

1 Corinthians 13:4-5

by St. John Chrysostom

Love is the greatest virtue, and it is characterized by long-suffering, kindness, and the absence of envy, vaunting, and being puffed up.

Scripture: Exodus 32:32, Song of Solomon 8:5, Romans 11:14, 1 Corinthians 13:4, Philippians 1:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:14
Topics: "Transforming Love", "Christian Virtues"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the transformative power of love, emphasizing how love can change individuals, making the timid brave, the fierce moderate, and the wanton chaste. He highlights that love is the root of all virtues, leading to self-denial, long-suffering, kindness, and humility. Chrysostom explains that love seeks not its own, is not easily provoked, and does not rejoice in unrighteousness but in truth. He illustrates how love bears all things, hopes, believes, and endures all things, never failing. The preacher urges believers to cultivate love in their hearts to experience its profound impact on their lives and relationships.

Transcript

Love suffers long, and is kind; love envies not; love vaunts not itself, is not puffed up.

Thus, whereas he had showed, that both faith and knowledge and prophecy and tongues and gifts and healing and a perfect life and martyrdom, if love be absent, are no great advantage; of necessity he next makes an outline of its matchless beauty, adorning its image with the parts of virtue as with a sort of colors, and putting together all its members with exactness. But do not thou hastily pass by, beloved, the things spoken, but examine each one of them with much care, that you may know both the treasure which is in the thing and the art of the painter. Consider, for example, from what point he at once began, and what he set first, as the cause of all its excellence. And what is this? Long-suffering. This is the root of all self-denial. Wherefore also a certain wise man said, A man that is long-suffering is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit is mightily foolish.

And comparing it too with a strong city, he said that it is more secure than that. For it is both an invincible weapon and a sort of impregnable tower, easily beating off all annoyances. And as a spark falling into the deep does it no injury, but is itself easily quenched: so upon a long-suffering soul whatever unexpected thing falls, this indeed speedily vanishes, but the soul it disturbs not: for of a truth there is nothing so impenetrable as long-suffering. You may talk of armies, money, horses, walls, arms, or any thing else whatsoever; you will name nothing like long-suffering. For he that is encompassed with those, oftentimes,

being overcome by anger, is upset like a worthless child, and fills all with confusion and tempest: but this man, settled as it were in a harbor, enjoys a profound calm. Though thou surround him with loss, you have not moved the rock; though thou bring insult upon him, you have not shaken the tower: and though thou bruise him with stripes, you have not wounded the adamant.

Yea, and therefore is he called long-suffering, because he has a kind of long and great soul. For that which is long is also called great. But this excellence is born of love, both to them who possess and to them who enjoy it contributing no small advantage. For tell me not of those abandoned wretches, who, doing evil and suffering none, become worse: since here, not from his long-suffering, but from those who abuse it, this result arises. Tell me not therefore of these, but of those gentler persons, who gain great benefit therefrom. For when, having done ill, they suffer none, admiring the meekness of the sufferer, they reap thereby a very great lesson of self command.

But Paul does not stop here, but adds also the other high achievements of love, saying, is kind. For since there are some who practise their long-suffering with a view not to their own self-denial, but to the punishment of those who have provoked them, to make them burst with wrath; he says that neither has charity this defect. Wherefore also he added, is kind. For not at all with a view to light up the fire, in those who are inflamed by anger, do they deal more gently with them, but in order to appease and extinguish it: and not only by enduring nobly, but also by soothing and comforting, do they cure the sore and heal the wound of passion.

Envy not. For it is possible for one to be both long-suffering and envious, and thereby that excellency is spoiled. But love avoids this also.

Vaunts not itself; i.e., is not rash. For it renders him who loves both considerate, and grave, and steadfast. In truth, one mark of those who love unlawfully is a defect in this point. Whereas he to whom this love is known, is of all men the most entirely freed from these evils. For when there is no anger within, both rashness and insolence are clean taken away. Love, like some excellent husbandman, taking her seat inwardly in the soul and not suffering any of these thorns to spring up.

Is not puffed up. For so we see many who think highly of themselves on the score of these very excellencies; for example, on not being envious, nor grudging, nor mean-spirited, nor rash: these evils being incidental not to wealth and poverty only, but even to things naturally good. But love perfectly purges out all. And consider: he that is long-suffering is not of course also kind. But if he be not kind, the thing becomes a vice, and he is in danger of falling into malice. Therefore she supplies a medicine, I mean kindness, and preserves the virtue pure. Again, the kind person often becomes over-complaisant; but this also she corrects. For love, says he, vaunts not itself, is not puffed up: the kind and long-suffering is often ostentatious; but she takes away this vice also.

