

# Qualities of Love – Is Discerning

*1 Corinthians*

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**Bible Text:** 1 Corinthians 13:6

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1 Corinthians 13 that's what we are this evening. Verse 1,

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never ends.

Verse 6 says again, "it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth."

Let's pray together.

*Father in heaven, it's a joy to be together and to be together, Lord, in your presence, gathered as your people to give you praise and to receive from you as we study your word together. We are reliant upon you in this hour. We trust you, Lord, to accomplish good things in our midst, that tonight, Lord, you would bless your church and at the same time call the lost to faith in your Son. Help me tonight, Lord, be at work so that the sermon would be living and useful. We thank you that your word, Lord, is living and active and sharp, able to get down to the innermost part of our being and so, Lord, we do trust you and we ask for these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.*

I think you would agree that we are living in a time of absolute crisis when it comes to the subject of love. The crisis has to do with how we define love, it has to do with how we measure love, it has to do with what we praise as love. What we learn in verse 6 in these next 2 statements, the word of God says that love does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. What we learn there shatters the false perceptions of love that so many people promote and if we we'll just listen tonight, if we'll just take into our hearts what we see here, it will keep us straight. It will help us to really understand what

love is. What we see here tonight challenges common lies and deceptions that exist in the moral realm, in the relational realm, in the doctrinal realm and in the realm of ministry. Tonight we'll be reminded that what many people call love isn't love and what really is love may look very different from what some would expect.

We're going to look at these 2 statements tonight under 3 headings. We're going to talk about love's discernment, love's desires and love's decisions. Love's discernment, love's desires and love's decision. We begin tonight thinking about discernment because right away we recognize that love sees. Love is able to recognize that there is a wrong and there is a right. The word translated "wrong doing" there is actually more general than that, in fact, it's translated in some versions as "unrighteousness," which I think is right. Love does not rejoice at unrighteousness but it rejoices with the truth so that right away we recognize that what is being described is the fact that love makes choices. Love does not exist in this gray zone of neutrality. Love is not accepting of everything. On the one side of the ledger we're told what is incompatible with love: love does not coincide with, love cannot cooperate with, love will not rejoice in that which is unrighteous. On the other side of the ledger we're told what love agrees with, what love takes joy in, what love is in complete accord with and that is the truth. So love makes distinctions. Love recognizes there is such a thing as unrighteousness and love recognizes there is such a thing as truth and so it operates in the realm of discernment. Love is not without discernment. Love practices discernment and sets its favor on that which is pleasing to God.

First of all, consider that love recognizes unrighteousness. Verse 6 says, "it does not rejoice at wrongdoing," or unrighteousness. So for true godly love there is such a thing as sin. The word here has been translated as "injustice, iniquity, wrongdoing, evil, unrighteousness." What exactly does it refer to? I think the short answer is: anything that is not in accord with the Gospel either in the realm of belief or in the realm of behavior. Anything that isn't reflective of the will of God. Anything that would grieve the Holy Spirit. Whether it be in the realm of thought or in the realm of practice, that is unrighteousness and it exists in more than one realm.

I want you to keep your Bible marker here and go to the book of Romans 1, if you would, please. Romans 1 and, in fact, in Romans 1 we get a very clear definition of what unrighteousness is. By the way, the word here in Romans 1 translated "unrighteousness" is the same word used in 1 Corinthians 13:6. Romans 1, look at verse 18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth." You see, there is unrighteousness and there is truth. What is truth? What is righteousness? It is God being put on display in terms of who he really is, what he really says, what he is really pleased with. For God to be unveiled before our eyes in truth, that's righteousness. Unrighteousness is the suppression of that truth. It is the desire and the effort to suppress the truth about God, to suppress the words of God, to put away that which would please God and to substitute for it with that which is displeasing to God.

