



# Practical Love

**"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18).**

BulletinVCM1JN13

7 September 2016

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:16-18).

When it comes to it, it is very easy to pay lip service to loving others but fail miserably when put to the test. Note the following salient points from this scripture:

- 1) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (vs 16). Out of His nature of love, God set the example of laying down His life to save us; which places a responsibility on all who lay claims on having a relationship with Him to follow suit. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).
- 2) "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (vs 17). When God provides "this world's good" to us, He is entrusting us to become channels of His blessings to others. Two poor beggars may beg together, but they cannot help one another. If Joseph was poor in Egypt, he would not have been able to help his relations. This places responsibility on us to (a) meticulously invest our skills, talents and time in generating wealth, and (b) developing and maintaining a mindset of seeing ourselves as channels of God's wealth to help the needy. The philosophy of selfishly accumulating wealth with a view to gaining financial independence from God, is a step away from God, who promised to meet our needs till old age.
- 3) "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (vs 18). Here is a divine mandate to abandon lip-

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service and get into true practical love. I Corinthians 13:1-8 gave these descriptions of the qualities and characteristics of love:

- 1) Being focused on the essentials of living than external display of religious practices (I Corinthians 13:1-3) "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 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, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing".
- 2) "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (vs 4).
- 3) "Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil" (vs 5)
- 4) "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (vs 6)
- 5) "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (vs 7).
- 6) "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (vs 8). When everything ceases, love will continue to be relevant even till eternity.

Comparing faith, hope and love, the scripture declares that "the greatest of these is charity" (I Corinthians 13:13). Let us therefore seek to excel in love.