And see how he adorns her not only from what she has, but also from what she has not. For he says that she both brings in virtue, and extirpates vice, nay rather she suffers it not to spring up at all. Thus he said not, She envies, indeed, but overcomes envy; nor, is arrogant, but chastises that passion; but, envies not, vaunts not itself, is not puffed up; which truly is most to be admired, that even without toil she accomplishes her good things, and without war and battle-array her trophy is set up: she not permitting him that possesses her to toil and so to attain the crown, but without labor conveying to him her prize. For where there is not passion to contend against sober reason, what labor can there be?

2. Does not behave itself unseemly. Nay, why, says he, do I say, she 'is not puffed up,' when she is so far from that feeling, that in suffering the most shameful things for him whom she loves, she does not even count the thing an unseemliness? Again, he did not say, she suffers unseemliness but bears the shame nobly, but, she does not even entertain any sense at all of the shame. For if the lovers of money endure all manner of reproaches for the sake of that sordid traffic of theirs, and far from hiding their faces, do even exult in it: much more he that has this praiseworthy love will refuse nothing whatsoever for the safety's sake of those whom he loves: nay, nor will any thing that he can suffer shame him.

And that we may not fetch our example from any thing base, let us examine this same statement in its application to Christ, and then we shall see the force of what has been said. For our Lord Jesus Christ was both spit upon and beaten with rods by pitiful slaves; and not only did He not count it an unseemliness, but He even exulted and called the thing glory; and bringing in a robber and murderer with Himself before the rest into paradise, and discoursing with a harlot, and this when the standers-by all accused Him, He counted not the thing to be disgraceful, but both allowed her to kiss His feet, and to bedew His body with her tears, and to wipe them away with her hair, and this amid a company of spectators who were foes and enemies; for love does nothing unseemly.

Therefore also fathers, though they be the first of philosophers and orators, are not ashamed to lisp with their children; and none of those who see them find fault with them, but the thing is esteemed so good and right as to be even worthy of prayer. And again, should they become vicious, the parents keep on correcting, caring for them, abridging the reproaches they incur, and are not ashamed. For love does nothing unseemly, but as it were with certain golden wings covers up all the offenses of the beloved.

Thus also Jonathan loved David; and hearing his father say, 1 Samuel 20:30 Thou son of damsels that have run away from their homes, thou womanly bred, he was not ashamed, though the words be full of great reproach. For what he means is this: Thou son of mean harlots who are mad after men, who run after the passers-by, thou unnerved and effeminate wretch, who hast nothing of a man, but livest to the shame of yourself and the mother who bare you. What then? Did he grieve at these things, and hide his face, and turn away from his beloved? Nay, quite the contrary; he displayed his fondness as an ornament. And yet the one was at that time a king, and a king's son, even Jonathan; the other a fugitive and a wanderer, I mean, David. But not even thus was he ashamed of his friendship. For love does not behave itself unseemly. Yea, this is its wonderful quality that not only it suffers not the injured to grieve and feel galled, but even disposes him to rejoice. Accordingly, he too, of whom we are speaking, after all these things, just as though he had a crown put on him, went away and fell on David's neck. For love knows not what sort of thing shame may be. Therefore it glories in those things for which another hides his face. Since the shame is, not to know how to love; not, when you love, to incur danger and endure all for the beloved.

But when I say, all, do not suppose I mean things injurious also; for example, assisting a youth in a love affair, or whatsoever hurtful thing any one may beseech another to do for him. For such a person does not love, and this I showed you lately from the Egyptian woman: since in truth he only is the lover who seeks what is profitable to the beloved: so that if any pursue not this, even what is right and good, though he make ten thousand professions of love, he is more hostile than any enemies.

