

46-13-10-Practicing the Peace of Love

love, peace, rudeness, self-seeking, irritability, grudges

1 Cor 13:5

Love creates an environment where peace can thrive.

INTRODUCTION:

–[God’s ideal formula for babies is *breastmilk*. But when a child is *mature*, it’s time to wean. A *hungry infant* might fuss until he gets latched on to his mother’s breast, but the *weaned child* can lay right up against her bosom calmly and *peacefully*.] This illustrates the **peace** God wants us to have– Psa 131:1-2, My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have **stilled** and **quieted** my soul; like a **weaned child** with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

–The *Love Chapter* isn’t a list of *do’s and don’ts*. It’s a portrait of God-like, loving behavior. **Paul**, when confronting dietary legalism in Rom 14:17, said, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, **peace** and joy in the Holy Spirit.” **Jesus** said His Kingdom is characterized by the childlike—not the frantic, unweaned childish. This “stilled and quieted” disposition of “a **weaned child** with its mother” belongs to us, because His Kingdom’s “peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” is already in us– Rom 5:5b, God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. By practicing the presence of love, we can experience the calm, peaceful contentedness of Kingdom living. HOM.idea.

–Again, 1 Cor 13:5 describes love in negative terms: “It is *not rude*, it is *not self-seeking*, it is *not easily angered*, it keeps *no record of wrongs*.” By canceling behaviors that disturb the peace, we make room for the positives, just as putting “childish ways behind,” allows us to embrace the childlike ways of love. So, first, let’s examine the behaviors that we must eliminate:

I. Behaviors that Lead Directly to Disturbing the Peace

A. Love isn’t “rude” ([lit., without grace or lacking charm]; some synonyms might be: ungracious, *discourteous*, *impolite*, *disrespectful*)

1. Rudeness is an extension of the arrogance mentioned in v.4.

a. Children are imitators and may emulate rudeness seen in poor adult role-models or practiced by an immature peer group.

b. Children can also become narcissistic, if neglected or denied healthy social interaction to meet their need for affirmation. (Rudeness to others is symptomatic of self-preoccupation.)

2. By rudely snubbing or disregarding others, we show our *disdain* of them. (This creates an environment of **discord** and *hostility*.)
- B. **Love** isn't "self-seeking" ([lit., *after one's own things*]; *self-focused, selfish*) [Mem-Web: "excessive or exclusive concern with oneself: seeking one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others."]
1. Children who were centers of attention or became *self-guardians against the selfishness of others* may, as adults, live in castles of self-serving indulgence or in fortresses of protective isolation.
 2. Kingdoms of self are mutually *hostile*, often *clashing* or *going to war*, and slow to surrender to terms of peace in God's Kingdom.
- C. **Love** isn't "easily angered." ([lit., *sharp against*]; *quickly exasperated, irritated or upset*) [This disposition has "a chip on the shoulder" and is "ready to fight if someone knocks it off." This displays a feeling of entitlement to special respect, which actually indicates an *inner sense of insecurity*.]
1. An inner child's repressed memory of unjust punishments or severe wounding can produce this *hot-head attitude* in adult life.
 2. There's no peace, when an adult's *inner child* has *iron jaws* from *past hurts* ready to clamp down on whoever *springs the trap*.
- D. Lastly, **love** "keeps no record of wrongs." ([lit., *makes a log of worthless things*]; *tallies up resentments, keeps score on personal injuries*)
1. It's grudge-holding puts that *irritable "chip on the shoulder."*
 2. It cripples inner peace and brings turmoil to surrounding social life, creating a toxic environment that poisons relational peace.

TRANS: How can we replace these behaviors that disrupt tranquility with those that create peace? [In 1977, the rock band Utopia replied with a hit song: "Light of the world, shine on me / Love is the answer / Shine on us all, set us free / Love is the answer. Maybe they were reading the Love Chapter!"] Love is the answer, because...

II. Love Creates an Environment Where Peace Can Thrive

- A. **Love** isn't "rude" or crude but *gracious* and *lovely*. [The British often respond to kind actions by saying, "What a lovely gesture!" Wm Barclay, in commenting on v.5, wrote, "There is a graciousness in Christian love which never forgets that courtesy and tact and politeness are lovely things."]
- B. **Love** isn't "self-seeking" but *self-giving* [Timothy exemplified this— Phil 2:20b-21 (GW), He takes a genuine interest in your welfare. Everyone else looks after his own interests, not after those of Jesus Christ.] (*Self-interest is a trivial pursuit compared to Love's broad interest in others.*)

- C. **Love** isn't "easily angered." [Kipling's "If" poem about maturity starts with: "If you can keep your head when all about you / Are losing theirs and blaming it on you..."]. That *inner calmness* cools down hot situations. (For a "kingdom" environment of "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," we must heed the exhortation in James 1:19-20, Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.")
- D. **Love** "keeps no record of wrongs" but lets go of the past. [Wm Barclay wrote, "many people nurse their wrath to keep it warm; they brood over their wrongs until it is impossible to forget them. Christian love has learned the great lesson of forgetting."] (Forgiving ["letting go"] may purge the logbook of resentments, but Love throws away the score-keeping pen!)

TRANS: Love erases wrongs, or Jesus wouldn't have died for us. Love isn't easily angered, or blasphemers would already be toast. Trinitarian Love isn't self-seeking, or God wouldn't have created anything. God's love is not rude, or He wouldn't be welcoming us into His Kingdom. This Love isn't a rule-list to keep but a Prince of Peace to follow. We practice Love's peace by practicing Christ's indwelling presence.

III. Our Focus on Christ is our Highway to Peace

- A. (God brings the peace, if we bring the focus— Isa 26:3 (NKJV), You will keep him in **perfect peace**, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. [In What Would Jesus Do? the grandson of the minister of In His Steps, has just preached in defense of the extreme measures it took to defeat Japan and promises his next sermon will tell *how to win the peace*. **That evening**, a Japanese-American seminary student, planning to go to Japan as a missionary, heard his message and commits suicide in the church chapel. **This tragedy** makes this young minister face his inadequacy to preach about peace-making and turn to his grandfather's solution of asking, "What would Jesus do? When **confronted by a skeptical parishioner**, he explains that it's not about imitating Christ, but about letting Christ live His life and His love through us.] **Love is the answer to winning the peace!**
- B. When stormy seas of past experiences and present circumstances rock our boat, Jesus says, "Peace, be still." (The indwelling Christ is our highway to peace! [Christ's words to us in John 16:33 (KJV) were put to a song: "These things I have spoken unto you, that **in me** ye might have *peace*. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer (be of good cheer), for I have overcome the world.") Our union with Christ brings the **love that creates an environment where peace can thrive....**