

Studies in Christianity Christian Love #19

S#1.

Love Bears All Things

S#2.

Text : **I Corinthians 13: 1-8 ; Matthew 18: 15-22**

A. After 9 consecutive weeks of reading **I Cor. 13**, I hope you have it memorized.

1. How can we have so many lessons on the same text ?
 - a. Actually, though we won't, the number of lessons could be multiplied.
 - b. Whole books have been written on this subject and on this specific text.
2. One's relationship with God depends up his ability to love as God defines love.
I John 4: 8 – The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. S#3.
3. God then demands that those who have a relationship with Him be like Him.
Matt. 22: 37 – “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'” S#4.
4. This love that God requires is not just a feeling, it is observable in one's life.
John 13: 35 – By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” S#5.

B. Many Christians have come to have an inaccurate concept of Christian conduct.

1. We often think we are okay as long as we avoid drastic violations of social mores.
 - a. Crimes of violence (rape and murder)
 - b. Robbery beyond small items (*west coast cities don't prosecute under \$700*)
 - c. Not abusing drugs (*After one becomes addicted it is a sickness.*)
2. One establishes virtue by conformity to more stringent social norms.
 - a. Dress in acceptable ways and use acceptable words.
 - b. Don't do things considered immoral. (*unfaithful to spouse*)
 - c. Don't smoke or get drunk.

C. Christian conduct requires that one abstain from sin, but focuses more in the way we treat each other. S#6.

1. The way we treat each other is a manifestation of the condition of our hearts.
2. Love is the lifestyle that God followers are required to live.
Eph. 5:3 – Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

3. The problem is, Christians are often more comfortable with sins of the heart than they are with sins of the flesh.
 - a. Few view the absence or the withholding of love as sin as long as there is no disrespect or confrontation.
 - b. Some try to turn some sins of the heart into virtues.
 - 1) *"I'm not rude; I just tell it like it is."*
 - 2) *"I'm not harsh, I'm just a straight shooter."*
 - 3) *"I'm keepin' it real."*
- *4. God expects more out of His followers than is common in the culture.

D. Our lessons spent on love are well spent.

1. We are learning what love looks like when lived out in one's life.
I Cor. 13: 4 – Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, **5** does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, **6** does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; **7** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
2. This lesson will focus on the first of four concepts expressed in **Vs. – 7** :
Vs. – 7 – bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

E. The outline for this lesson is simple :

S#8.

1. What does it mean to “bear?”
2. What are “all things?”
3. What does wisdom teach ?
4. What effect does it have ?

I. What does it mean to “bear” all things ?

S#9.

A. This is not a common verb in the N.T.

S#10.

1. “stego” is only used four other times in the N.T.
2. All five times it is used only by the Apostle Paul.

B. In **Vs-7** is translated in different ways in the various versions of the N.T.

1. NIV — (Love) It always protects
2. TLB — (Love) If you love someone you will be loyal
3. NLB — (Love) Love never gives up

4. NCV — (Love) patiently accepts all things
5. Most common translation is : (Love) bears all things — NASB, ESV, KJV

C. It is also commonly interpreted in two differing ways :

1. Just accept whatever happens or whatever anyone does to you.
 - a. Paul uses bear up under in **I Thes. 3: 1, 5** ... When we could endure no longer
 - b. This would not seem logical in **13: 7** because of the last phrase in the verse
 - c. Those who favor this interpretation tend to paint Christians as doormats.
2. The second interpretation is that love tends to cover over the sins of others.

D. The actual meaning of “*stegō*” lends itself to the second interpretation. S#11.

1. to protect or keep by covering, to preserve
2. to cover over with silence; to keep secret; to hide, conceal:
3. by covering to keep off (something which threatens), to bear up against, hold out against, and so to endure, bear, forbear (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*)

E. “*stegē*” is the noun from of “*stegō*” and it is translated as “Roof.” S#12.

1. **Mark 2: 4** – Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying.
2. Compare : **Matt. 8: 8 ; Luke 7:6**
3. THEREFORE, we will interpret the verse based upon the actual first meaning of “*stego*.” **to protect or keep by covering, to preserve**

II. What does the Holy Spirit mean by “all things?” S#13.

A. Vs-7- bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. S#14.

1. There is no limit to love. Love NEVER gives up.
2. The negative effects of the object of one's love do not have a cumulative effect because “**love does not take into account a wrong suffered.**” (**Vs-5**)
 - a. Every time is the first time the offense has been committed.
 - b. Love forgives an infinite number of times. (**Matt. 18: 22 ... 70 x 7**)

B. “All things” is not necessarily to be taken literally. S#15.

1. **Hyperbole**, from a Greek word meaning "excess," is a figure of speech that uses extreme exaggeration to make a point or show emphasis.

