible says that love works no ill to his neighbor, then is the Scriptural use of the rod of correction working ill? I suppose that depends on what your value system says – ask the rebellious child who hasn’t received his needed share. The rebel will say spanking is working ill; but God says the neglect of spanking is working ill. Do you see how love can easily be turned around to the opposite of what God intended, and how carnal minded men will immediately latch on to the fallacious meaning? The person who spansks is the loving one in God’s estimation – if, of course, they are practicing **both** the “letter” and the “spirit” of the Law.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” – Jesus

Love has priorities. Jesus said to love our enemies; but not more than we love our Lord, children, wife, neighbor, friends,

faith, etc. Love in proper priority will help you to understand the relationship between God ordained discipline (on family, church and state levels) and God's love and mercy. **"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."** Love without proper priorities will end up supporting all sorts of foolishness: From protecting animals to the detriment of people, to protecting criminals while aborting babies. All this stupidity is excused in the name of "love".

Obedying every principle and command in "The Faith once delivered to the saints" is the only definition of "love" that can be used in the Bible verses that speak of love. If this love is not your love, then your love is not what God commands, nor are you in a position to judge others as "unloving" based on your perspective. Your judgment is not mature yet.

Some have said that "agape" love is what we need; however, this is a myth. "Agape" is a Greek noun; and "Agapao" is the verb form of the same word. Observe these two words in the following verse:

1Jo 2:15 *"Love <agapao> not the world, neither the things that are in the world . If any man love <agapao> the world, the love <agape> of the Father is not in him."*

It is clear that what gives love virtue is the **object** of that love, not the presence of affection. Love is virtue or vice depending on its object. If your "agape" is set on sin and evil, then your "agape" is sinful and evil.

Col 3:2 *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*

Of Charity and Church

Most people judge the love of a church group by how much acceptance they feel from the people; but this is not right thinking. We should judge the love of a church group by:

1. How much they are trying to please God, and...

2. How much they are sincerely trying to help others be pleasing to God.

1Co 13:6 *Charity...rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth*

Usually, when I have heard people complain that a group is unloving, I have later learned two things:

1. The person complaining was a “taker” and not a “giver” – they didn’t do much loving, but expected to receive plenty; and
2. The person needed to change some things that they were unwilling to change. So they concluded this church lacked love because they didn’t feel *unconditional acceptance*. The people wanted to help them with a need in their life; however, this offended them, because they didn’t want to acknowledge a need in their life – and if they did, “*they could take care of it themselves just fine, thank you*”.

If we, as professing Christians, love Christ first, then our church will diligently seek to please Christ and preserve his Faith and Practice. Our drive will then be to make man pleasing to God. But, if our love is to please and “win” people; then our church will be geared to attract people, entertain them, and make them feel comfortable and accepted - and “Christ” will be “seasoned” to be more palatable and pleasing to man.

I’ll tell you who the unloving church is:

- It is the church that draws you into a fashion race by exalting themselves in this way.
- It is the church where your husband has to be careful where his eyes go because of the immodesty.
- It is the church where your wife is encouraged to fix and flaunt at your expense.
- It is the church where there is not a standard of holiness upheld for all members equally.
- It is the church where the leaders don’t meet Bible qualifications.

- It is the church which labels the God fearing conscientious believer as “the weaker brother”; and justifies the liberal who sports his “Christian liberty” to live ungodly.

- It is the church where “worldly gain” is trumpeted as God’s blessing to the faithful.

- It is the church where the youth group tears down the chastity you teach your young person at home.

- It is the church where people who carefully obey all the teachings of God’s Word are called "Pharisees".

- It is the church that is in love with “pleasing people” more than pleasing Christ.

- It is the church who labels as “unloving” those parents who back away from fellowship in this environment because it tears away at the godly fabric of their faith and home order.

May we not become uncharitable towards those who malign us for teaching the truth.

“Charity suffereth long and is kind”

Ro 3:31 *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, **we establish the law.***