Verse 19 says, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them." He goes on to tell us what all God has revealed, "his invisible attributes, his divine nature," and on it goes. "They are without excuse," he says, "For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged," verse 23, "the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles." This is the essence of unrighteousness, to suppress the truth about God but to embrace something in its stead so that we can say that unrighteousness exists in the realm of thought. When we suppress the truth and we embrace in our thinking a philosophy, a theology, an idea about God that isn't true, when we suppress the truth that God has made known and we substitute for it with some sinful conception of God, some sinful conception of the world, some sinful conception of our existence, that is unrighteousness and the love of God cannot rejoice in that. So that God's love is discerning, first of all, in the realm of philosophy. It's discerning in the realm of thought. If you're walking in the love of God, you must examine not only how you think but how the world around you thinks and measure it by the standard of truth.

Not only, though, is there unrighteousness in the realm of philosophy or thought, there is also unrighteousness in the realm of behavior. Morality. Look down at verse 28, "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done." You see, there are things that ought not to be done. "They were filled with all manner of," what? "Unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them." Unrighteousness stands at the head of all that follows in that description because all that follows in that description can be summed up by that word "unrighteousness." Filled with all manner of unrighteousness. Unrighteousness in attitudes. Unrighteousness in speech. He talks about gossips, slanderers. Unrighteousness in deeds. Love cannot approve. Love will not approve of that which is unrighteous in the moral realm.

So when we walk in the love of God, we do not set our approval on that which is unrighteous in the realm of thought. When we walk in the love of God, we do not set our approval on that which is unrighteous in the realm of behavior. And then specifically, we can also say that love, the love of God, cannot approve of, cannot rejoice in, that which is unrighteous in the realm of theology. I want you to look at 2 Thessalonians 2. I think you can recognize right away how practical this is, how timely this is in terms of the generation that we're living in because for many quarters and in many cases what we are hearing is that if we are really loving, we won't be so caught up in the matter of doctrine. I mean, if we really love, if we just love, is it really that important what people believe? I mean, shouldn't we be loving regardless of what someone is teaching or regardless of what someone attributes to God in terms of teaching?

Notice how the appearance of the antichrist one day is described in 2 Thessalonians 2, look at verse 8, "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one," how is this lawless one going to come on the scene? "By the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love," what? "The truth and so be saved." They will not be truth lovers. Verse 11, "Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but," what did they have pleasure in? What does the Bible say? "Unrighteousness." You see, if I don't have pleasure in the truth, what do I have pleasure in? Unrighteousness.

So there is the general unrighteousness of man in his mind suppressing the truth about God even that which has been recorded in his very nature, trying to suppress and put away what can be known about God by nature. There is then the living out of that unrighteousness in the moral realm in attitude and words and deeds and then specifically when it comes to those who are deceived, those who will perish, the reason why they perish is because they have no delight in the truth but they take delight in unrighteousness. They reject true doctrine and embrace false doctrine. Look back at 1 Corinthians 13:6 tells us that "love does not rejoice at unrighteousness," which is to say that love recognizes that there is such a thing as unrighteousness. Love is not turning a blind eye to the matters of right and wrong, truth and error, rather love recognizes there is a difference.

Love recognizes not only unrighteousness but, verse 6 tells us that "love rejoices with the truth." So love is discerning. It is able to recognize not only the error but it recognizes what is right. What is the truth here? What does he have in mind? Again, I believe it's general, it is everything that agrees with the Gospel in terms of belief and practice. Everything that is right from the standpoint of thinking, everything that is right from the standpoint of attitudes, everything that is right from the standpoint of behavior, everything that is right from the standpoint of theology. Love rejoices in that. So that in all of these areas, love is not neutral and it's not passive, it doesn't turn a blind eye to right or wrong.