2. The literal meaning of “**all things**” is inconsistent with the rest of scripture,
 - a. For Example : **I Cor. 5** ... The Apostle instructs them to purge sin.
 - b. **Acts 16: 16ff** ... The Apostle cast the demon out of the girl following them.
3. When a brother is observed in sin, we are obligated to deal with it, not endure.
 - a. **I Cor. 5**
 - b. **Matt. 18:15ff** ... If your brother sins, go and show him his fault.
 - c. **I John 5:16–17** ... Pray for a brother who is sinning
4. Thus, when viewed in total, **Vs–7** makes it clear that “**all things**” is not literal
 - a. “**believes all things**” no one is to believe false doctrine or false prophets
 - b. “**hopes all things**” many things can be hoped for, but certainly not all.
 - c. “**endures all things**” **I Thes. 3** .. Timothy was sent because Paul couldn’t endure

III. What does wisdom teach about covering over a brother’s faults?

S#16.

A. The N.T. teaches that Christians must cover the sins of others.

1. **I Pet. 4: 8** – Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another,
because love covers a multitude of sins. S#17.
2. Part of “Agape” is the willingness to overlook the faults of others.

B. The bible book of the Proverbs provides wisdom on how to live a happy and peaceful life as God would have it.

1. **Prov. 10: 12** – Hatred stirs up strife,
But love covers all transgressions. S#18.
2. **Prov. 11: 9** – With his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor,
But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.
 - a. A wound made by a sword will heal, but the cuts of a sharp tongue fester.
 - b. *Many speak unkindly in anger and then expect the words to be forgotten when their anger subsides, but such words often eat like a cancer.*
 - c. **Prov. 11: 9** – He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets,
But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.
* *NEVER destroy a trust.*
3. **Prov. 17: 9** – He who conceals a transgression seeks love,
But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends. S#19.
4. **Prov. 20: 19** – He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets,
Therefore do not associate with a gossip.

5. **Prov. 26: 20** – For lack of wood the fire goes out, S#20.
 And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down.
21 Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire,
 So is a contentious man to kindle strife.
22 The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels,
 And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.

IV. What effects does “concealing or covering” all things have on one’s life? S#21.

A. It will prevent one from gossiping about a brother. S#22.

B. We won’t feel we have to volunteer everything we know about them.

1. Jesus could have told everything about everyone, but he did not.
 * **John 4** ... He demonstrated this ability with the Samaritan woman at the well.
2. The longer we are together and the closer we become and the more we learn about each other so the more important it becomes that trust be maintained.
3. *When we dig up old dirt on a brother, we help the devil. The devil is a grave digger. He goes about digging up that which the blood of Christ has covered over.*

C. Having trust in our brethren will enable us to grow spiritually.

1. We have to trust each other in order to share our burdens.
Gal. 6: 1 – Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. **2** Bear one another’s burdens. and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. S#23.
2. We have to have the confidence not to hide our sins from each other.
James 5: 16 – Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. S#24.

D. This kind of love will motivate us to protect a brother’s reputation. S#25.

1. Love always protects. If a brother is attacked, we defend him.
2. **Mark 2: 23f** .. Jesus defended His disciples when they were accused of sin.

E. Love covers over the sins of a brother, but love does not leave a brother in sin.

1. Adolf Van Harnack very poetically wrote : (liberal scholar avoid his doctrine)
 “Love throws a cloak of silence over what is displeasing in another person.”
2. **Matt. 15: 18 ff** ... Love requires we do our best to win a brother back for Satan.

F. Love changes our entire lifestyle.

1. It changes the way we think about others.

2. It changes the way we interact with people.
3. It is the foundation of our relationship with God.
 - a. Nothing we give to God is acceptable if it is not motivated by love.
 - b. God wants obedience, but because we love Him, not because we fear Him.

CONCLUSION :

A. Love motivates us to self-sensor before we speak, by asking :

S#26.

1. Is this something I would say to the person if they were standing here ?
2. Will it benefit the person I am talking about ?
3. Will it benefit the person I am talking to ?
4. Would I want someone to talk about me in a similar way ?
5. Does this promote unity ?
6. Is telling this violating a trust ?
7. Will telling this glorify God ?

B. I want to close with a famous little story that illustrates love. :

Back in the 1650s Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector of England. A young soldier under his command had been sentenced to death. On the day that he was to be executed the young girl to who he was engaged appeared before Lord Cromwell and made an impassioned plea for his life, but to no avail. The young man was to be executed that evening when the curfew bell sounded. However, when the sexton pulled the rope the bell made not sound. The young girl had climbed the belfry and wrapped herself around the clapper so it could not strike the bell. Her body was bruised and her hands were smashed, but she did not turn loose until the clapper stopped swinging. Though bruised and bleeding she managed to climb down to meet those waiting to perform the execution. When she explained what she had done Cromwell commuted the young soldier's sentence. A poet beautifully reported it as follows : "At his feet she told her story, showed her feet all bruised and torn, and her sweet young face all haggard with the anguish it had worn and his heart was touched with such pity. With his eyes at misty light, he said, "Go. Your lover lives; the curfew will not ring tonight."

INVITATION :

Love bears, covers, protects

Love died to cover over your sins ... How will you respond ? **S#27.**

S#28. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**I Corinthians 13: 1-8**

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, **5** does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, **6** does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; **7** bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

Matthew 18: 15-22

15 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. **16** "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. **17** "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. **18** "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

19 "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. **20** "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" **22** Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.