

The Love of God Constrains!

KJV 2 Corinthians 5:13 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us...

2 Corinthians 5:13 If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

14 For the love of Christ controls us....!

What does Paul mean by **the love of Christ**?

The Love of Christ is **Bi-directional**!

Meaning it operates in **two opposite** directions at the same time!

The **LOVE OF CHRIST** speaks of the Love Christ has for us **and** the Love we have for Christ!

But obviously His love for us affects our love for Him—since He loved us first!

KJV 1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

It is impossible to love Christ without **knowing & experiencing** His great love for us!

...God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Rom 5:5)

This is why God gives us The Word of God, The Holy Spirit and puts people in our lives—so we can demonstrate we understand how much Christ loves us by loving them.

NIV Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

❖ **We can only truly love people with God's love!**

Our love has emotional limits & expectations connected to it!

Most love people when people meet their expectations; when people disappoint them they change how they feel and respond to them.

The Love of Christ never does this—because when we were at our worst Christ loved us and died for us! **Our behavior doesn't change God!**

As we grow to understand the power of Christ's love toward us it changes how we see and react to every situation!

^{KJV} Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Since Christ loved us when we were a mess of sin living in a world of sin—now that He died for me and rescued me from the world of sin, I know He still loves me while I'm in this—whatever this might be!

Your situation doesn't mean God loves you any less!

Because I know nothing can **separate** meaning **detach, pull us apart and remove God from our lives!**

Since God is love! **(1 John 4:8 &16)**

And faith works by love! **(Gal 5:6)**

The reason we can know we're coming out of **hard times, tribulation, sickness, poverty, oppression and depression** is because The Love of Christ is producing and backing up our faith!

Strong Faith in God is produced by experiencing **God's strong love for us!**

When I started I told you the Love of Christ is bidirectional—It starts with God showing and giving us His love—then we show Him we receive and understand it by loving people—in spite of themselves.

Because he was controlled by the love of God Joseph said this:

Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

When the love of God controls us, we can see beyond our own pain!

When the love of God controls us we can see beyond the pit!

We no longer bring up what how people treated us in the past!

When the love of God controls us we don't focus on hurt, our focus becomes the future!

When the love of God controls us we don't see death, we see life!

Isn't it amazing the very one God sent to keep them alive was the very one they were trying to kill! (They couldn't see God's love in their brother).

They were trying to kill Joseph, yet Joseph was the one God would use to keep them alive!

God is funny! He'll use the very one you're jealous of to preserve you!

Joseph could have had his brothers put to death, but instead he says "*Am I in the place of God?*"

Because the love of God was controlling Joseph, he said "*don't be afraid of me, I'm your brother.*"

When the love of God controls us we don't see our fellow laborers in Christ as adversaries or enemies—we can see them as our brothers!

When we operate in the love of Christ some people will think of us as fools!

Because Paul himself says "*if we are out of our minds, it's for God's sake; if we are in our right minds it's for your sake.*"

- Who else in their right mind would risk their lives for yours?
- Who else would set aside their personal comforts, lifestyle and plans to try and reach you with the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- Who else would allow themselves to be lied on, talked about, beaten, go hungry, stay up late praying for you and get up early to hear from God.

No doubt only people controlled by the love of Christ!