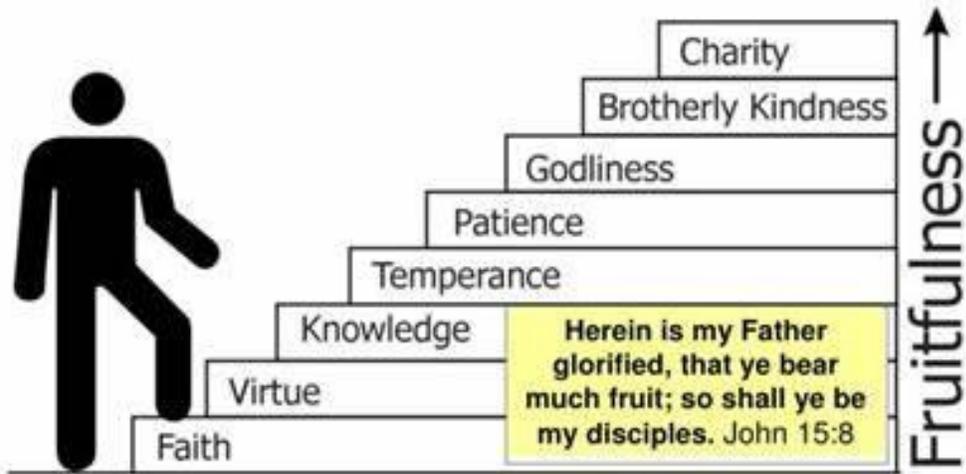


God's Call to Spiritual Growth

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. Psalm 37:23,24



MARCH BIBLE STUDY SERIES

SOLID STEPS OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Lesson Twelve:
Add To Your Faith Love
(Charity)

Scripture Lesson:
II Peter 1:5-7(KJV)

II Peter 1:5-7(KJV), And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love (CHARITY).

Faith Has A Three-Fold Dimension:

- **Inward** (virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience)
- **Upward** (godliness)
- **Outward** (brotherly kindness and love).

**“Charity is Three
Dimensional. It Encompasses
the Love FOR Christ, Love
FROM Christ, and Love LIKE
Christ.”**

The Need For Charity

“All of life’s problems are heart problems.”

Proverbs 4:23, Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

"All church problems are really love problems. All human problems are love problems."

Scripture Lesson: I Corinthians 13:1-7, Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 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. 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.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Charity Must Be Put On.

Colossians 3:14 (Amp), Beyond all these things put on and wrap yourselves in [unselfish] love, which is the perfect bond of unity [for everything is bound together in agreement when each one seeks the best for others].

The Purpose of Love (Charity).

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, If you could master all languages, and command crowds and angels. If you had great faith, and knowledge of the Bible, and the ability to know everything there is to know. If you were the richest person in the world, and gave away all your goods, and even forfeited your life in sacrifice. Yet have not "charity," then you have really done nothing!

How can we have more of this kind of love in our lives?

- 1. Accept it First.**
- 2. Seek More of It.**
- 3. Nurture It.**
- 4. Protect It.**

Seven Distinctive Marks Of Genuine Love

I Corinthians 13:4-7, Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

1. Love's Patience - Love is Patient
1 Corinthians 13:4

Living in this world, you must develop the capacity to handle the injuries, disappointments, frustrations, let-downs, conflicts, and offenses that you will experience throughout the course of your life.

**2. Love's Generosity - Love Is Kind.
It Does Not Envy.
1 Corinthians 13:4**

**The degree to which you are
growing in kindness is the
degree to which you are
growing in love.**

“The greatest thing a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to some of His other children.”

**“Whenever you attempt a good work,
you will find other men doing the
same kind of work and probably doing
it better.”**

Grow in love, and you will be released from envy. Cultivate a generous spirit, and you will be blessed.

3. Love's Humility - Love Does Not Boast. It Is Not Proud. It Is Not Self-seeking.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5

“When a man begins to boast, he is advertising his emptiness and his ignorance. There is no swagger about love. It is too big for that. The Lord Jesus Christ never ‘showed off.’ His greatness was revealed not merely in what He displayed, but in the things He suppressed.”

**Love will release you from
preoccupation with yourself.**

4. Love's Courtesy - Love Is Not Rude.

1 Corinthians 13:5

**Courtesy is like oil in the
machinery of human
relationships.**

Do not bring out the worst in the person you love. Love covers over a multitude of sins. Courtesy is discreet. Practice courtesy in the words you withhold.

5. Love's Restraint - Love Is Not Easily Angered. It Keeps No Record Of Wrongs.

1 Corinthians 13:5

**Bad temper is a sure sign of a
poisoned soul.**

“If a person allows himself long to hold anger towards another, he will quickly come to hate him.”

**6. Love's Joy - Love Does Not
Delight In Evil But Rejoices With
The Truth.**

1 Corinthians 13:6

“When a man has fallen, love will think about the battle he must have fought and the struggle he must have had before he went down.”

Have you cultivated the habit of presuming the worst, rather than thinking the best?

**7. Love's Consistency - Love
Always Protects, Always Trusts,
Always Hopes, Always Perseveres.
1 Corinthians 13:7**

**Love is not an occasional gesture
but an obvious aspect of character.**

**A Snapshot of what Genuine
Love Looks Like:**

**It is Patience, Generosity,
Humility, Courtesy, Restraint,
Joy, and Consistency.**

How Can We Have More Of This Kind Of Love In Our Lives?

- 1. Accept it First.**
- 2. Seek More of It.**
- 3. Nurture It.**
- 4. Protect It.**

**“We Love others best when we
Love God most.”**

Bible Study Follow Up Chat

- 1. How can we take our love for God and extend it to the world around us?**
- 2. What does it mean to “love yourself?” How is this expressed in a healthy, Christ-like way?**
- 3. Which people in your world are easiest to love, and why?**
- 4. Which people are toughest to love, and why?**

5. When do you find it most difficult to love others, and why?

6. How do you know the difference between real love and fake love?

7. What do you think it means to “cover” someone’s sin with love?

8. What can you do to become a more loving person?