So also Rebecca aforetime, because she exceedingly clung to her son, both perpetrated a theft, and was not ashamed of detection, neither was she afraid, though the risk was no common one; but even when her son raised scruples to her, upon me be your curse, my son, she said. Do you see even in a woman the

soul of the Apostle how, even as Paul chose, (if one may compare a small thing with a great,) to be anathema for the Jews' sake, Romans 9:3 so also she, that her son might be blessed, chose to be no less than accursed. And the good things she gave up to him, for she was not, it seems, to be blessed with him, but the evils she was prepared to endure herself alone: nevertheless, she rejoiced, and hastened, and this where so great a danger lay before her, and she was grieved at the delay of the business: for she feared lest Esau might anticipate them and render her wisdom vain. Wherefore also she cuts short the conversation and urges on the young man, and just permitting him to answer what had been said, states a reason sufficient to persuade him. For she said not, you say these things without reason, and in vain you fear, your father having grown old and being deprived of clearness of sight: but what? upon me be your curse, my son. Only do thou not mar the plot, nor lose the object of our chase, nor give up the treasure.

And this very Jacob, served he not for wages with his kinsmen twice seven years? Was he not together with the bondage subject to mockery in respect of that trick? What then? Did he feel the mockery? Did he count it behaving himself unseemly, that being a freeman, and free born, and well brought up, he endured slaves' treatment among his own kinsmen: a thing which is wont to be most vexing, when one receives opprobrious treatment from one's friends? In no wise. And the cause was his love, which made the time, though long, appear short. For they were, says he, Genesis 29:20 in his sight as a few days. So far was he from being galled and blushing for this his bondage. Justly then said the blessed Paul, Love does not behave itself unseemly.

3. 1. Seeks not its own, is not provoked.

Thus having said, does not behave itself unseemly, he shows also the temper of mind, on account of which she does not behave herself unseemly. And what is that temper? That she seeks not her own. For the beloved she esteems to be all, and then only behaves herself unseemly, when she cannot free him from such unseemliness; so that if it be possible by her own unseemliness to benefit her beloved, she does not so much as count the thing unseemliness; for the other party thereafter is yourself, when you love : since this is friendship, that the lover and the beloved should no longer be two persons divided, but in a manner one single person; a thing which no how takes place except from love. Seek not therefore your own, that you may find your own. For he that seeks his own, finds not his own. Wherefore also Paul said, Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good. 1 Corinthians 10:24 For your own profit lies in the profit of your neighbor, and his in yours. As therefore one that had his own gold buried in the house of his neighbor, should he refuse to go and there seek and dig it up, will never seek it; so likewise here, he that will not seek his own profit in the advantage of his neighbor, will not attain unto the crowns due to this: God Himself having therefore so disposed of it, in order that we should be mutually bound together: and even as one awakening a slumbering child to follow his brother, when he is of himself unwilling, places in the brother's hand that which he desires and longs for, that through desire of obtaining it he may pursue after him that holds it, and accordingly so it takes place: thus also here, each man's own profit has he given to his neighbor, that hence we may run after one another, and not be torn asunder.

And if you will, see this also in our case who address you. For my profit depends on you, and your advantage on me. Thus, on the one hand it profits you to be taught the things that please God, but with this have I been entrusted, that you might receive it from me, and therefore might be compelled to run unto me; and on the other hand it profits me that you should be made better: for the reward which I shall receive for this will be great; but this again lies in you; and therefore am I compelled to follow after you that you may be better, and that I may receive my profit from you. Wherefore also Paul says, For what is my hope? Are not even ye? And again, My hope, and my joy, and the crown of my rejoicing. 1 Thessalonians

2:19 So that the joy of Paul was the disciples, and his joy they had. Therefore he even wept when he saw them perishing.

Again their profit depended on Paul: wherefore he said, For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. Acts 28:20 And again, These things I endure for the elect's sakes that they may obtain eternal life. 2 Timothy 2:10 And this one may see in worldly things. For the wife, says he, has not power over her own body, nor yet the husband; but the wife over the husband's, and the husband over the wife's. 1 Corinthians 7:4 So likewise we, when we wish to bind any together, do this. We leave neither of them in his own power, but extending a chain between them, we cause the one to be holden of the other, and the other of the one. Will you also see this in the case of governors? He that judges sits not in judgment for himself, but seeking the profit of his neighbor. The governed on the other hand, seek the profit of the governor by their attendance, by their ministry, by all the other things. Soldiers take up their arms for us, for on our account they peril themselves. We for them are in straits; for from us are their supplies.

But if you say, each one does this seeking his own, this also say I, but I add, that by the good of another one's own is won. Thus both the soldier, unless he fight for them that support him, has none that ministers to him for this end: and this same on the other hand, unless he nourish the soldier, has none to arm himself in his behalf.

