

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHURCH

Why Should I Be Involved In Church?

Rules for Christian Living

Romans 12:20 Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”

Christianity goes beyond non-resistance to active benevolence. It does not destroy its enemies by violence but converts them by love.

It feeds the enemy when he is hungry and satisfies his thirst, thus heaping live coals of fire on his head. If the live coal treatment seems cruel, it is because this idiomatic expression is not properly understood. To heap live coals on a person's head means to make him ashamed of his hostility by surprising him with unconventional kindness.

Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Darby explains the first part of this verse as follows: “If my bad temper puts you in a bad temper, you have been overcome of evil.”

The great black scientist, George Washington Carver, once said, “I will never let another man ruin my life by making me hate him.” As a believer he would not allow evil to conquer him.

But overcome evil with good. It is characteristic of Christian teaching that it does not stop with the negative prohibition but goes on to the positive exhortation. Evil can be overpowered with good. This is a weapon we should use more frequently.

Stanton treated Lincoln with venomous hatred. He said that it was foolish to go to Africa in search of a gorilla when the original gorilla could be found in Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln took it all in stride. Later Lincoln appointed Stanton as war minister, feeling that he was the most qualified for the office. After Lincoln was shot, Stanton called him the greatest leader of men. Love had conquered!

The Greatest Gift

1 Corinthians 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Even if a person could speak in all languages, human and angelic, but didn't use this ability for the good of others, it would be no more profitable or pleasant than the clanging, jangling sound of metals crashing against each other.

Where the spoken word is not understood, there is no profit. It is just a nerve-racking din contributing nothing to the common good.

For tongues to be beneficial, they must be interpreted. Even then, what is said must be edifying.

The tongues of angels may be figurative for exalted speech, but it does not mean an unknown language, because whenever angels spoke to men in the Bible, it was in the common speech, easily understood.

1 Corinthians 13:2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Likewise one might receive marvelous revelations from God. He might understand the great mysteries of God, tremendous truths hitherto unrevealed but now made known to him. He might receive a great inflow of divine knowledge, supernaturally imparted. He might be given that heroic faith which is able to remove mountains. Yet if these wonderful gifts are used only for his own benefit and not for the edifying of other members of the Body of Christ, they are of no value, and the holder is nothing, that is, he is of no help to others.

1 Corinthians 13:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

If the apostle gave all his goods to feed the poor, or even gave his body to be burned, these valiant acts would not profit him unless they were done in a spirit of love.

If he were merely trying to attract attention to himself and seek a name for himself, then his display of virtue would be valueless.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

Someone has said: "This did not start out to be a treatise on love, but like most literary gems of the NT, it was introduced in connection with some local situation." Hodge has pointed out that the Corinthians were impatient, discontented, envious, inflated, selfish, indecorous, unmindful of the feelings and interests of others, suspicious, resentful, and censorious.

And so the apostle now contrasts the characteristics of true love. First of all, love suffers long and is kind. Long-suffering is patient endurance under provocation.

Kindness is active goodness, going forth in the interests of others.

Love does not envy others; rather it is pleased that others should be honored and exalted.

Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up. It realizes that whatever it has is the gift of God, and that there is nothing in man of which to be proud.

Even gifts of the Holy Spirit are sovereignly bestowed by God and should not make a person proud or haughty, no matter how spectacular the gift might be.

1 Corinthians 13:5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

Love does not behave rudely. If a person is truly acting in love, he will be courteous and considerate. Love does not selfishly seek its own, but is interested in what will assist others.

Love is not provoked, but is willing to endure slights and insults.

Love thinks no evil, that is, it does not attribute bad motives to others. It does not suspect their actions. It is guileless.

1 Corinthians 13:6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

1 Corinthians 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

1 Corinthians 13:9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

1 Corinthians 13:10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

1 Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.