

PRINCIPLE OF CHARITY

Principle of CHARITY (Body Care) – We choose to love one another unto we see Christ.

Introduction:

In this session, we will cover **charity** in the Body of Christ.

We're members of one another and our behavior is to love for one another. The love that is required to have a healthy church body is called **agape** love. God's type of love. There are three primary characteristics of agape love:

- Unconditional – We choose to love (not emotional)
- Sacrificial – We love selflessly
- Eternal – We love with no end

God loved the **world**, John 3:16. God loved the **unlovable** sinners of the world because he decided to. He gave His only Son sacrificially, so He could reconcile sinners to Himself. This is the perfect example of agape love. The theme of agape love continues through the Apostles of Christ. The Apostle John said, "If we do not love one another, we do not know God, I John 4:8". Apostle Paul said, "Clothe ourselves with love, which binds us all together in **perfect unity**, Colossians 3:14".

If we have humility, unity, diversity, and purity but have not charity, we have nothing and gained nothing, I Corinthians 13:1-3. Therefore, it goes without saying if we do not possess love for one another then we do not have a healthy church body. We want to apply agape love in our church, so we can maintain a healthy church body.

APPLICATION OF CHARITY

Study Scriptures: v.9. Let **love be genuine**. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. **v.10.** Love one another with **brotherly affection**. Outdo one another in showing honor.

Paul said our love should be genuine. This means we can have fake love. Genuine love was demonstrated by God when He loved the unlovable (world) If God loves the unlovable, then we ought to love the unlovable.

To be truly devoted to God is proven by your love those who God loves. To recognize that there is someone you **do not** love in practice is to say to God, "My devotion to you is not strong enough to love that person you love."

I am not talking about the **struggle** to love unlovable people. The Scriptures recognizes some people are difficult to love, Romans 12:18. And some people are toxic. They are truly unhealthy. God's love protects you and does not allow you to be abused or taken advantaged of by someone.

I am talking about your **attitude** not to love like God loves. You must not let your lack of love for someone go unchecked nor unchallenged if you want to grow like Christ.

Agape gives whatever it takes (sacrifices) to make the relationship work. John said, "Jesus gave up his life for us. So, we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. Love sacrifices to forgive. Agape love is active not passive. Does love always work? No! But we are commanded to love and leave the results up to God.

Here are some scriptural descriptions of agape love:

- a) Love your neighbor as yourself, Mark 12:31
- b) Lay down your life, 1 John 3:16
- c) Generosity, I John 3:17-18
- d) Make allowances for faults, Colossians 3:13-14
- e) Deep affection, I Peter 1:22

EXERCISE

Paul described agape love **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**: **4.** Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; **5.** does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; **6.** does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; **7.** bears all things believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **8.** Love NEVER fails.

Love does not or is not...

- Love does not envy or boast
- Love does not insist on its own way
- Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing
- Love is not irritable
- Love is not resentful
- Love is not arrogant
- Love is not rude

Love is...

- Love is patient
- Love is kind
- Love rejoices in the truth
- Love bears all things
- Love believes all things
- Love hopes in all things
- Love endures all things

As an exercise, **put your name in the blank** spaces below, and begin to **conform** the attitude of your soul to agape love, so you can **transform** your soul (mind, emotions, desires) concerning people you are striving to show agape love to in the Body of Christ and in your personal life:

Love does not or is not...

- _____ does not envy or boast
- _____ does not insist on my own way

- _____ does not rejoice in wrongdoing
- _____ is not irritable
- _____ is not resentful
- _____ is not arrogant
- _____ is not rude

Love is...

- _____ is patient
- _____ is kind
- _____ rejoices in the truth
- _____ bears all things
- _____ believes all things
- _____ hopes in all things
- _____ endures all things

Study Questions:

1. How are we to demonstrate our love to others

Reference: I John 3:16-18, Ephesians 4:32

2. How can you love another person as Christ has forgiven you

Reference: John 13:34

3. How do you show the love of Christ daily?

4. Who is responsible for your growth in love?

Reference: I Thessalonians 3:12, 4:9-10

5. What characteristics of love according to I Corinthians 13:4-8 do you struggle with the most?

Verse to Ponder: John 13:34b. Love each other. Just as I have you loved you.

