

Verse 8

The end of all things is near as we are living in the last days. The term “last days” is in reference to the time from Christ’s ascension into heaven until He returns on the Last Day. As a result of being in the last days, above all, we are to keep fervent in our love for one another. Jesus instructs us that we are to love each other as Christ loved us (which is sacrificially) and that we know that we are truly Christians and have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. In the last days, there will be trials, testing, and suffering that will put stress and strain on people and relationships. However, we are to love each other fervently.

- **1 Corinthians 13:1-13** If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body ^[a]to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ ^[b]bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of* ^[c]prophecy, they will be done away; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will be done away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I ^[d]became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror ^[e]dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. ¹³ But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the ^[f]greatest of these is love.
- **John 15:12** “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.
- **John 13:34-35** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- **Romans 13:8-12** Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves ^[a]his neighbor has fulfilled *the law*. ⁹ For this, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love ^[b]does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the law*. ¹¹ Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now ^[c]salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. ¹² The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.
- **Colossians 3:12-14** So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and ^[b]patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
- **1 John 2:9-11** The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. ¹⁰ The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ¹¹ But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.
- **1 John 3:10-18** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: ^[a]anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. ¹¹ For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; ¹² not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶ We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his ^[b]heart ^[c]against him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.
- **1 John 4:20-21** If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Peter places and emphasis on having fervent love for each other in the last days. He does this for several reasons:

1. **Love for the brethren is a sign of a Christian and is commanded by God.**
 - i. See the aforementioned verses above.

2. **Love covers a multitude of sins and impacts relationships**
 - i. We have multiple relations in our life (marital, friendships, relationships with co-workers, children, parental, church members).
 - ii. The primary context used in this verse is the relationships and responses with fellow believers, the brethren.
 - iii. When a fellow believer stumbles and falls, the Christians response is not to attack and not to discourage, but to love and help them in their sanctification.
 - iv. We have all sinned and stumbled in our Christian walk and have felt the weight of that sin. There is something that works in our souls when we feel the love and support of fellow believers to encourage and strengthen us with their love.
 - v. When others see the love of Christ at work in us toward them, they can be moved in their heart to do the same to others and then in return grow in sanctification.
 - vi. Let us never be people that kick our brothers and sisters when they are down, but rather pick them up in love. We are told in **Romans 12:15** to weep with those who weep, and this weeping may be as a result of sin or struggles, so let us weep with them in love.
 - vii. In showing love, we are not to condone sin. We are to never condone sin. There are sins that merit church discipline, but not every sin rises to that level. However, loving those who have wronged us and loving those whom we find fault in, or have habits that annoy us is what the Christian is called to do.
 - viii. We are also to show love toward those others in the family of God that annoy us with things that are scrupulous in nature. We must cease from pettiness about every little insignificant matter. Many churches have split and relationships have been ruined as a result of this. Instead, let us love fervently.
 - ix. Fervent love for one another also reaches beyond the church family and into other relationships we have. We see this clearly in our relationships with our family and those we are around and love the most. If we were to walk around all day with pettiness and look for faults or annoyances in others, we would destroy relationships. There must be an implementation and consistent actions of love, patience, forbearance, and not keeping records of wrongs for obedience to the instruction of God and as to foster the best environment for all involved. As families and in relationships, we know each other's faults, and we must be able to fervently love which is a covering for all involved and protects these relationships. This love that we are to have fervently can extend to all people/relationships in our lives.
 - x. **When we do not show love to those who have wronged us or have sinned, then we in return have sinned.**

Covering

This verse states that love covers a multitude of sins. We see the idea of covering is woven throughout the Bible. Some passages that discuss the idea of covering are:

- 1.) Adam and Eve in the garden (**Genesis 3:21**). After Adam and Eve sinned, they realized they were naked and hid in their shame. God in His great mercy and love killed an animal which would be the first animal and blood sacrifice and covered His rebellious creatures. This would foreshadow God's redemptive work on the cross to cover His people to hide their guilt and shame.

- 2.) The mercy seat of Ark of the Covenant (**Leviticus 16**)-The blood from the animal sacrifice was taken into the holy of holies by the high priest once a year for the atonement for the sins of the people. This blood was taken and sprinkled on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant as a covering for the sins of the people. This also would foreshadow the work of the great High Priest as He would be the true mercy seat to which the blood of the sacrifice would be applied which would cover and atone for the sins of His people.

3.) Justification (**Romans 4:6-8**)(**2 Corinthians 5:21**)- We are all condemned and stand guilty in our own “righteousness” before the Holy God. Perfection/righteousness is required to enter Heaven, which is a requirement no one can merit on their own. In our own sinful nature and life without Christ, we stand covered in our own sin and condemnation. However, in our justification (legally declared righteous by God) by faith alone (sola fide), the perfect righteousness of Christ covers us via imputation, and we then stand with no condemnation and are covered in the complete righteousness of Christ. Only those who are covered by His righteousness will enter Heaven. This covering is a gift from God and is out of His great love(**Romans 5:8-9**). It is His love that covers all our sins. We see similar language in **James 5:20**, as one who turns a sinner from the error of his ways will cover a multitude of sins via the saving power and grace of God.

- **Psalm 32:1-2** How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered!² How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!
- **Psalm 85:2** You forgave the iniquity of Your people;
You covered all their sin. ^[a]*Selah.*
- **Proverbs 10:12** Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions.

This idea of covering is vital to the redemptive history and the Christians life. Christ has covered us with His blood and righteousness as our sins have been forgiven. Think about what Christ has covered with you. Think about all your sins and faults. Think about rejoicing and healing in the soul with the love and the covering of Christ. He commands His people to love as He loves and forgive as He forgives. We are to then fervently love at all times and cover people with the love of God that is being lived out through us.

3. Love toward others has a direct relationship with our love and attitude toward God.

- a. The way that we act toward others is a correlation of relationship with God. He has made our relationship with others a reflection of our relationship with Him. When we grow in sanctification and our understanding of the Lord and the importance He places on our actions and love toward others, we will grow in our love for others. If our actions and love toward others is lacking, then our relationship and sanctification with God is also.

Fervent love

The word fervent in the Greek means: zealous and earnest/sincere.

- We are to have zealous love for each other, and this love must be done sincerely and not in hypocrisy.
 - **Romans 12:9** Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

Verse 9

We are to be hospitable to all. Often when someone new comes into our house, we bend over backwards to show them hospitality. However, this same level of hospitality is not usually extended to our family and friends that we are familiar with. Peter is encouraging the believers to be hospitable to each other even though they may be around each other all the time. The idea here is that love and hospitality are to be shown to all people with great zeal as this is pleasing to the Lord. (**Romans 12:13**). Showing this hospitality and love is not enough on its own, it must be done without complaining and grumbling as well as with proper motive of the heart.

Think about the love of God upon you. Think about all the sins He has covered. Think about His compassion and patience He has had on you, even though you have disobeyed the sovereign holy God of the universe. Think about when you sin, He is always ready to forgive His people. Think about the sacrificial love He has shown. We are to love like He loves.