It loves the truth, it does not rejoice in unrighteousness and yet consider how often love is presented that way. "You know, we just don't need to be so judgmental, we need to be loving. We don't need to take such a firm position, we just need to be loving. Can't we accept it all? Can't we embrace it all? Because after all, isn't that what it means to be loving?" Verse 6 reminds us that's not what it means at all. In fact, true love can't operate like that. We've got to remember that when we talk about the love of God, beloved, we're talking about that which characterizes God. This is God's love. This is love that we only possess because he has saved us. Love is what God practices. Love is what we see embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ when he walked on this earth. We see it on the pages of Scripture. Think of it this way: the Holy Spirit, the fruit of his activity in our lives is love, isn't it? The fruit of the Spirit is, what's the first thing that is mentioned? Love. But who authored this book, the Bible? Who is the author of Scripture? The Holy Spirit is and

throughout this book that we study tonight, isn't there doctrine? Isn't there a recognition of truth? Isn't there a recognition of error? I mean, you study the New Testament epistles and I think it is absolutely true to say that there is more emphasis on doctrine at the beginning of each of those letters than on practice. Practice follows doctrine. Over and over again God says, "Here is what we are to believe." Then once he has established what we are to believe, he says, "Here is how you live it out." And that is the Holy Spirit's activity. How can we say that we are walking in the love that the Holy Spirit teaches when we don't have the interest reflected in the word of God that was authored by the Holy Spirit? He's interested in doctrine. He has given us a Bible full of it.

So the first thing we see in 1 Corinthians 13:6 is that love is discerning. Love is discernment. It recognizes unrighteousness and truth. But we not only see discernment in verse 6, we also see desire. Love is known not only by what it affirms, love is known by its affections. When we remember again that we're talking about God's love, then to walk in the love of God is to love what God loves and to hate what he hates and to love other people means that we love others in the way that God loves them. Love isn't self styled. The model for love is the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Father, the Holy Spirit, what we find in the pages of Scripture. This is the model of love. Loving what God loves, hating what God hates. Loving people in the way that God wants people loved.

Does God rejoice in sin? Does God ever set his approval on sin? Is God passive in the face of sin? Does God embrace in any way false teaching about himself? Does God in his word act like that doesn't really matter? Well, don't forget we're talking about his love. Does God find pleasure in truth? Is God the God of absolute truth? Is he a God of light? Can we say along with 1 John, "There is no darkness in him whatsoever"? If God is the God of light and if God hates sin, not only in practice but in belief, then if we're walking in his love, that's what he's going to teach us in terms of what our attitude should be. How about loving people? Are people destroyed by sin? Are people destroyed for lack of knowledge? Isn't it true in the Old Testament that the people of Israel, the word of God says that the people perished for lack of knowledge? Can't you go through the Old Testament and see where the people of Israel were deceived by false prophets, led down roads of destruction by false teachers? Does God love what destroys people? Then if we're walking in the love of God we're going to care about what destroys people and what benefits people. People aren't benefited by error, they are benefited by truth so that I cannot love God, I cannot love people apart from hating sin in all of its forms and affirming truth in all of its forms. Love not only recognizes truth and distinguishes it from unrighteousness, love positively rejoices in truth but cannot, does not, rejoice in anything else, in anything that is contrary to the truth. I want to ask you: is that how you think about love? Do you think about God's love as being discerning? And do you think about God's love in terms of desire and delight in that which is true and a holy kind of despite for that which is error?

You say, "Well, how does this get expressed practically?" Let's talk about love's decision. If I do not rejoice in unrighteousness but I rejoice with the truth, what is that going to look like practically? Well, we need to be, first of all, in our personal life. Let me never imagine that I'm walking in the love of God if I'm not sensitive to sin and sensitive to

truth in my own life. If we're walking in the love of the Holy Spirit, what are we going to be doing? We're going to be confessing our sin. Whatever we see in our life that is contrary to the truth we will have a holy hatred for it. Whatever we see in our own life that is contrary to the truth, we will identify it for what it is according to God's word and we will then want to deal with it in accordance with God's word, repenting of it, putting it away, putting it to death in our lives. How many people are there in this world tonight who say they love the Lord but they are not dealing with the sin that is in their life? Sometimes glaring areas of sin. I mean, things that are not even questionable. Clear violations of the word of God. In some cases, these people are being called upon by people who love them to get out of their sin but they continue in it, all the while saying, "I love the Lord."

