

ASPECTS OF LOVE

Scripture: 1 Cor 13 vs 4 to 7.

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Part 6.

The Fifth 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 is not puffed up**

N.I.V. **Charity it is not proud.**

I have looked at what some commentators say about the words of Paul, that charity (love) is not '*puffed up*', or '*proud*'.

J B Phillips says: "Nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance".

Barns says: "It means, to blow, to puff, to pant; then to inflate with pride, and vanity, and self-esteem".

Gill says: "Is not puffed up swelled with pride, and elated with a vain conceit of himself, of his parts and abilities, of his learning, eloquence, wisdom, and knowledge"

The NRSV of the Bible uses the word '*arrogant*'.

Of all the various quotes I have looked at, I still consider the K.J. to be the best one to use in this study, for as Gill says charity (love) is not *puffed up*, swelled with pride.

What we have to realise when looking at this *aspect of love* is this. Paul is not referring to being proud of someone else, and neither is he considering the pride one can have because of the achievement of his wife, son or daughter. He is referring to people who view themselves, not in the light of how others see them, but in their own light.

It is amazing how people view themselves. I remember that I was feeling very low in spirit on one particular occasion, and at the time I was ministering at some services away from home. On speaking to a colleague about how worthless I was feeling, he replied, "I don't feel like that at all, I have plenty to offer". He saw himself as somebody, and was puffed up by his own view.

The Greek word that is used by Paul for '*puffed up*' means 'to be proud, vain, arrogant, to be inflated with pride'.

I think the best illustration of this type of attitude is to be seen in **Isaiah 14 vs 12-15** where we read.

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

For the N.I.V. readers it says.

12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!

13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.

14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

15 But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

It is clear from what we read here in these verses, that Lucifer (Satan) held a very responsible position prior to being cast out of heaven. The reason for his downfall is quite apparent when these verses are read.

There is a phrase that is used of some people and it is this. 'They are too big for their own boots'. The folly of Lucifer (Satan) was that he saw himself as being bigger than he actually was. He, like all other beings in heaven, had the privilege of being created at that time to function in a role that was specifically his.

What is noticeable is how he became *puffed up* with pride. The favour of God, is not to inflate us to the degree that we try to rise to a position above the one God has placed us in. The favour of God is so that we are where he wants us to be, which is higher than where we were. Paul, when writing to the Ephesians, chapter 2 vs 4-10.

4 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

5 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

6 *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

7 *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

9 *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

There are three stages revealed here by Paul in these verses, each one takes us upwards, not downwards. Verse 5 *quickened*, v 6 *raised (and) sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*. This is the height to which God in Christ has taken us. To think that we can go beyond the final one, which is to '*sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*' is to be raised by self, which means being '*puffed up*'.

If we look at the scenario recorded in **Isaiah 14**, we see how Lucifer (Satan), started off in a high position but became *puffed up* with pride to the degree that he thought he could exalt himself above God and the throne of God. Because of this, notice how the opposite of what has happened to us in Christ, happens to him. **Isaiah 14 verses 12 & 15**

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations.

15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

It was pride that caused him to exalt himself above his station and this is what brought him down. Paul says that if you have the love of God in your heart, this divine love in you will not *puff* itself up.

Augustine said: "It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as angels".

Winston Churchill said: "I know of no case where a man added to his dignity by standing on it".

There is evidence in the N.T that substantiates the thought that God on occasions will allow something to take place that will keep someone's feet on the ground as a deterrent, specifically sent to prevent them becoming inflated and *puffed up*.

Take the example of Paul when he wrote in **2 Cor 12. vs 1-10**

1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

The controversy concerning Paul's thorn in the flesh has been the subject of much speculation over the years. I do not intend to enter into it at this time, because my reference to it is specifically related to the word, '*not puffed up*'.

Geneva Bible Footnotes says: "Why God will have even his best servants to be vexed by Satan, and by every type of temptations: that is, lest they should be too much *puffed up*".

John Gills Expositor says: "Over much elated in his mind, and swelled with a vain conceit of himself through the abundance of revelations."

There is no doubt about the fact that Paul even though he had received so much from God concerning the Church, and the ministries in it, never allowed himself to be exalted to the degree that he was *puffed up* with pride. He knew the great value of this *aspect of love* in his heart for God, so never got swelled headed, or thought of himself above his station.

We need now to look at this *aspect of love* as it relates to each of us, because it is vitally important for us not to be *puffed up* to the degree that we think we have something others do not have.

Pride can affect us in so many ways if we allow it. There is personal pride, religious pride, pride of race. The main aspect of pride I believe we need to consider, is the one that relates to us personally. Being *puffed up* or being proud is an attitude of the heart. I think that to have a personal attitude that I am higher in standing, and better righteously than anyone else, is to have a wrong spirit.

Someone has said. "There is no room for God in a man who is full of himself". How true these words are. For it is the absence of all that hinders our spiritual growth and

development, that will see us mature into a people, who will not see how important we are, but how necessary God is, in all areas of life.

Being *puffed up* has to do with self. It has to do with the way we act and see ourselves. Let us see ourselves in Christ, seated **with** Him, **not above** Him. Let us not have a high opinion of ourselves otherwise we shall be brought low. We are what we are in Christ, not because of what we have done, but because of Him. We glory in Him, not in the Church, not in our denomination, and not in our organisation. We glory in Christ and place Him in the highest position of all.