

ASPECTS OF LOVE

Scripture: 1 Cor 13 vs 4 to 7.

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Part 10. The Ninth Aspect

K.J.

*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, **thinketh no evil**; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

N.I.V.

*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.*

K.J. **Charity thinketh no evil.**

N.I.V. **Love it keeps no record of wrongs.**

The word 'evil' refers to a mode of thinking, feeling, acting, which is base, wrong, wicked, troublesome, injurious, pernicious, and finally destructive. Therefore when Paul wrote these words he was stating that love, when it is functioning, does not move in a form, which shows itself up as being outrageously bad.

Evil **is not** one of the characteristics of love, because love has no principle of badness in it. Love can only do that which is good, and only produce good.

Barns commentary says. "*Thinketh no evil*. That is, puts the best possible construction on the motives and the conduct of others. This expression also is comparative. It means that love, or that a person under the influence of love, is not malicious, censorious, disposed to find fault, or to impute improper motives to others. It is not only "*not easily provoked*", not soon excited, but it is not disposed to think that there was any evil intention even in cases which might tend to irritate or exasperate us".

Gills commentary says. The Arabic version reads. "And remembers not evil having once forgiven it, he thinks of it no more; or he does not meditate revenge, or devise mischief, and contrive evil against man that has done evil to him, as Esau did against his brother Jacob; so the Ethiopic version, by way of explanation, adds. "Neither thinks evil, nor consults evil".

With this background, we should consider our attitude to each other and whether or not we act in a manner out of step with what the word of God teaches.

Let us consider here our attitude to forgiveness. I think we need to understand fully what the Bible teaches about forgiveness. My reason for saying this is because there is a lot of misunderstanding about it.

If we take what Paul writes to its most extreme, most people think that if we have this love of God, we are not to retain any record of the wrong committed against us. I do not believe this as clear-cut as most of us think. I say this because, unless there is repentance in the first place by the individual who has sinned, be it against God or any other person, there can be no forgiveness, for all forgiveness in scripture is based on repentance.

The whole message of John the Baptist was repentance. Wherever he went it was the same message he preached. "*Repent and be baptised*". John's baptism was a baptism to repentance.

Matt 3 v 1 & 2: "*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*".

We will read some other scriptural verses in connection with 'Repentance'

Acts 2 v 38: "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*".

Acts 17 v 30: "*In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent*".

Let us note here now, some verses regarding forgiveness.

Hebrews 8 v 12: *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more".*

Hebrews 10 v 17: *"Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more".*

Matthew 6 v 12: *"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"*

Ephesians 4 v 32: *"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you".*

Barnes commentary says, "He that comes before him unwilling to forgive, harbouring dark and revengeful thoughts, how can he expect that God will show him that mercy which he is unwilling to show to others"

Forgiveness is therefore to be based on 'Repentance'.

This *aspect of love* that Paul is writing about has to be linked to these two things. If it was, that the Love of God *'keeps no record of wrongs'* without repentance being connected to it, it means people could do what they want, when they want, and whenever they want. Listen to what it says in **1 John 1 v 9** *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"*

Therefore when we say that *'charity thinketh no evil'* or *'love keeps no record of wrongs'*, it has to be taken in the context in which it has been written. The important thing to realise is that when God forgives, He chooses to never to bring those sins we have been forgiven of, to His remembrance ever again.

If we take this *'aspect of love'* and use it in the proper context, then this is what Paul wants the Christians to whom he is writing to put into practice.

When you have forgiven someone on the basis of their acknowledgement of a wrong against you, then you have no alternative but to remove it from your record of accounts.

It has to be borne in mind that when we speak about sin that needs to be forgiven, there is **original sin** and **actual sin**. A baby is born with **original sin** in its nature, but you cannot say that it has been involved in **actual sin**, until it has the ability to commit an act of sin.

When repentance for sin has taken place, both original and actual sin is forgiven, and love chooses at that point not to remember it any more, or even think of the person in a bad or evil way.

The expression of Paul, that *'charity thinks no evil'* is a very clear statement on an *aspect of love* that has to be promoted among the people of God. The problem we are faced with time and time again, is that we fail to remember the good deeds that others do, but have a very long memory when it comes to remembering the wrongs of people.

The negative thoughts we have towards people seem to outweigh the positive. However, love is what turns this the other way around, the positive thoughts we have of people, those good thoughts, should outweigh the negative. It is possible to have such love in our hearts that it totally eclipses any bad feeling towards others.

Therefore, according to what Paul is teaching us here about this *aspect of love*, we who profess to be filled with the Holy Spirit should be the most loveable, caring, peaceable people on the earth.

If love *'thinketh no evil'*, and *'keeps no record of wrongs'* (as the N.I.V. translation puts it), it means that we have nothing to fall back on, which would remind us of the wrongs others have done. We know that records are made, so that a reference to something can be made. However what Paul says here is, love that forgives, is also love that *'keeps no record of the wrongs'* that have already been forgiven.

Let us note what it says in

Psalms 130 v 3: *"If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"*

The N.I.V. says *"If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?"*

Let's ask the question 'How guilty are we of keeping a record of the wrongs people have repented of?' It is of these wrongs that no history should be kept.

There is evidence, even in scripture, of the record of wrongs that have not been repented of.

Paul when writing in **2 Timothy 4 v 14** says, "*Alexander the metalworker (coppersmith) did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done*". Notice here, even though Paul has remembered what Alexander had done to him, and that he had obviously kept a record of it, he leaves any action to be taken against him to the Lord.

It is clear from Paul's reference to Alexander that he had not shown any remorse or sorrow for what he had done, so a '*record of his wrongs*' had been remembered by Paul.

An emphasis should be made here to stress the importance of putting things right, when wrongs have been done. Let me say here that there is no shame or stigma attached to anyone, following the confession of wrongs they may have committed.

Paul says in **Galatians 6 v 1** "*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you, which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted*".

I believe from what I have been stating in this study tonight, that we have a good understanding of what Paul means when he says that one of the *aspects of love* is, that it '*thinketh no evil*', or as the N.I.V says, '*keeps no record of wrongs*'.