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When giving characteristics of God’s love, I Corinthians 13:5 says that love “Doth not behave itself unseemly....” The context of this verse deals with the Greek word *agapē*, which is the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation. The love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation does not behave itself unseemly. What does it mean to “not behave...unseemly,” and why are two negatives used to express a positive?

“Doth not behave itself unseemly” is made up of two Greek words: *ou* and *aschēmoneō*. The Greek word *ou* is the absolute negative, indicating here “absolutely not.” The Greek verb *aschēmoneō*, translated “behave...unseemly,” is defined as “to behave in an *unbecoming* manner, or *indecorously*; to behave *disgracefully*; to be void of proper deportment.” The two negatives clearly assert that love *absolutely* does *not* behave itself unseemly. God places emphasis here by having the Apostle Paul express this truth with two negatives, which in this case changes the negation into an affirmation—a positive assertion. It changes what starts out as an absolute negative into an affirmation, and it expresses the positive in a very high degree: “The love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation absolutely DOES behave itself in a seemly manner!”

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word “seemly” as “fittingly, appropriately; decently, becomingly.” As sons of God, we want to conduct ourselves in a seemly manner—one that shows respect to our heavenly Father and to others. Our lord and savior, Jesus Christ, is a wonderful example of manifesting this characteristic of the love of God. He always behaved himself in a manner that brought glory and honor to his Father. He involved himself in many different situations that could have influenced him to be casual in conversation, in appearance, or in behavior. However, his example teaches us that he graciously maintained a behavior consistent with the standard of God’s Word.

In Luke 5 there is a record showing Jesus Christ graciously maintaining a behavior consistent with the standard of God's Word. The context is Jesus Christ dining at Matthew's house with publicans and sinners. This scenario may have looked inappropriate to the scribes and Pharisees, because when they saw it, they began to murmur.

Luke 5:30-32:

But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

In this potentially challenging situation, Jesus Christ disciplined himself to behave in a manner that brought glory to his Father. He was manifesting God's love, and he knew that God had sent him to call sinners to repentance, which is a change of mind from bad to good. He did not bring himself down to the level of those he was eating with. On the contrary, he gave the sinners the opportunity to bring themselves up to the level of the Word. He maintained a behavior consistent with what God had sent him to do by behaving appropriately, decently, becomingly, bringing honor and glory to God.

In addition, Jesus Christ could have reacted very differently to the murmuring. He could have lashed out at the scribes and Pharisees, but he didn't. He absolutely did not behave unseemly; instead, he chose to remain within the boundaries of God's Word. He didn't compromise his dignity as the Son of God, rather he manifested God's divine love in ways people had never seen before.

God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, always brought honor to God in his behavior. Even when he was in challenging and difficult situations, he absolutely did not behave unseemly. Instead, he always chose to remain within the boundaries of God's Word by manifesting God's love, and he powerfully affected the lives of others. As sons of God and ambassadors for Christ, we follow Jesus Christ's example. He did not live unto himself but selflessly gave his life so others might have the opportunity to experience God's amazing love. We can show our respect for God and each other by walking honestly, decently, and becomingly; and we can increase in that love more and more.

Some practical ways we manifest this characteristic of the love of God include showing respect to others in our speech, in our behavior, and in our appearance by

- putting on the mind of Christ and lovingly communicating with one another;
- speaking words that build up and encourage;
- being well mannered and never rude in any situation;
- showing consideration of others with proper etiquette while dining at home and while dining out with others;
- dressing decently, modestly, appropriately, for the situation.

As we manifest God's great love, we glorify God and are respectful toward others. We can reach outside ourselves and conduct our lives to the honor and glory of our heavenly Father in every situation and powerfully affect the lives of others.

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