

SELF-EVALUATION AND REFLECTION – 4

JANUARY 28, 2024

1 COR. 13:1-3 If charity isn't the motivation behind my actions, then I'm a nothing, making a lot of repulsive noise, to no benefit. Charity is Agape, meaning love based on principle and decision.

About Agape

- A commandment (**JOHN 13:34**); it's what really matters in Christ (**GAL. 5:6**); the mark of spiritual maturity (**COL. 3:14 AMPC**); how we imitate God (**EPH. 5:1-2 MSG**); is to be eagerly pursued (**1 COR. 14:1 MSG**); casts out all fear (**1 JOHN 4:16b-18 J.B. Phillips**); proof of salvation (**1 JOHN 3:14**); Everyone saved has it (**ROM. 5:3-5**).

Agape Defined - 1 Cor. 13:4-8a

- 1.) Suffers long. Has a long fuse; not easily angered; not impatient with people when imposed upon. **MT. 14:14** Jesus was getting away to rest after hearing of His cousin's death. Instead, He was confronted by a multitude who got word of His location.
- 2.) Is kind. Agape isn't harsh with people no matter how provoked. **TITUS 3:3-6 NASB** Jesus was gentle and kind even when dealing with sinners (**JOHN 8:10-11 AMPC**).
- 3.) Envieth not. These Corinthians were envious of the gifts and ministries of others. Satan's fall was fueled by envy. **JOHN 17:22** says Jesus shares His glory with everyone.
- 4.) Vaunteth not itself. It doesn't brag, boast, or start a parade to bring attention to oneself. **MT. 8:1-4** Jesus didn't want applause. (**JER. 9:23-24 NLT**). This is what we boast about.
- 5.) Not puffed up. It doesn't inflate itself with pride or think more highly of itself (**PHIL. 2:5-8 NLT**). Jesus went to the lowest level of humility to save us.
- 6.) Doesn't behave unseemly. It's not rude or ill-mannered; crude or insensitive; callous. **LUKE 13:16-17** He always showed love and respect.
- 7.) Doesn't seek its own. **1 COR. 10:24** It seeks the well-being of others first (**2 COR. 8:9**).
- 8.) Not easily provoked. It's not easily offended by what others say or do (**PS. 119:165**). Doesn't roll the eyes or sigh deeply.

- 9.) Thinks no evil. Chooses to believe the best, not the worst about people. It doesn't mentally rehearse the faults of others.
- 10.) Rejoices not in iniquity, but in truth. When right and truth prevail, not when things that sent Christ to the Cross prevail.
- 11.) Bears all things. It's slow to expose the sins of others. **PR. 10:12 NIV** Hatred points out flaws and imperfections, but love covers them **(1 PET. 1:22, 4:8)**; and deals privately with them. **(MT. 18:15-17 NLT)**.
- 12.) Believes all things. It recognizes God's integrity and reliability. **NUM. 23:19** It's not skeptical about God's faithfulness.
- 13.) Hopes all things. It looks to the fulfillment of all things **(ROM. 12:11-12 AMPC)**. It's a motivating force **(1 JOHN 3:3)**.
- 14.) Endures all things. **2 TIM. 2:1-3-NLT** It endures hardness and perseveres under pressure.
- 15.) Never fails. Why? Because God is love and He never fails. Love is the greatest of all forces.

Conclusion:

Growing in God is growing in love. The greatest challenge to Agape is selfishness. Growing out of selfishness and into love produces spiritual maturity. What are our test results?