Now listen, if you're walking in God's love, you can't rejoice in unrighteousness, you rejoice with the truth. And not only do you deal with sin but on the positive side of the ledger, if you're walking in God's love, you're striving to know the truth and then striving to walk in what you learn. Don't separate this, by the way, from all the other qualities we're learning here. I'm just dealing with one tonight. This operates along with patience and kindness and all the rest we have been talking about but in this one area, we need to recognize that if I'm walking in the love of God then in my mind and in my heart, there must be a commitment to truth. Isaiah 5:20 says this, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness." Woe to those who turn truth and error upside down. Light and darkness on its head. And we are living in a world right now, beloved, where that is exactly what is done every day. What is true is treated like it's error and what is absolute falsehood, lies of Satan, are treated as if they are the truth and someone walking in the love of God is someone walking in the discernment that recognizes what it really is according to God's truth and they set their approval in their own life, they set their approval on that which pleases God. That's love.

But not only does love operate in my own life as an individual, love in this particular area will be expressed in my personal relationships. Like I did this morning, I'm going to give you just some practical examples of that. No way this is exhaustive or intended to be but sometimes it helps us to see, okay, what does this mean in terms of living it out? I'm going to give you some things in terms of personal relationships if we are walking in this quality of love, what it looks like.

So first of all I would say, if I'm walking in the love of God in terms of my relationships, I will not rejoice in someone's fall through sin and it doesn't matter whether they're my brother or in terms of the Gospel, my enemy. It doesn't matter whether they are my friend or someone who despises me. I cannot rejoice in seeing anyone destroyed through sin. Have you ever known what it is to see someone who set themselves in opposition to the truth and set themselves maybe even in opposition to you, have you ever seen them then destroyed through their pursuit of disobedience? And if you have, what was your attitude about it? Don't imagine that we are walking in the love of God when we rejoice to see someone who has opposed us stumble and fall. I don't know about you folks but I've seen that. I've seen where people almost take a delight in telling someone else, "Do you remember that guy? Do you remember what he said? Do you remember how he acted?"

Did you hear what happened to him?" As if there is some kind of joy to be derived from the fall of another human being. Listen, if we really walk in love of God, we pray for, we long for, we work for redemption, not destruction, even in the case of those who have considered themselves our enemies.

Another example if I'm walking in the love of God, I don't gossip or slander. Anybody here struggle with your tongue? Anyone struggle with gossip or slander? Someone has described gossip this way: it is a vicarious delight in something sinful. Most of what we talk about has to do with something negative we perceive to be in someone else's life. "Did you hear about this? Did you know about this? Has anyone told you about this?" And almost always, we're not talking about something positive, we're talking about gossip or slander. We're talking about something we perceive to be negative, something that reflects poorly on their character. Why do we go about talking about it? Why do we go about telling others? Because we are finding some kind of pleasure in what we perceive to be unrighteousness in their life. That's not love. Love does not take pleasure in unrighteousness.

Or we could add to that and say it this way: if I'm walking in love, I don't want to magnify or publicize someone's failures. Love desires to cover, not cover up in the sense of excusing sin but cover in the sense that I want to be a part of the cure and I care about this person so my desire is to see them set right with God in the most compassionate, caring way possible. I don't want to take their failure and magnify it. I don't want to take their failure and publicize it. "Lord, may you help me to be an instrument of yours to see them helped in the most private way we could possibly do this." It's not always possible but you even see that desire worked out in church discipline, don't you? Because where does church discipline always begin? What's the answer? One-on-one and if you win your brother, that's the end of it, right? And then if they won't listen one-on-one, how do we go? 10 or 15, is that what it says? What? 2 or 3 and if they hear, you have won your brother. You see, the desire is to deal with it first in as small a way as you possibly can because the desire is not to injure or hurt or destroy, the desire is redemption.

