

LENT DEVOTION

Austin Christian Fellowship of India (ACFI)

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"He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity, and honor" (Proverbs 21:21). As a believer pursues righteousness he/she ought to pursue "love" also. Because "love" is also one of the characters of God just like righteousness is. "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, it always hopeful, and endures through every circumstances" (1 Corinthians 13:4--7).

The present day culture confuses love and lust. Unlike that, God's kind of love is directed toward others, not inward toward ourselves. It is utterly unselfish! This kind of "divine love" goes against our natural inclinations. It is possible to pursue this kind of love only with the help of the Spirit of God. He helps us to set aside our own instincts and desires. He also helps us to give love while expecting nothing in return. That is exactly what God did. He allowed His Son to die the death of a sinner, in our place, "while we were still His enemies" and dead in sin. God paid the highest price He could pay, the life of His dearest Son, just for us. Jesus accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, and then offered us the new life that He had bought for us. This kind of sacrificial love benefits others more than it does to "self."

Friends, "love" is key to walking in the light for if a believer walks in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from every sin" (1 John 1:7). A believer cannot grow spiritually while hating others. Christian love is not just a feeling or inclination but a choice. A believer chooses to have concern over other people's well-being and treat them with respect, whether or not we feel affection toward the person who offends or is irritable.

But when a believer pursues "righteousness and love" the Word of God assures life, prosperity, and honor. The system of the world aspires to attain this - the future, fortune, and the fame - through various means. It uses the power of money, mind, and muscle to influence others for "selfish reasons." But the Word of God assures a believer that they are given in their pursuit for "righteousness and love."