

Love Thinketh No Evil

By Rodney Nulph

In contrast to the passing age of miraculous gifts, Paul, by inspiration's pen, wrote of love. While miraculous gifts were about to cease when Paul penned 1 Corinthians 13, love was a permanent blessing of the church. "Love never fails..." (1 Corinthians 13:8a). The power of love is clearly seen by Paul's introductory remarks (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Without love, nothing else really matters! One of the wonderful characteristics of biblical love is that it "...thinketh no evil" (1 Corinthians 13:5b KJV) or "is not...resentful" (ESV).

Firstly, consider the **interpretation**. The word translated "thinketh" comes from a Greek verb (*logizomai*) that is an accounting term, which means to "credit someone's account." Therefore, to "think no evil" is to not hold grudges or past hurts done to us by others. There are always enough hurts in life to go around! If a person is not vigilant and diligent, a long ledger of all the hurts done to us by others can be impressed upon one's mind. Then, bitterness and resentment ensue, and before long, we are so consumed with hurt that we cannot see anything else.

Secondly, consider the **demonstration**. The Old Testament patriarch Joseph demonstrated what it really means to "think no evil." After being laughed and scorned and on the verge of being murdered, Joseph was sold into slavery. Joseph was treated more severely than most people would treat a criminal. Did Joseph have a **right** to become bitter from the human perspective? Just imagine your own flesh and blood doing to you what Joseph's family did to him! How would you react? How would I react? Yet, after years that could never be lived again, Joseph did not account the wrongs that happened to him against the evil doers. "But as for you, ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Genesis 50:20). The first Christian martyr, Stephen, also demonstrated what it means to "think no evil." When Stephen's godliness and powerful, scriptural preaching fell on the ears of "religious people," they behaved in an amazingly ungodly way (Acts 7:54ff). Religious people throwing stones? What if you assembled with the saints and someone threw stones at you, how would you react? Sadly, folks often react the very opposite way that Stephen did (Acts 7:60). While those stones may not be literal stones, we all have had some stones of insult, hurt and harshness thrown at us by our fellow "religious" friends. Some Christians carry a list in their hearts of all the negative things that have ever happened to them. Instead of allowing those experiences to make them better, they become bitter and sometimes even leave the Lord! Surely, the greatest demonstration of "thinketh no evil" is manifested by Jesus on the cross. The sinless, suffering Savior gasped, "...Father, forgive them..." (Luke 23:34b). Did Jesus deserve this punishment? Did His murderers deserve His forgiveness and love? Do I deserve His mercy? Do you?

Lastly, consider the **application**. What can we do when we suffer unjust actions from others? We must be willing to **release**; “let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice” (Ephesians 4:31). Often, it is a decision we must be diligent to make to simply not allow our thoughts to center on bad things and negative experiences! Gandhi correctly said, “I will not let anyone walk through my mind with their dirty feet.” We must be willing to **repay**; “and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...” (Ephesians 4:32a). So often when we think of “repaying” someone for their evil deeds, we think of negative revenge. However, God’s children repay good for evil (Romans 12:17-21). While this is certainly not an easy command to obey, it is surely the best way to deal with hurt brought on by others. We must be willing to **remember**; “...even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32). How many times have I sinned against God? If a perfect, holy God can forgive our trespasses, we can surely forgive others (Matthew 18:21ff).

There are far too many Christians enslaved in their own negative thoughts. We can allow life’s bruises to infect our entire beings. Do you have a list of wrongs tallied in your mind of bruises from another? Do you find yourself thinking of all the unpleasant things that have happened to you? If so, give those thoughts over to God. Rid your mind of those diseased thoughts today. Remember, “love...thinketh no evil”!