We can describe this another way in terms of relationships. If I'm walking in the love of God, I do not take the wrong side in the battle. What battle? The ongoing battle between good and evil. The ongoing battle between unrighteousness and truth. If I'm walking in the love of God, then I always desire to find myself on the side of righteousness and where this gets tested especially is when we're talking about a relationship that is very dear to us. You may be very close to a person, you may have a long relationship with a person but if you really love them, if what they need to hear is not what they want to hear, you are not loving them by taking their side if they are on the wrong side. And sooner or later in your life, you will be tested on that. You love someone and they are on the wrong side of the issue, now what are you going to do? And how often I wonder in the history of the church have people found themselves on the wrong side of the battle between truth and error, unrighteousness and truth, how many times have people found themselves on the wrong side in the name of love. "Well, I just love them." Are they wrong? Do they need to hear the truth? We all know this verse from the book of Proverbs, "Faithful are the wounds," what does the Bible say? "Of a friend." What does it

go on to say? "Deceitful are the kisses," what? "Of an enemy." An enemy will kiss you deceptively when a friend will wound you. By the way, this is also a test of love in our own personal lives. Do I want to be on the right side of the battle when it comes to me? In other words, if there's something in my life that isn't right, that doesn't glorify the Lord, that isn't true, that doesn't represent righteousness, will I love you when you bring that to my attention or will I despise you for it? Walking in the love of God means I want to be on the right side of the battle.

We could say it yet another way, this goes hand in hand with that last thing that I mentioned and that is: if I'm walking in the love of God in relationships, I don't remain neutral in the battle. Love is not passive in the face of sin or truth. When the sides are clear, when the sides are evident, you take a side and you side with righteousness. How many believers have been in a position to be a force for righteousness, to be a force for good, to even be a force for rescue in the life of another person but out of fear or out of a desire for self preservation, they take no position? "Don't ask me. It's not my business. You know, I don't really have a right to speak to that." All the ways we use to keep ourselves out of the fray because in truth we are not loving God at that moment, we are not loving others at that moment, we are loving us and, "I don't want to be on somebody's wrong side and I don't want to be persecuted and I don't want to be mistreated. I don't want to take my side with truth and perhaps even with godly people who are standing in the truth. I just want to keep myself out of the issue." I wonder if there is someone here tonight that you have taken a place of neutrality because it's better for you when what God is calling to you is to take a stand for what is right.

So love in my own life means that I live a discerning life and I choose truth, not unrighteousness. Walking in love in my relationships has many expressions and we talked about some tonight. What about in the life of the church? How does verse 6 look in practice? "Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness or in wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth," how does that look in the life of a local church? Or let's say it another way: people talk all the time about, you know, is that a loving church? Well, what does a loving church look like, not divorcing this verse from all the rest but just focusing tonight on this one quality, what does love like this look like in a local church? Where you have a loving church, obviously there will be a commitment to truth. At the same time, though, we need to be very careful here now and I want to say this: where you have a loving church, there is also a commitment to humility because if we have a commitment to truth and we're honest with the truth, we talked about this this morning, "If the Lord should mark iniquities, who could stand?" Answer: no one. Does the truth expose us? Does the truth reveal our sins? If you're really looking at the truth the way you ought to be looking at it, does it make you walk standing up tall or does it make you bow down in humility and see yourself for who you really are? So where you have a loving church there will be this commitment to truth but the truth will be embraced in a humble spirit. We are learners. We are disciples. We are following the Lord and together we're on this pilgrimage and progressively we are being sanctified and we have not arrived and we will never arrive until we meet with glorification. Whatever good is in our lives, it is due to God's grace and whatever God does according to his grace, he does for his glory. It's not our name, it's his name that he is working for.



We can also say this: where a church is walking in love, there will be a commitment to purity. Holiness will characterize a loving church. Now, that is contrary to how we often think about it, isn't it? In many cases, loving churches are thought of as those churches which judge nothing and so there's all sorts of sin and all sorts of disobedience that is just excused and ignored and embraced and we say, "That's a loving church. You just come like you are and we're all going to embrace each other at the point of our failures." The concept is the church is a hospital for sick people. Well, there's no doubt that in the church of Jesus Christ as we learned this morning, there has to be forgiveness and there has to be patience and kindness, gentleness and all the things we're learning in 1 Corinthians 13 but listen, beloved: if we really love each other and if we believe the totality of what the New Testament teaches about the church, then we will judge sin in our midst because that's loving God and that's loving each other. Does sin destroy people? What's the answer? Yes, so if we love one another, we will deal with sin.

