

act in a rude or unfitting way. Love is much more than being kind and considerate to others, but it is never less.

**it does not seek its own** – Love is selfless. It is always concerned for the welfare and benefit of others. Here is one of love’s most profound qualities, and antithetical to human nature, it prompts us to love others with self-denial, personal sacrifice and toil. Love will work hard, suffer long, sacrifice its own time and money, and do many uncomfortable and inconvenient things to care for and tend to the happiness and welfare of others. Loving Christians serve one another.

**Galatians 5:13-14** - 13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another**. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, **"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** NASB

Jesus lived His entire life to **serve** and **benefit others**. It was the intent and focus of His whole life, and **He** has **called us to follow Him** in this devotion to the love and service of others. This He says is done by **“denying ourselves”** and **“taking up our cross and following Him,”** and **“losing our life”** in the process.

**Luke 9:23-24** - 23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, **let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me**. 24 "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. NASB

In other words, we will have to be willing to **deny our own interests often**, considering the **needs** and **concerns** of **others**, and give of our **time, talent, and treasure** to see their needs and concerns addressed. Christian love is at its heart a self-sacrificing service to others that springs from a pure heart and clear conscience, that is demonstrated most clearly at the Cross of Christ.

**Ephesians 5:1-2** - 1 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. NASB

See here the chief virtue in **“imitating God”** is to **“walk in love.”** By this Paul means to call us to **live our life** with the **purpose** of **loving** and serving others.

**is not provoked** – Consider, because love is focused on the welfare of others, it is not easy to provoke or to offend. The ESV renders this, **“it is not irritable,”** and the NIV **“it is not easily angered.”** Love has a **tender** and **calm disposition** toward others that **suffers injury with patience**, as to soften the blow that others may inflict, because it is not primarily motivated with its own preservation. Because love is humble and not arrogant, it is **composed** and **restrained when wronged** because it is not primarily motivated with its own exaltation. Pride is easily offended where humility is selflessly reserved. Love is not self-preserving, self-exalting or self-focused. Therefore it is not overly concerned with its own reputation or prestige.

**Romans 12:14-21** - 14 **Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not**. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. 17 **Never pay back evil for evil to anyone**. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 **If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men**. 19 **Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God**, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 **"But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink**; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." 21 **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good**. NASB

Because love is **“not provoked, easily angered, or irritable,”** it’s calm disposition allows it the ability to respond in kindness and blessing even in the face of injury. Love is not **“overcome with evil”** to the point of vengeful response, but in its selfless repose can

“**bless and not curse,**” returning a blessing instead. Consider the calm repose of Jesus in His last week before His passion, making His way ever so closer to that fatal night when the injuries of others would finally mean His own personal sacrifice unto to death.

**1 Peter 2:20-25** - 20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if **when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.** 21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 **who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;** 24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. NASB

One way that Christians **glorify God** is by **not returning evil for evil**, but patiently bearing with the injuries of others by entrusting themselves to God who judges justly. **does not take into account a wrong suffered** – It is common with human nature for us to **harbor resentment** and **hold a grudge** against those who are rude or insulting, or otherwise displeasing to us. We keep a “**record of wrongs**” in our hearts and harbor and hold a **bitterness** in our hearts toward them. We “**think evil**” and are “**resentful**” toward them. When we let this build up over a long period of time, this **bitter resentment** can be a **destructive** and odious thing to God and others. In the end this bitter resentment is only hurting ourselves, as we are the object of its torment, and it is the ruin of many relationships. **Love** on the other hand is **forgiving** and **forbearing** with others, because it seeks their benefit and not its own. It is patient and kind and wishing a blessing and peace upon others, and therefore not willing to hold an offense toward others, because it does not desire retaliation but rather blessing. Love gives others the benefit of the doubt and does not assign malicious intent to the motives of others easily, but wants to see the good in others. It has a sweet and peaceful motive toward others.

**Colossians 3:12-14** - 12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.** 14 And **beyond all these** things **put on love**, which is the perfect bond of unity. NASB

Christians must be willing to **mortify** their own tendency to **hold a grudge** against others, and more than this, must “**put on**” a willingness to forgive and forbear with others out of compassion and love for them. This heals and promotes the health of relationships as we “**put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.**” Love binds us together in peace by its forgiving and peaceable disposition toward others.

**6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness** – Love is **holy**, and it **grieves** when there is **sin** or **unrighteousness**, because God is offended by any kind of evil. Therefore love is **grieved** when others fall into or commit any kind of sin, and therefore **never rejoices** in **sin** or **unrighteousness**. See in this also the **destructive** and **unloving motive of gossip**, which seeks to report and spread abroad the news of someone else’s moral failures. This is a grievous and destructive thing that ought not to exist among loving Christians, for we are seeking to the good of others and not their demise, **neither** do we **rejoice** in any **unrighteousness**. Christians must mortify the tendency to rejoice when they hear of the sin of anyone, much more the sin of another believer, rather it should **grieve** us.

**Philippians 4:8-9** - 8 Finally, brethren, **whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute,** if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **let your mind dwell on these things.** NASB