

Pursue Love

Ponder: Why all the emphasis on love?

Scripture: “. . . pursue righteousness, godliness faith, love . . .” (1 Timothy 6:11, NKJV).

Besides today’s Scripture, Paul said to “pursue love” two other times (2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 14:1). In all three cases, he used the imperative mode; that is to say, he issued a command, not a suggestion or even a recommendation.

If love just came naturally, we wouldn’t to pursue it (run after it, chase it). Righteousness, godliness, and faith don’t come naturally; neither does love. By fleshly instinct, we are inclined to look out for our own interests, and perhaps those of our close kin and friends. But that other fellow? Let him take care of himself!

Jesus, on the other hand, taught us to love everyone – even our enemies (Matthew 5:44). That doesn’t mean we must approve of everything people do, or even have warm, fuzzy feelings for them. But we will seek what is in their best interest, while putting away hatred and animosity.

The opening verses of Paul’s great treatise on love (First Corinthians chapter thirteen) show us that without love, nothing else matters. Some at Corinth were hung up on supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially tongue-speaking; but even if you could speak in all kinds of languages, having never studied them, all it would be without love is a bunch of noise! If you had miraculous gifts like prophecy and knowledge, and miraculous faith that could literally move mountains, such would be devoid of value without love. Even being so generous that you gave everything to feed the poor, and then went to your death as a martyr, would be meaningless if you didn’t have a loving attitude.

That’s why love is emphasized so heavily – without it, nothing else matters. Is doctrinal soundness important? Most assuredly! But you can be as straight as a gun barrel while being equally as hard, cold, and empty. The church at Ephesus (Revelation 2) appears to have been doctrinally solid; but they had left the love that had characterized them earlier. It isn’t “either doctrine OR love,” but “sound doctrine AND fervent love.”

As Paul commanded the Corinthians, “Let all that you do be done with love.”