

## Spiritual Love, the Perfect Bond of Unity

**Colossians 3:14** Moreover, above all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Last week we studied that this love is not just any love but is the love as a fruit of the Holy Spirit; then we studied how to put on this Spiritual Love by faith in the Holy Spirit.

**which is the perfect bond of unity** not as simple as it sounds.

Let's start off with the relative pronoun **which**. What is the antecedent of this pronoun, the putting on of Spiritual Love or Spiritual Love itself? Actually, it is the subject of the entire discussion: *put on love, since Spiritual Love is the perfect bond of unity*.

**which is Present Active Indicative** of the absolute status quo verb – to be

**which is the perfect** not in the manuscripts

**which is bond** How we understand this word guides in understanding this last phrase: *to join together, a bond, like the tendon or ligament of the bones, that which holds somethings together — or as Eduard Lohse: fastening separate items together to make them united; it is that which gives coherence to something.*

Question: In context, what is being 'bound' together? In context, the objects being bound together are the seven virtues of verses 12-13:

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- (1) heart of compassion,
- (2) kindness
- (3) humility
- (4) gentleness in controversy
- (5) longsuffering
- (6) bearing with one another and
- (7) forgiving each other.

It is Spiritual Love that binds all this fruit of the Holy Spirit together in a believer.

Now as a result, it is Spiritual Love that binds believers with one another.

**which is bond of unity** this is translated in various ways: *unity, harmony, perfectness, 'which ties everything completely together,' perfect bond, perfection.* All these are attempts to convey the meaning behind the Greek word *teleiotes* which simply means *perfection!* In classical Greek, this word was used to denote a state of being or existence. It was used to refer to the end or actual accomplishment of a goal. This word is used just twice in the New Testament, here in Colossians 3:14 and in

**Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,**

Take a look and see if you can figure out which word is the translation of our Greek word. Remember our word means perfection, or the

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accomplishment of a goal. If you said **maturity** you are correct. Spiritual Maturity is the goal of perfection of the teaching of the entire Word of God. Here is the standard of evaluating a pastor-teacher. Can his teaching take you to spiritual maturity? If not, find someone else whose teaching of the Word of God will take you to spiritual maturity. Not his building program or how he makes you feel. But, does his teaching of the Word of God open the Word of God to you so that you have a mature understanding of the Word of God and a mature relationship with Jesus Christ and loving others in Spiritual Love by the Holy Spirit? This is “*the highest stage of Christian teaching*” volume 6 of The New Testament Greek-English Dictionary. And people, only the Word of God has *teleiotes* — teaching that leads to perfection.

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Stated simply, without Spiritual Love, these virtues would be lacking in perfection. Or just the existence of any or even all of these Christian virtues without Spiritual Love there would be no perfection. Perfection is the key here, the goal, set by God Himself. And it is God who has so established this perfection in the need of Spiritual Love. Without Spiritual Love the existence of all seven of these Christian virtues would not unite together into that necessary harmonious perfection that God demands. They exist apart from Spiritual Love by the power of the Holy Spirit, but it is Spiritual Love from the Holy Spirit that has the power of making all these into perfection as to God’s goal.

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Question: How does Spiritual Love cause all these virtues to be bonded to perfection? The answer to this question is a detailed study of 1 Cor. 13:4-8 in the list of 16 impacts or effects of Spiritual Love. What we begin to grasp is that in 1 Cor. 13 and here in Col. 3:12-14 it is spiritual perfection that is a collective concept of all 7 virtues in Col. 3:12-13 plus the force of Spiritual Love.

Let's note some of the absolutes of Spiritual Love that we have studied.

1. Spiritual Love is the New Commandment by our Lord in John 13:34-35
2. Spiritual Love is fruit of the Holy Spirit. Gal. 5:22
3. Spiritual Love is the love that is expressed by Jesus Christ Himself. John 13:34
4. Spiritual Love is the superior way of life for every Christian. 1 Cor. 12:31
5. Spiritual Love is the alchemizing or transforming force of common services of the Christian into something precious, valuable and profitable to the believer. 1 Cor. 13:1-3
6. Then, in 1 Cor. 13:4-8 are listed 16 impacts of the force of Spiritual Love.
7. Spiritual Love is the bond that makes perfection. Col. 3:14

So, I hope you are beginning to grasp just how important Spiritual Love is to God and to Jesus Christ and to the Holy Spirit and should be to you.

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What is your goal in your study of the Bible? When you go to church, when you sit in private and read and study the Word of God, what is your goal, why are you doing this? For momentary peace? To handle just a current problem? To check something out that someone has said? To know more than someone else? etc.

Or is your goal, spiritual maturity? A relationship with Jesus Christ that crosses over every area of your life? Your single life, your marriage, your work, your social life, your very reason for existing?

Spiritual Love is the bond of Christian perfection! In the individual Christian and in the assembly of Christians.

To fully appreciate why Spiritual Love is mentioned last in Col. 3:12-14, we must remember the analogy set up by Paul, as ‘putting on’ garments of clothing. It is the last piece to be ‘put on.’ Therefore, it is most important for it holds all the other pieces together and is the one that is seen by the world, angels and all other believers and unbelievers. This is why Jesus Christ, in giving the New Commandment, said it is when the world sees Spiritual Love they know that we belong to Jesus Christ.

**John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**

**John 13:35 “By this (by loving in Spiritual Love) ~~all men~~ (angels and mankind) will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

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Please remember that this is not speaking of human love from our flesh nature. Nothing from our flesh nature is acceptable to God. It is dead before God.

**John 6:63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.**

Since this is not speaking of human love it must be love as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Gal. 5:22

Therefore, if we grasp the full significance of the New Commandment, what is the perfection that this Spiritual Love produces?