4. Do you see love, how it is everywhere extended and manages all things? But be not weary, until thou have thoroughly acquainted yourself with this golden chain. For having said, seeks not her own, he mentions again the good things produced by this. And what are these?

Is not easily provoked, thinks no evil. See love again not only subduing vice, but not even suffering it to arise at all. For he said not, though provoked, she overcomes, but, is not provoked. And he said not, works no evil, but, not even thinks; i.e., so far from contriving any evil, she does not even suspect it of the beloved. How then could she work any, or how be provoked? Who does not even endure to admit an evil surmise; whence is the fountain of wrath.

1 Corinthians 13:6-7

Rejoices not in unrighteousness: i.e., does not feel pleasure over those that suffer ill: and not this only, but also, what is much greater, rejoices with the truth. She feels pleasure, says he, with them that are well spoken of, as Paul says, Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Romans 12:15

Hence, she envies not, hence she is not puffed up: since in fact she accounts the good things of others her own.

Do you see how by degrees love makes her nursling an angel? For when he is void of anger, and pure from envy, and free from every tyrannical passion, consider that even from the nature of man he is delivered from henceforth, and has arrived at the very serenity of angels.

Nevertheless, he is not content with these, but has something even more than these to say: according to his plan of stating the stronger points later. Wherefore he says, bears all things. From her long-suffering, from her goodness; whether they be burdensome, or grievous, or insults, or stripes, or death, or whatsoever else. And this again one may perceive from the case of blessed David. For what could be more intolerable than to see a son rising up against him, and aiming at the usurpation, and thirsting for a father's blood? Yet this did that blessed one endure, nor even so could he bear to throw out one bitter

expression against the parricide; but even when he left all the rest to his captains, gave a strong injunction respecting his safety. For strong was the foundation of his love. Wherefore also it bears all things.

Now its power the Apostle here intimates, but its goodness, by what follows. For, it hopes all things, says he, believes all things, endures all things. What is, hopes all things? It does not despair, says he, of the beloved, but even though he be worthless, it continues to correct, to provide, to care for him.

Believes all things. For it does not merely hope, says he, but also believes from its great affection. And even if these good things should not turn out according to its hope, but the other person should prove yet more intolerable, it bears even these. For, says he, it endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:8

5. Love never fails.

Do you see when he put the crown on the arch, and what of all things is peculiar to this gift? For what is, fails not? it is not severed, is not dissolved by endurance. For it puts up with everything: since happen what will, he that loves never can hate. This then is the greatest of its excellencies.

Such a person was Paul. Wherefore also he said, If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh; Romans 11:14 and he continued hoping. And to Timothy he gave a charge, saying, And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all....in meekness correcting those that oppose themselves, if God perhaps may give them the knowledge of the truth. 2 Timothy 2:24-25

What then, says one, if they be enemies and heathens, must one hate them? One must hate, not them but their doctrine: not the man, but the wicked conduct, the corrupt mind. For the man is God's work, but the deceit is the devil's work. Do thou not therefore confound the things of God and the things of the devil. Since the Jews were both blasphemers, and persecutors, and injurious, and spoke ten thousand evil things of Christ. Did Paul then hate them, he who of all men most loved Christ? In no wise, but he both loved them, and did everything for their sakes: and at one time he says, My heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them that they may be saved: Romans 10:1; 9:3 and at another, I could wish that myself were anathema from Christ for their sakes. Thus also Ezekiel seeing them slain says, Alas, O Lord, dost Thou blot out the remnant of Israel? Ezekiel 9:8 And Moses, If You will forgive their sin, forgive. Exodus 32:32

Why then says David, Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate You, and against Your enemies did I not pine away? I hate them with perfect hatred. Psalm 139:21-22

Now, in the first place, not all things spoken in the Psalms by David, are spoken in the person of David. For it is he himself who says, I have dwelt in the tents of Kedar; Psalm 120:5 and, By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept: Psalm 137:1 yet he neither saw Babylon, nor the tents of Kedar.

But besides this, we require now a completer self-command. Wherefore also when the disciples besought that fire might come down, even as in the case of Elias, You know not, says Christ, what manner of spirit you are of. Luke 9:55 For at that time not the ungodliness only, but also the ungodly themselves, they were commanded to hate, in order that their friendship might not prove an occasion of transgression unto them. Therefore he severed their connections, both by blood and marriage, and on every side he fenced them off.

