

#1 AGAPE - THE VALUE OF LOVE

#2 AGAPE - THE VIRTUE OF LOVE

#3 AGAPE - THE VALIDATION OF LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:5-6 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

This love is never the least we can do for another person, it is always the best we can do for them.

I. LOVE IS STEADFAST IN ITS DUTY.

Doth not behave itself unseemly,

A. IT'S SEEN IN IT'S BEHAVIOR

does not act unbecomingly. The word

We sometimes speak of people getting "bent out of shape," and what we mean is that they are acting in a way that doesn't suit who or what they're supposed to be.

We're all familiar with John's statement that **God is love (1 John 4:8, 16)**. Notice that I didn't say that love is God, because it isn't, but that love is godly. Agape, which is not natural but supernatural love, always does the right thing in a relationship and not the wrong thing. It is godly in nature it never contradicts itself.

The natural course of human relationships is based on feelings, isn't it?

A. IT IS SEEN IN IT'S BEHAVIOR

B. IT IS SHARED IN THE BOOK

Jesus said to His disciples, (**John 14:15**). *If you love Me, you will keep My commandments*

Do you hear it? Is it right or wrong to keep the commandments of Jesus? It's right! But what is the key to doing the right thing instead of the wrong thing?

- Is it determination? No.
- Is it peer pressure? No.
- It is this love. Jesus said that when we love Him, it is then that we do the right thing.

Paul talks about *speaking the truth in love* (Eph. 4:15). In 1 Cor. 16:14 he says, *Let all that you do be done in love.* Agape doesn't say or do things that are unbecoming. Those **Galatians 5:22 says, *The fruit of the Spirit is love.***

KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS is what keeps us from acting unbecomingly

I. LOVE IS STEADFAST IN ITS DUTY.

II. LOVE IS SELFLESS IN ITS DIRECTION.
seeketh not her own,

The next thing Paul says about agape is that ***it does not seek its own.***

A. IT IS SELFLESS IN DIRECTION

In other words, it isn't self-absorbed or self-centered. One of the worst charges that can be leveled at a professing Christian is, "You never think about anyone but yourself." Self-centeredness is also the very essence of immaturity and carnality in a Christian's life.

The hymn writer wrote about Jesus, "He had no tears for His own griefs, but sweat drops of blood for mine." Jesus embodied the selfless character of love.

When Jesus was on trial He never spoke a word of defense on His own behalf. Why?

Because if Jesus had defended Himself it would have meant eternal damnation for the rest of us.

- When Jesus was confronted by a hungry crowd, He didn't get angry or turn His back on them.

He had compassion and provided for their needs.

- When He saw a leper, He wasn't repulsed, He embraced him.
- When He was nailed to the cross, He didn't cry out for vengeance, He prayed ***Father, forgive them (Luke 23:34)***. Love is selfless in its character. **MATT.16:24 If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.**

A. IT IS SELFLESS IN DIRECTION

B. IT IS SEEN IN IT'S DIRECTION

It is not coincidental that the same Jesus Who commanded His disciples to love one another (**John 13:34**), Who also insisted in the next verse, ***By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another, also said,*** You can't do the one without the other because, by nature, agape is selfless in its character.

What is our problem? Our problem is SELF! We have dominant selves instead of denied selves.

I. LOVE IS STEADFAST IN ITS DUTY.

II. LOVE IS SELFLESS IN ITS DIRECTION.

III. LOVE IS STEADY IN ITS DEMEANOR.

is not easily provoked,

A. IT IS SLOW TO ANGER

Pr 16:32 ¶ He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

He that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.] It is much easier to subdue an enemy

without than one within. There have been many kings who had conquered nations, and yet were slaves to their own passions.

Someone once said, "It is impossible to express love with a clenched fist." Bill Bixby's character on "The Incredible Hulk" use to say quite often, "You don't want to make me mad. You really don't want to make me mad." Because when Bill Bixby got mad he turned into a mean green Lou Ferrigno. The Incredible Hulk was the monster created by provocation.

A. IT IS SLOW TO ANGER

B. IT IS THE SWAY OF ANGER

Eph 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

There is a right kind and a wrong kind of anger. The right kind is justified righteous indignation. The wrong kind of anger is the self-centered kind that we sometimes call "flying off the handle."

"I spoke a word in anger
To one who was my friend.
Like a knife it cut him deeply,
A wound that was hard to mend."

That happens too often, doesn't it? We are provoked to anger and what we say and do is detrimental in every way. For every minute of self-centered anger we lose sixty seconds of selfless love, for agape is not provoked.

I. LOVE IS STEADFAST IN ITS DUTY.

II. LOVE IS SELFLESS IN ITS DIRECTION.

III. LOVE IS STEADY IN ITS DEMEANOR.

IV. LOVE IS SILENT IN ITS DISSATISFACTION.

thinketh no evil;

The next thing Paul says about agape is that it *does not take into account a wrong suffered.*

A. WE DON'T DWELL ON IT

This is an accounting term which means to count up or to record something in a ledger. It is translated "**to consider**" or "to let the mind dwell on" something. Paul says that when it comes to suffering wrong, agape doesn't dwell on it. Agape doesn't consider it worth remembering.

You see, this is wonderfully characteristic of the love of God Who says, **(Heb. 8:12) *I will remember their sins no more*** If you want to know if the Holy Spirit is quenched in your life and not producing the fruit of love, all you have to do is ask one question: "**Is there anyone I have not yet forgiven?**"

A. WE DON'T DWELL ON IT

B. WE DEAL WITH IT

You don't seem to understand that the root of your spiritual agony is your unwillingness to forgive the person who caused you pain.

You have taken into account the wrong suffered and quenched the love of God in your life. You can't love the church or God or anyone else the way you should because you will not forgive the person who caused you pain. You're more than willing to love anyone else with agape, but not the person who caused you pain. But it doesn't work like that. Until you love him or her, agape is quenched in your life, period. The only love you can offer anyone is second-rate.

I. LOVE IS STEADFAST IN ITS DUTY.

II. LOVE IS SELFLESS IN ITS DIRECTION.

III. LOVE IS STEADY IN ITS DEMEANOR.

IV. LOVE IS SILENT IN ITS DISSATISFACTION.

V. LOVE IS SETTELED IN ITS DOCTRINE.

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

A. IT DOES NOT DELIGHT IN FAILURE

The last thing I want you to see this is that agape **does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.** Agape never rejoices over someone else's spiritual or moral failure. It never uses someone else's downfall to bolster its own ego.

What is it that makes gossip so much fun? One of the biggest lies in the English language is, "I hate to tell you this, but..."

How many times have we put shocked looks on our faces while inside we smiled with smugness as we shared a juicy morsel of gossip. Is the story true? It really doesn't matter. It's too good not to be repeated. Where did it come from? It came firsthand from a close friend whose cousin works with a man whose brother told him that his boss had seen it with his own eyes.

What causes us to be glad over the bad in other people's lives? Could it be that it makes us feel a little better about the bad in our own lives which we hope to keep hidden?

A. IT DOES NOT DELIGHT IN FAILURE

B. IT DOES DELIGHT IN FACTS

but rejoiceth in the truth;

The word truth here stands opposed to iniquity, and means virtue, piety, goodness. It does not rejoice in the vices, but in the virtues of others.