

VIRTUE 4

LOVE

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you, and over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

—Colossians 3:12-14

Love—not gallantry or pride—should drive a knight to be a knight and should govern his thoughts and actions. Before even looking into this virtue, let's first start with the very definition of love provided by Scripture:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand” (Romans 5:1-2).

After we get this first part straight and understand it with the simplicity and wholeheartedness of a child (Mark 10:15), we can then share it with others. By knowing and feeling that we are unconditionally loved and accepted as adopted children of God, His grace and forgiveness flows from our lives and encourages us to love and forgive others. Just as Christ works with us and through us despite our shortcomings and weaknesses, we must bear with others: “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves” (Romans 15:1), and “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

Finally, we show our love for others by our forgiveness: “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:23-24).

REFLECT

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

—Ephesians 5:1-2

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

—Romans 15:1

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture,
“Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right.

—James 2:8

RESPOND

1. Why is it important that God loves us first?
2. What does it mean to “bear with” others?
3. When do we *confront* others in love, and when do we *overlook* and “bear with” others?
4. Why is love a knightly trait and not a trait for wimps?
5. Why is hatred, gossip, and cruelty easier than love?