

# CHARITY & ITS FRUITS

A Study of 1 Corinthians 13 based on the sermons of Jonathan Edwards

## Sermon 7

“Love does not...insist on its own way.”

### 1 Corinthians 13:5b

Doctrine—“A Christian spirit is opposite to a \_\_\_\_\_ spirit.”

“The \_\_\_\_\_ which the Fall brought upon the soul of man consists very much in that he lost his nobler and more extensive principles, and fell wholly under the government of self-love...But God hath in mercy to miserable man contrived in the work of redemption, and by the glorious gospel of His Son, to bring the soul of man out of its confinement, and again to infuse those noble and divine principles by which it was governed at first.” (160-161)

Edwards then **first** proceeds to show “what is that selfishness to which a Christian spirit is contrary.” He writes, “A Christian spirit is not contrary to all self-love. It is not a thing contrary to Christianity that a man should love himself; or what is the same thing, that he should love his own happiness. Christianity does not tend to destroy man’s love to his own happiness; it would therein tend to destroy \_\_\_\_\_.” (162)

“The Scripture from one end of the Bible to the other is full of things which are held forth to work upon a principle of self-love. Such are all the \_\_\_\_\_ and threatenings of the Word of God, and all its calls and invitations; its counsels to seek our own good, and its warnings to beware of misery.” (162)

“The self-love which is the selfishness to which a Christian spirit is contrary is only an \_\_\_\_\_ self-love.” Edwards then seeks to explain first what this “inordinate self-love” is not, “(it) does not consist in our love of our happiness being absolutely considered in a too high \_\_\_\_\_...The alteration which is made in a man when he is converted and sanctified is not by diminishing his love to happiness, but only by regulating it with respect to its exercises and influence, and the objects to which it leads.” (163)

“If their love of happiness is diminished by their being made holy, that will diminish their happiness itself; for the less anyone loves happiness the less he relishes it, and consequently is the less happy...when a saint increases in grace, he is made still \_\_\_\_\_ happy...when God makes a soul happy which was before miserable, or makes a soul more happy than it was, he continues the same love of happiness...So that if we consider men’s love of themselves or their own happiness absolutely, the inordinacy of self-love does not consist in its being in too great a degree, because it is alike in all.” (163)

“Though the degree of men’s love of their own happiness taken absolutely may in all be the same, yet the proportion that their love of themselves bears to their love of others may not be the same...And so its influence becomes inordinate by reason of the weakness or absence of other-love which should restrain and regulate its influence...Man before the Fall loved himself or his own happiness, I suppose, as much as after his fall. But then a superior principle of divine love had the throne, it being in such strength that it wholly regulated and directed self-love. But since the Fall this principle of divine love has lost its strength, or rather is dead. So that self-love continuing in its former strength and having no superior principle to \_\_\_\_\_ it, become inordinate in its influence, and governs where it should be only a servant.” (164-165)

One other way that self-love can be inordinate is when a person places all his happiness “in things which are confined to \_\_\_\_\_...and this is selfishness.” (165)

**Secondly**, Edwards gives several evidences showing that a Christian spirit is contrary to a \_\_\_\_\_ spirit.

“A Christian spirit seeks to please and glorify God...Christianity requires that we should make God and Christ our \_\_\_\_\_ Christians, so far as they live like Christians, live so that for them to live is Christ.” (167)

“Those who have a Christian spirit have a spirit to seek the good of their fellow creatures...we ought to \_\_\_\_\_ others’ spiritual good...A Christian spirit will dispose persons to seek others’ wealth and outward estate.” (167)

“As it is a merciful spirit, it disposes persons to consider not only their own difficulties but also the burdens and afflictions which others suffer...A person of a selfish spirit is ready to make much of the afflictions which he \_\_\_\_\_ is under, as if he stood in greater necessity of those and those things than anybody else...” (168)

“It (a Christian spirit) is a liberal spirit. It does not only seek the good of others who are in affliction...but is communicative to all, and forward to promote the \_\_\_\_\_ of all, as there is opportunity.” (168)

“A Christian spirit is contrary to a selfish spirit as it disposes persons to be \_\_\_\_\_ spirited...he is greatly concerned for the good of the public community to which he belongs, and particularly of the town where he dwells...for the good of his country...for the good of the church and people of God in general.” (168-169)

“A Christian spirit disposes them in many cases to forego and part with their own things for the sake of the things of \_\_\_\_\_.” (170)

**Thirdly**, Edwards gives the doctrine to support his conclusion that Christian love is contrary to selfishness.

“Nature cannot go beyond self-love; but all that men do is in some way or other from this root...self-love is the sum of natural principles, as divine love is of supernatural principles. This divine love is no plant which grows naturally in such a soil as the heart of man. But it is a plant \_\_\_\_\_ into the soul out of heaven; it is something divine, something from the holy and blessed Spirit of God, and so has its foundation in God, and not in self.” (172)

“How Christian love is in a peculiar manner above and contrary to a selfish spirit appears by this, it goes out even to \_\_\_\_\_. There is that in the nature and tendency of it to go out to the unthankful and evil, and to those that injure and hate us, which is directly contrary to the tendency of a selfish principle, and quite above nature.” (173)

“They who have true love to God love Him so as wholly to devote themselves to God...They who have true love to God, love God as God, and as the Supreme Good; whereas the nature of selfishness is to set up \_\_\_\_\_ for God, and to make an idol of self. That being which men respect as God, they devote all to. They who idolize self devote all to self, but they who love God as God devote all to Him.” (173)

Edwards then discussing how in the OT the command to love our neighbor as ourselves was given in Leviticus 19:18 (Jesus quoted this verse in summarizing the second great command in Matthew 22). Edwards then discussed the words of Jesus in John 13:34 and writes, “It is the same commandment which Moses gave as to the substance of it, with a new enforcement and light annexed. For this rule of loving others as Christ has loved us does more clearly and in a \_\_\_\_\_ degree show our duty and obligation with respect to our neighbor, than as Moses revealed it.” (174)

“Christ set His love on those who were enemies... By His love to men He has so espoused them and united His heart to them that He is pleased in many respects to look on them as Himself...Christ, as it were, spent Himself for us...He thus loved us without any expectation of ever being requited by us for His love...for He knew that we were poor, maimed, halt, blind, empty, needy vagabonds, who could only receive from Him, and could render \_\_\_\_\_ to Him.” (175-176)

“Our love to others will not depend on \_\_\_\_\_ love to us; but we shall do as Christ did to us, love them, though enemies.” (176)

Application-Edwards appeals for his hearers to consider several things:

“You should not seek your own things only, for you are not your own. You have not made yourself, nor are you made for yourself; you are neither the author or end of your being. Nor is it you that \_\_\_\_\_ yourself in being, nor is it you that provides for yourself; you are not dependent on yourself. But there is another who hath made you, and preserves you, and provides for you.” (176)

“If you will devote yourself to God as making a sacrifice of your own interest to Him, you will not throw yourself away; though you seem to neglect yourself, and to deny yourself, God \_\_\_\_\_ take care of you...” (177)