But now because he has brought us to a more entire self-command and set us on high above that mischief, he bids us rather admit and soothe them. For we get no harm from them, but they get good by us. What then does he say? We must not hate, but pity. Since if you shall hate, how will you easily convert him that is in error? How will you pray for the unbeliever? For that one ought to pray, hear what Paul says: I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayer, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all men. 1 Timothy 2:1 But that all were not then believers, is, I suppose, evident unto every one. And again, for kings and all that are in high place. But that these were ungodly and transgressors, this also is equally manifest. Further, mentioning also the reason for the prayer, he adds, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who wills that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, if he find a Gentile wife consorting with a believer, he dissolves not the marriage. Yet what is more closely joined than a man to his wife? For they two shall be one flesh, Genesis 2:24 and great in that instance is the charm, and ardent the desire. But if we are to hate ungodly and lawless men, we shall go on to hate also sinners; and thus in regular process you will be broken off from the most even of your brethren, or rather from all: for there is not one, no, not one, without sin. For if it be our duty to hate the enemies of God, one must not hate the ungodly only, but also sinners: and thus we shall be worse than wild beasts, shunning all, and puffed up with pride; even as that Pharisee. But not thus did Paul command us, but how? Admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long suffering toward all. 1 Thessalonians 5:14

6. What then does he mean when he says, If any obeys not our word by this epistle, note that man, that you have no company with him? 2 Thessalonians 3:14 In the first place, he says this of brethren, however not even so without limitation, but this too with gentleness. For do not thou cut off what follows, but subjoin also the next clause: how, having said, keep no company, he added, yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. Do you see how he bade us hate the deed that is evil, and not the man? For indeed it is the work of the devil to tear us asunder from one another, and he has ever used great diligence to take away love that he may cut off the way of correction, and may retain him in error and you in enmity, and thus block up the way of his salvation. For when both the physician hates the sick man and flies from him, and the sick man turns away from the physician, when will the distempered person be restored, seeing that neither the one will call in the other's aid, nor will the other go to him?

But wherefore, tell me, do you at all turn away from him and avoid him? Because he is ungodly? Truly for this cause ought thou to welcome and attend him, that you may raise him up in his sickness. But if he be incurably sick, still you have been bidden to do your part. Since Judas also was incurably diseased, yet God left not off attending upon him. Wherefore, neither do thou grow weary. For even if after much labor thou fail to deliver him from his ungodliness, yet shall you receive the deliverer's reward, and will cause him to wonder at your gentleness, and so all this praise will pass on to God. For though you should work wonders, and raise the dead, and whatsoever work you do, the Heathen will never wonder at you so much, as when they see you displaying a meek, gentle, mild disposition. And this is no small achievement: since many will even be entirely delivered from their evil way; there being nothing that has such power to allure men as love. For in respect of the former they will rather be jealous of you, I mean the signs and wonders; but for this they will both admire and love you: and if they love, they will also lay hold of the truth in due course. If however he become not all at once a believer, wonder not nor hurry on, neither do thou require all things at once, but allow him for the present to praise, and love, and unto this in due course he will come.

7. And that you may clearly know how great a thing this is, hear how even Paul, going before an unbelieving judge, made his defense. I think myself happy, says he, That I am to make my defense before you. Acts 26:2 And these things he said, not to flatter him, far from it; but wishing to gain him by his gentleness. And he did in part gain him, and he that was till then considered to be condemned took captive his judge, and the victory is confessed by the person himself who was made captive, with a loud voice in the presence of all, saying, With but little persuasion you would fain make me a Christian. Acts 26:28-29 What then says Paul? He spread his net the wider, and says, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds. What do you say, O Paul? except these bonds? And what confidence remains for you, if you are ashamed of these things, and fliest from them, and this before so great a multitude? Do you not every where in your Epistles boast of this matter, and call yourself a prisoner? Do you not every where carry about this chain in our sight as a diadem? What then has happened now that you deprecate these bonds? I myself deprecate them not, says he, nor am I ashamed of them, but I condescend to their weakness. For they are not yet able to receive my glorying; and I have learned from my Lord not to put 'a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment:' Matthew 9:16 therefore did I thus speak. For, in fact, unto this time they have heard ill reports of our doctrine, and abhor the cross. If therefore I should add also bonds, their hatred becomes greater; I removed these, therefore, that the other might be made acceptable. So it is, that to them it seems disgraceful to be bound, because they have not as yet tasted of the Glory which is with us. One must therefore condescend: and when they shall have learned of the true life, then will they know the beauty also of this iron, and the lustre which comes of these bonds. Furthermore, discoursing with others, he even calls the thing a free gift, saying, It has been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer in His behalf. Philippians 1:29 But for the time then present, it was a great thing for the hearers not to be ashamed of the cross: for which cause he goes on gradually. Thus, neither does any one introducing a person to a palace, before that he beholds the vestibule, compel him, yet standing without, to survey what is within: since in that way it will not even seem admirable, unless one enter in and so acquaint one's self with all.

