

## Love Is The Bond Of Perfectness

"And above all these things, put on love which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:14).

The Colossians, who had been encouraged to "put on" a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and forgiveness, were instructed to compliment them all by putting on love.

Paul called love "the bond of perfectness." The Greek word which is rendered "bond" in this text is found in two other New Testament passages, the first in Acts 8:23 where Simon the sorcerer is said to be in the "bond" of iniquity. Its other occurrence is Ephesians 4:1f where brethren were urged to endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The word signifies a co-bond. The co-bond was a mutual bond between Colossian brethren and should it so be, it would be the bond of perfectness or completeness. Whatever else might be put on by these brethren would still be lacking unless love was put on. It was the "icing on the cake."

No congregation is what God wants it to be if its members are lacking in their love for each other. When Paul sought to regulate spiritual gifts among Corinthians dissensions over them, it was evident Corinthians were at odds with each another because of their vying for the "tongue gift." He wrote, "for where there is among you jealousy, strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?" (1 Cor. 3:3). And while it was proper to desire the greater gifts, Paul showed them a most (more) excellent way, turning momentarily from the discussion of scripture gifts to a description of, and need for love (1 Cor. 12:31).

Paul showed that were one to speak with the tongues of men and angels, and yet did not have love, he was as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal (1 Cor. 13). He showed that were one to have the gift of prophesy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, were one to have faith which could move mountains and yet lack love, he would be nothing (1 Cor. 13:2). Were one to sacrifice all his possessions to feed the poor or even give his body to be burned (i.e. become a martyr for Christ) and yet lack love, he would not be benefited (1 Cor. 13:3).

Then Paul writes "Love suffeth love, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil, rejoiceth

not in unrighteousness but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, Love never faileth...But now abideth faith, hope, love and the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:4-8, 13).

Where there is bickering, backbiting, murmuring, complaining against one another, one thing is evident: there is no love and if there is no love, there cannot be a bond of perfectness. Every Christian needs to ask himself, "Have I put on love?" and if not, "Why not?" We love, because He first loved us. We show the world we are His disciples when we have love one for another. Do we love our brethren? Love for brethren is not optional. We must love our brethren for if we don't, we will not go to heaven. It is as simple as that!

Jim McDonald