Jesus Christ Himself: The perfection from God now seen through the believer who consistently walks by Faith in the Holy Spirit and consistently reflects the love of Christ or Christ Himself. If your goal is Christ in you, Christ reflected out from you, then it is the fullness of Col. 3:12-14; and 1 Cor. 13:4-6. The fullness, the completion, the perfection of Jesus Christ in you.

And if they see Jesus Christ in you, they are seeing the Glory of God Himself!

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Spiritual Love is the perfection of all these virtues by the Holy Spirit.

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But, Spiritual Love is therefore the perfection between believers. Not that Spiritual Love should be the perfection between believers, it is! If this perfection does not exist between believers, then we know what is absent: Spiritual Love!

Let's see where we are in this great chapter of the Bible (Colossians Chapter 3).

1. Since you have been raised up with Christ:
  - a. Keep seeking the things above (where Jesus Christ is sitting at the right of the Father).
  - b. Set your mind on the things above (not on things of the earth).
2. Consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed.
  - a. For the wrath of God will come.
  - b. When you were unbelievers you walked in these things.
3. Now that you are a new spiritual creation, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive speech. And do not lie to one another.
4. Put on (as clothing) a new self, being renewed throughout your life as a believer to a true knowledge of Jesus Christ, in whom there is no distinction between believers but all one in Christ.
5. So, since you are chosen of God, holy and beloved put on 7 virtues that will characterize you as a believer:
  - (1) heart of compassion

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- (2) kindness
- (3) humility
- (4) gentleness
- (5) longsuffering
- (6) bearing with one another
- (7) forgiving each other.

6. Above all, put on Spiritual Love which is the bond of perfection of all the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

7. Three concluding commands:

- a. Continue being at peace given by the Holy Spirit.
- b. Continually thankful to God the Father.
- c. To continue all your life getting to Know the teachings about Jesus Christ.



Continue being at peace given by the Holy Spirit.

**Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body;**

The verse starts off with a concluding conjunction: **And** then we have a definite article, specifying or identifying **The Peace** which is further identified: **and The Peace of Christ.**

The King James reads **The peace of God** but a correct reading of the better manuscripts reads **The peace of Christ** The King James was more influenced by Colossians 1:2...**and peace from God our Father** than by



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manuscripts that prefer **The peace of Christ**. It can easily be understood how **the peace from God our Father** is in fact **The peace of Christ**.

What is meant by ‘the peace of Christ?’

You will know that you are in the Angelic Conflict or the spiritual warfare when all you cry out for is inner peace! Not money, not success, not things or even not people but please God give me inner peace that I might sleep! Well, here is the good news: you can have this inner peace, called here the peace of Christ.

***Doctrine of Peace***

I. First, let’s just look at the word-concept of peace itself.

*Eirene* where we get the girls name, *Irene*. Opposite of war or dissension; peace, harmony. Spiritually: peace of mind, tranquility existing because of imputed Divine Righteousness (+R) and Justice – reconciliation with God. But there are other categories of understanding of this word *peace*: health, welfare, even prosperity or even happiness. This word is much like the Hebrew *shalom* — peace, joy, welfare etc.

But the word carries two fundamentally opposite ideas:

- a) what is present: harmony, tranquility, peace
- b) what is absent: absence of war or turmoil or hostility or any grievance between parties.

A person may be prosperous but have no peace inside his soul; while a person may be doing very poorly as far as the world is concerned and have great peace in his soul.

A person may be at war with someone but have inner peace in his soul.

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II. There are two ways of looking at our Peace and God:

1. Peace with God and Peace of God
2. In Rom. 5:1 **peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ** while in Phil. 4:7 **and the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** Please note that Jesus Christ is involved in both concepts of peace and God.
3. Peace with God is a *peace* that is from the cross work of Jesus Christ. When one believes in Jesus Christ, he is in a state of peace with God — on the cross Jesus Christ broke down the barrier between man and God and established peace *with* God. This peace is available to everyone – anyone who will believe in Jesus Christ as Savior.

**Peace of God** this is *peace* as a fruit of the Holy Spirit... Gal. 5:22 **the fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy** inner happiness, **peace** inner tranquility, **longsuffering** patience in regard to others, **kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control** Every believer is in a state of peace with God by faith in Jesus Christ. But, in our lives the believer may or may not experience inner peace!

This peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. This peace is not based on the circumstances of life but on the power and filling by the Holy Spirit. By faith in the Holy Spirit. So, every believer should know how to be filled by the Holy Spirit by grace through faith.

4. Peace with God by faith in Jesus Christ, Salvation 1 Peace. Rom 5:1

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5. Peace of God faith in the Holy Spirit; this is a peace that comes to the believer during his life when he is in faith in the Holy Spirit  
Salvation 2 Peace. Rom. 8:6; 14:17; 15:13; Gal. 5:22

The Holy Spirit was given to us the moment we believed in Jesus Christ (Indwelling of the Holy Spirit) so that the believer can experience in his life, his position with God and with Jesus Christ; like imputed Divine Righteousness (+R) — living a +R life; and here with peace. We have eternal peace with God due to our position in Jesus Christ but we can experience this peace by the power of the Holy Spirit who will pour this peace into our hearts regardless of the circumstances in life.

6. Peace with God is not experienced. It is our eternal position with God and the believer can never lose it. However, peace of God can be experienced regardless of circumstances in life. It is fruit of the Holy Spirit but it can be lost when we stop walking by faith.
7. Peace with God can never change. But you can lose the peace of God by not walking by faith in the Holy Spirit.
8. Both Peace **with** God and Peace **of** God are provided by the person and work of Jesus Christ. Compare: Rom. 5:1 **peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ** and Phil. 4:7 **peace of God in Christ Jesus**.