A loving church will be committed to truth in a spirit of humility but there will also be at the same time a commitment to holiness, purity. I ask us tonight: are we a church committed to purity? Young people, are you committed to sexual purity? Are we committed to purity in the realm of our habits? Drunkenness is a sin, isn't it? Carousing is a sin, isn't it? Gossip and slander. Schism. And then, parents, are you committed to purity? We can't call our children to a standard we're not walking in.

Hand-in-hand with that we can say this: where there is a loving church, there will be a commitment to accountability. We will be willing to be accountable to one another. We will be willing to allow there to be that interaction where we confront each other in a right kind of attitude about sin in a form of discipline.

We can say it another way: there is a commitment to maturity. The word of God describes those who are mature in the book of Hebrews as those who by reason of use have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Use of what? Use of the word of God. You learn the truth, you begin to live your life by using the truth, by discerning life through the grid of truth and the more you live your life with that grid, living your life in light of God's word, the more you are able to accurately assess what God sets his approval on and what he doesn't. But it takes time and it takes growth. It takes time under the word of God. It takes time living out the word of God to arrive at a mature place where your senses are trained for discernment.

So where there is a loving church, there will be a church that is committed to discipleship, a church committed to seeing the saints mature. We can sum it all up with this: where there is a loving church, there is a commitment to practicing the word of God. The book of James warns us about being mere hearers, auditors, people who come and sit and listen to the lessons and don't feel they are accountable to pass any tests. I come and I gather the information and I leave until I come to the next class and gather more information. No, the word of God tells us we're not to be just hearers of the word, we are to be what? Doers. Doers. So if we walk in love as a church, we will be committed to the practice of what we're learning. We will never on this side of glory perfectly practice

what we know but we must be a church that strives to practice what we know and, in fact, the Bible says if we are not doers of the word, we are self-deceived. Self-deceived.

What is love? What does it do? Verse 6, "it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but it rejoices with the truth." Love is known by its discernment. It recognizes unrighteousness and it recognizes truth. Love is known by its desires. It delights not in unrighteousness. It delights in the truth. Then love is known by its decisions because it acts on what it loves so that it lives out the truth of God first in its personal life and then in its relationships and that gets embodied in the corporate identity of the Lord's church, a church where there is a commitment to truth in a spirit of humility, a commitment to purity, a commitment to accountability, a commitment to maturity, a commitment to practice. Is that what you want to walk in? Have you embraced a false concept of love? One that is passive and neutral? One that is willing to embrace and accept almost anything? Have you embraced a concept of love that is really compromise because that isn't love.

Let's bow together for prayer.

*Father in heaven, we thank you for each one of these things, each of these qualities that we are seeing in this 13th chapter and I pray, Lord, that in our thinking we would never separate one out from the rest. Lord, even what we've seen tonight, I know it will exist in the realm of patience, in the realm of kindness, all the other things that we've seen. But Lord, I pray that we would not in recognizing that diminish what we have seen tonight. I pray, Lord, that we would recognize that when we're walking in the love of your Son, walking in the love of your Spirit, we will have delight in what is true and right and holy and we, Lord, will have a holy hatred for everything that is a suppression of your righteousness. Lord, only you can power us to walk in this in its true sense. I thank you that you have shed abroad in our hearts your love so that we have the capacity to walk in love. Lord, let us examine ourselves in light of what we have seen tonight and wherever we have confused love with compromise, wherever we have confused love with an embracing of that which is impure and contrary to you, I pray that we would change our mind, that we would repent of that kind of conception of love and that we would look at our Lord and Savior and see, Lord, that while he was compassionate, he was also very clear and very firm in what is true and what is right. We ask you this tonight, Father, in the name of our Savior. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*