

## Love Covers

**(1 Peter 4:8)** Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

What did Peter mean when he wrote that "*love covers a multitude of sins.*"? Here is what I found in JW publications:

**[cl p.303]**<sup>11</sup> "*Love . . . bears all things.*" That expression literally means "all things it is covering." (*Kingdom Interlinear*) First Peter 4:8 states: "Love covers a multitude of sins." Yes, a Christian who is governed by love is not eager to drag into the light of day all the imperfections and shortcomings of his Christian brothers. In many cases, the mistakes and faults of fellow believers are minor in nature and can be covered by the cloak of love.—Proverbs 10:12; 17:9.

**[kp p. 30]**<sup>14</sup> In most cases, the mistakes and faults of fellow believers are minor in nature. We all stumble in word or deed at times, disappointing or even hurting one another. (James 3:2) Should we be quick to publicize the shortcomings of others? Such a course would only serve to create friction in the congregation. (Ephesians 4:1-3) If we are governed by love, we will not "give away a fault" of a fellow worshiper. (Psalm 50:20) Just as plaster and paint cover the imperfections of a wall, so love covers the imperfections of others.—Proverbs 17:9.

**[w99 4/15 p. 22]** Finally, keep firmly in mind the apostle Peter's loving admonition: "The end of all things has drawn close. Be sound in mind, therefore, and be vigilant with a view to prayers. Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:7, 8) It is so easy to let human imperfections—other people's and our own—work their way into our hearts and minds and become obstacles, stumbling blocks. Satan well knows this human weakness. Divide and conquer is one of his wily tactics. We must, therefore, be quick to cover over such sins with intense love for one another and not "allow place for the Devil."—Ephesians 4:25-27.

**[w97 12/1 p. 18]**<sup>11</sup> However, what if others sin against us, causing a noticeable wound? If the sin is not too serious, we may have little difficulty applying the Bible's counsel to 'forgive one another freely.' (Ephesians 4:32) Such a readiness to forgive is in harmony with Peter's inspired words: "Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8) Keeping in mind that we too are sinners enables us to make allowances for the trespasses of others. When we thus forgive, we let go of the resentment rather than nurture it. As a result, our relationship with the offender may not suffer any lasting harm, and we also help to preserve the precious peace of the congregation. (Romans 14:19) In time, the memory of what he did may well fade away.

**[bw p. 182]**<sup>14</sup> Besides remaining alert and balanced with reference to Christian discipleship, we do well to consider whether love is motivating us to fulfill our responsibilities. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) The apostle Peter urged that we have "intense love" for fellow believers. Such intense love is demonstrated by our having a forgiving spirit. When that is the case, we do not exaggerate the faults of our brothers nor do we call undue attention to their failings. We do not look for mistakes, putting the transgressions of others in the worst light possible. In our thus being forgiving, our love will cover a multitude of sins instead of exposing them to full view for others to see.

JW publications quote 1 Peter 4:8 and tell us that if we have true love for our brothers and sisters that it will cover over their sins against us.

That may be true, but is that what Peter meant? I don't think so.

Look at what Christ said:

**(Luke 7:47)** Because of this, I tell you, her sins, many though they are, are forgiven, because she loved much.

The woman's sins were forgiven, because she showed love to others.

Perhaps that is what Peter was talking about. Perhaps he was saying that it is our love for others that covers a multitude of OUR sins. (1Pe 4:8)

I think these scriptures back up that idea:

**(Matthew 5:43-46)** "You heard that it was said: 'You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'  
<sup>44</sup> However, I say to you: Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens, since he makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good and makes it rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those loving you, what reward do you have? Are not also the tax collectors doing the same thing?

**(Matthew 24:12, 13)** and because of the increasing of lawlessness, the love of the greater number will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But the one who has endured (with love) to the end will be saved.

**(Luke 6:35)** On the contrary, continue to love your enemies and to do good and to lend without hoping for anything back; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind toward the unthankful and wicked.

**(1 Corinthians 13:1-3)** If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become a clanging gong or a clashing cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have the gift of prophecy and understand all the sacred secrets and all knowledge, and if I have all the faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> And if I give all my belongings to feed others, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I do not benefit at all.

If we show true love for others, we will benefit, we will be rewarded, with our sins being covered over. (Jas 2:15-16; Mt 6:12; Mt 10:42; Ga 6:10; 1Jo 2:10)

What do you think?

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Dave

da.getmyip@gmail.com