So then let us also deal with the heathen sort: with condecension, with love. For love is a great teacher, and able both to withdraw men from error, and to reform the character, and to lead them by the hand unto self-denial, and out of stones to make men.

8. And if you would learn her power, bring me a man timid and fearful of every sound, and trembling at shadows; or passionate, and harsh, and a wild beast rather than a man; or wanton and licentious; or wholly given to wickedness; and deliver him into the hands of love, and introduce him into this school; and you will speedily see that cowardly and timid creature made brave and magnanimous, and venturing upon all things cheerfully. And what is wonderful, not from any change in nature do these things result, but in the coward soul itself love manifests her peculiar power; and it is much the same as if one should cause a leaden sword, not turned into steel but continuing in the nature of lead, to do the work of steel. As thus: Jacob was a plain man, Genesis 25:27 dwelling in a house, and unpracticed in toils and dangers, living a kind of remiss and easy life, and like a virgin in her chamber, so also he was compelled for the most part to sit within doors and keep the house; withdrawn from the forum and all tumults of the forum, and from all such matters, and even continuing in ease and quietness. What then? After that the torch of love had set him on fire, see how it made this plain and home-keeping man strong to endure and fond of toil. And of this hear not what I say, but what the patriarch himself says: how finding fault with his kinsman, his words are, These twenty years am I with you. Genesis 31:36 And how were thou these twenty years? (For this also he adds,) Consumed by the heat in the day time, and with the frost by night, and sleep departed from

my eyes. Thus speaks that plain man, keeping at home, and living that easy life.

Again, that he was timid is evident, in that, expecting to see Esau, he was dead with fear. But see again, how this timid man became bolder than a lion under the influence of love. For putting himself forward like some champion before the rest, he was ready to be first in receiving that savage and slaughter-breathing brother as he supposed him to be, and with his own body to purchase the safety of his wives: and him whom he feared and shuddered at, he desired to behold himself foremost in the array. For this fear was not so strong as his affection for his wives. Do you see how, being timid, he became suddenly adventurous, not by changing his character, but being invigorated by love? For that after this also he was timid, is evident by his changing from place to place.

But let no man consider what has been said to be a charge against that righteous man: since being timid is no reproach, for this is a man's nature; but the doing any thing unseemly for timidity's sake. For it is possible for one that is timid by nature to become courageous through piety. What did Moses? Did he not, through fear of a single Egyptian, fly, and go away into banishment? Nevertheless, this fugitive who could not endure the menace of a single man, after that he tasted of the honey of love, nobly and without compulsion from any man, was forward to perish together with them whom he loved. For if you will forgive their sin, says he, forgive; and if not, blot me, I pray you, out of Your book which you have written. Exodus 32:32

9. Moreover, that love makes also the fierce moderate, and the wanton chaste, we have no longer need of any examples: this being evident to all men. Though a man be more savage than any wild beast, no sheep so gentle as he is rendered by love. Thus, what could be more savage and frantic than Saul? But when his daughter let his enemy go, he uttered not against her even a bitter word. And he that unsparingly put to the sword all the priests for David's sake, seeing that his daughter had sent him away from the house, was not indignant with her even as far as words; and this when so great a fraud had been contrived against him: because he was restrained by the stronger bridle of love.

Now as moderation, so chastity, is an ordinary effect of love. If a man love his own wife as he ought to love, even though he be never so much inclined to wantonness, he will not endure to look upon another woman, on account of his affection for her. For love, Canticles 8:5 says one, is strong as death. So that from no other source does wanton behavior arise than from want of love.

Since then love is the Artificer of all virtue, let us with all exactness implant her in our own souls, that she may produce for us many blessings, and that we may have her fruit continually abounding, the fruit which is ever fresh and never decays. For thus shall we obtain no less than eternal blessings: which may we all obtain, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, and also the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, and honor, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-john-chrysostom/1-corinthians-134-5/>

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