

Living a Life of Love:

Embracing the virtue that Reflects Gods Heart

Opening Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (New International Version)

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

Introduction:

In 1997 the following letter appeared in newspapers throughout our land:

Dear Ann Landers: You recently printed a sweet "how-we-met" story. The woman said at the end of World War II, she sat behind a soldier in church. He knew all the lyrics to the songs so she figured he couldn't be all bad. Later, she learned he was a doctor. Three months later, she slipped on an icy walk and injured her arm. That same doctor insisted she stay in the infirmary, and he visited her twice a day. When she was discharged, he asked her to the movies to celebrate. They subsequently married in the same chapel where they had met.

Here's how that same story would go if it happened [today]:

Dear Ann: Last week, I attended church services and noticed that the soldier sitting behind me knew all the words to every song. I figured anyone who knew those lyrics was probably a member of the religious right. I bumped into him a month later. After cussing him out and telling him to watch where he was going, I learned he was a doctor. Three months later, I slipped on an icy walk and injured my arm. After suing the property owner for all I could get, this same doctor treated me and insisted that I stay in the infirmary. He then made twice-daily visits to see how I was doing, which made me suspicious. I complained to his supervisor and filed a sexual harassment suit. I was discharged in January, and the doctor asked if I would like to see a movie to celebrate. I told the police he was a stalker and applied for a restraining order. When the doctor asked me to marry him in the same chapel where we first met, I called the FBI. They searched his apartment to make sure there were no shrines built for me and no bodies hidden under the floorboards. I married the guy anyway because, after all, doctors earn six-figure incomes. -- [signed] Tuned in and turned on in La Jolla, Calif.

That letter may be a little extreme, but would you agree that something tragic has happened in our land, and that something has to do with human relationships? We're less trusting, more suspicious, fearful of opening ourselves to others. Some of us have no truly close friends. We're isolated and alone. We wall ourselves into gated communities, and worse yet, we don't even know the other people behind those walls, much less people outside.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today we gather to reflect upon the profound nature of love and the virtues it embodies. Love is central to our faith and is a defining characteristic of God Himself.

Our Scripture passages

1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul beautifully describes the nature of love, emphasizing that love is patient.

Let us explore the significance of this virtue and its application in our daily lives.

1. Love Bears with Patience:

Patience is a virtue that is often challenging to cultivate, but it is an essential component of genuine love. In our relationships with others, we encounter moments of frustration and disappointment. However, love calls us to bear with patience, to extend grace and understanding even when circumstances are difficult. Just as God patiently bears with us in our shortcomings and sins, we are called to exhibit the same patience towards others.

2. Love is Steadfast:

True love perseveres through trials and tribulations. It does not falter or give up easily. Love is not a fleeting emotion but rather a commitment to enduring relationships. Patience enables us to remain steadfast, even when faced with challenges and obstacles. By cultivating patience, we demonstrate our dedication to nurturing and preserving the bonds of love.

3. Love Seeks to Understand:

Patience allows us to actively listen and seek to understand others. It encourages us to put ourselves in their shoes, to empathize, and to respond with compassion. When we are patient, we create an atmosphere of trust and open communication. Love requires us to set aside our own agenda and truly engage with others, acknowledging their needs and perspectives.

4. Love Extends Grace:

Love that is patient extends grace and forgiveness. It does not hold grudges or keep a record of wrongs.

Instead, it chooses to let go of past hurts and offers a fresh start. Patience enables us to extend grace to those who have wronged us, just as God extends His grace to us. It reflects the transformative power of love to heal and restore broken relationships.

Conclusion:

Dear friends, as we reflect on the profound truth that love is patient, let us strive to embody this virtue in our lives. In a world filled with impatience and instant gratification, let our love be a beacon of hope and a testimony to Christ's love for us. May we bear with patience, remain steadfast, seek to understand, and extend grace to others. By doing so, we demonstrate the transformative power of love and fulfill the greatest commandment to love one another as Christ has loved us.