

The Christian’s Responsibility To Love

John Isaac Edwards

The word “love” occurs 310 times and “charity” 28 times in my Bible. Reading all these passages made me realize the responsibility placed on me to love.

1) **Follow After.** We are taught, “Follow after charity...” (1 Cor. 14:1). Appealing to Timothy to flee covetousness Paul penned, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love...” (1 Tim. 6:11). In his second letter to the young man he declared, “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity...” (2 Tim. 2:22). If I am not following after love, then I am going the wrong direction!

2) **Let All Things Be Done With.** Love is to undergird everything I do. 1 Corinthians 16:14 teaches, “Let all your things be done with charity.” I ask myself: Does everything I do show love? If not, I ought not be doing it!

3) **Walk In.** From the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, one learns about the Christian’s walk, as the word “walk” appears 7 times within its pages. The “walk letter” exhorts, “And walk in love, as

Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us...” (Eph. 4:2). As I read the context of this passage, I discovered that such things as lying, stealing, corrupt communication out of my mouth, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, malice, fornication, all uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking and jesting is to not walk in love! (Eph. 4:25-5:4). How I walk has to do with how I live, for Colossians 3:7 says, “In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.” And so I ask: Is my life characterized by love?

4) **Put On.** Speaking to the Colossians about being risen with Christ, Paul discussed putting off the old man and putting on the new man. Colossians 3:14 records, “And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” Love is not “put-on” in the sense of a deception; a hoax. “Let love be without dissimulation...” (Rom. 12:9). Love takes the place of the deeds of the old man! 1 Thessalonians 5:8 also teaches, “But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love...” Have I put on my breastplate?

5) **Be An Example In.**

Among responsibilities placed upon Timothy is, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity...” (1 Tim. 4:12). Can folks look at me and say, “There’s an example of love!”?

6) **Add.** Peter reminded those established in the truth about the importance of adding to one’s faith. Among the 7 additions to faith Peter said, “... giving all diligence, add to your faith...charity” (2 Pet. 1:5-7). What is the value of adding? “For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful...if ye do these things, ye shall never fall...an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:8-11). Suppose I become careless and negligent, failing to add? “But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” (2 Pet. 1:9).

Where does this put me? Am I meeting my responsibility to love?

Some We Are To Love

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The Scriptures call to attention some we are to love.

1) **God.** The love of God is the first duty of man. God has always called upon man to love Him. The law taught, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Dt. 6:5). Jesus referred to this as "...the first and great commandment" (Mt. 22:37). We love God because He first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19). Loving God means keeping His commandments! "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 Jn. 5:3). "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments" (2 Jn. 6).

2) **The Son Of God.** If we are children of God, then we will love the Son of God! Jesus said, as recorded in John 8:42, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God..." To love Jesus is to keep His "commandments" (Jn. 14:15,

21; 15:10), His "words" (Jn. 14:23), His "sayings" (Jn. 14:24).

3) **The People Of God.** Children of God are taught to love one another. Jesus instructed, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn. 13:34-35). We are to be "...knit together in love..." (Col. 2:2). Peter penned, "...see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet. 1:22). The many "one another" Scriptures reveal things we will do when we truly love God's people.

4) **Our Neighbour.** The old law taught, "...thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19:18). Jesus called this "the second commandment" in Matthew 22:39. Love for one's neighbour takes in a lot of things (Rom. 13:9-10; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8). The story of

Luke 10:25-37 teaches neighborly love the finest. Wouldn't this world be a far better place if we would but exemplify such in our lives?

5) **The Stranger.** Leviticus 19:34 and Deuteronomy 10:19 teach, "Love ye therefore the stranger..." The word "hospitality" means "love to strangers." We are commanded, "...given to hospitality" (Rom. 12:13) and "...be not forgetful to entertain strangers..." (Heb. 13:2).

6) **Enemies.** Jesus taught, "...Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you" (Lk. 6:27-28). It is easy to love those who love you. The challenge is loving the unloveable! This is what God did! "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

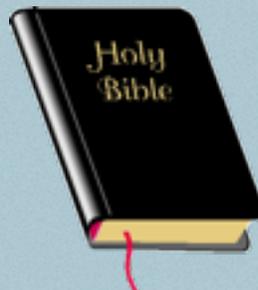
How are we doing in this regard?

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