

# Love – Part 1

## 1 Corinthians 13

### Introduction

1. In the Bible there are two different kinds of love.
  - a. The first kind all of us are familiar with. It is when we have a desire for something or someone. When a person or thing is pleasing to us we long for it; we love it.
  - b. Though this love is necessary for true service to God there is another kind of love that is far greater and much more powerful. This love, which many people refer to as *agape* love because of its Greek translation, is a love that seeks other people's best interest at all times, in spite of our own personal feelings.
2. In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul spends the entire chapter discussing the second of these types of love.
  - a. This is the love that God had for us when He sent His Son to die on the cross.
  - b. As children of God and followers of Christ we too must strive to learn this kind of love (Ephesians 5:1).

### Discussion

#### I. The Importance of Love

- A. In the first three verses of 1 Corinthians 13 Paul shows just how important agape love is to the Christian.
  1. Paul says that we can do the greatest things imaginable, but if we do not have love, then it is useless.
  2. To help us see the significance of this, let us consider.
- B. "Loveless acts may benefit someone (Philippians 1:15-18). But it does not benefit the person engaged in it." (Dunagan)
  1. In Matthew 6:1-7 Jesus taught that men had to be careful when doing charitable deeds so that they do not do them to be seen of men.
  2. Why is this so? Because when we do things in order to gain recognition from men, then we do not have love.
  3. Thus Paul states in *1 Corinthians 13:5*, "*Love does not seek its own.*"
  4. If we do good things to show off, then we do not have love and whatever benefit we may hope to have from our good deeds is lost, as Paul wrote "*It profits me nothing*" (vs. 3).
- C. Without love even the strongest faith in the world is useless to us (see vs. 2).
  1. How important is love? Let us just say that we can go to church every Sunday, read our Bibles every day, take care of the elderly people, care for the sick and teach as many people as we can but if we do not have love, none of these great things will do the one who does them any good!
  2. They will be useless to us. This is how important love is.
  3. Our spiritual life depends on it.
- D. How then can we know whether or not we truly have love?
  1. The first test of love is my willingness to do things for people even when it may be inconvenient for us.
    - a. Love is willing to give up comforts, convenience and sacrifice personal resources to help others in need. (1 John 3:16-18).
    - b. Love is willing to do good things for people even when those good deeds are not appreciated by men (Matthew 5:38-48).
    - c. Love gives without expecting anything in return (Luke 6:35).
    - d. In short, love does things even when it may not want to, when it may not be convenient and when it gains nothing from it.
    - e. We know we have love when we are able to do all of things without complaining, without grumbling, without bickering or backbiting and without becoming bitter.
    - f. Love does all of these believing in the sufficiency of the reward in heaven (Matthew 6:1-4).

- g. For so Jesus loved us (Hebrews 12:2) asking only that those who crucified Him be forgiving (Luke 23:34).
- 2. The second is to ask ourselves, "Why am I doing this?"
  - a. Paul describes true love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-6.
  - b. In this list Paul shows us what love is not and what we will not do if we have love.
  - c. He also shows us things that we will do if we have love. We can use these characteristics as a test for ourselves.

## II. Characteristics of Love (1 Corinthians 13:4-5)

- A. Love Suffers Long:
  - 1. Long suffering means to have patience; to endure trial of any sort without grumbling, complaining or becoming bitter.
  - 2. The idea is that when we love a person who may injure us in some way (i.e. insult, damage property, etc.) we will be patient with them instead of getting angry and showing evil in return.
  - 3. James describes this type of attitude as "slow to wrath" in James 1:19.
  - 4. If we have love then we will suffer long before we get angry and even then our anger will be directed toward helping the person overcome sin rather than toward the person (Matthew 23:13, 37-39, this after over two years of preaching to them).
- B. Love is kind:
  - 1. Love does not insult people or tease people or gossip and do mean things toward people.
  - 2. To be kind means to be helpful, friendly and courteous (Acts 28:20).
  - 3. If my friend breaks something of mine then I will be patient and kind to them in return.
  - 4. We sinned against God and He was kind enough to give us His Son so that we can still be saved.
  - 5. Kindness helps those in need, does not make fun of the shortcomings of men and seeks to do what is best for all.
- C. Love does not envy:
  - 1. To envy is to want what other people have.
  - 2. Sometimes when we see other people getting an award or being praised for doing something good we want to be praised for something also.
  - 3. When we see others who have the things that we desire and become upset about it, then we have envy.
  - 4. Love however does not do this. As one writer put it, "Love never detracts from the praise that is due another nor tries to make him seem less and self seem more by comparison. Instead of being envious love is satisfied with its own portion and glad of another's greater portion." (Lanski)
  - 5. Because love seeks the best interest of others when good things happen to them it is too busy being happy for them to be sorry for itself (Romans 12:15).
- D. Love does not parade itself:
  - 1. This means that love does not brag.
  - 2. There is a proverb that says, "*Let another man praise you and not your own mouth; a stranger and not your own lips*" (Proverbs 27:2).
  - 3. If we have love then we will not go around trying to make our selves look good.
  - 4. At times we may find ourselves "talking up" our own achievements in order to make ourselves look good. As hard as it is, we must strive to overcome this.
  - 5. If we do something good, then love says we will let others to the praising for us.
- E. Love is not puffed up:
  - 1. Love is not arrogant.
  - 2. It is easy for us to feel that we are better than other people when we can do great things, or when we do something that other have not yet done.
  - 3. If we have love, however, we will realize that Jesus did far greater works than we could imagine, yet He still humbled himself to a point lower than us by hanging on the cross (Philippians 2:5-8).
  - 4. If we have love then we will treat other people as if they are better than us, rather than the other way around (James 4:10; Ephesians 5:21).

F. Love does not behave rudely:

1. If we are being rude, disgraceful, dishonorable, and indecent toward other people then we do not have love.
2. Children should remember that if they love their parents, then they will not be “sassy” or “talk back” to them.
3. Brothers and sisters should know that when you love each other then “pushing each other’s buttons” is out of the question. Be polite.
4. Toward our brethren we ought to show respect and honor, not rudeness or indecency.

G. Love does not seek its own:

1. If we have love then we do not have to have our own way all the time.
2. Since love does not seek its own there is only one other thing that we can do: seek to help other people without seeking our own benefit. Consider the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37).
3. Many people ask, “But who will take care of me?” Our heavenly Father will take care of us (John 13:35).
4. When we trust in the Lord to care for our needs, then we can concentrate on serving Him as well as our brethren. We can have peace knowing that our reward is in heaven (Matthew 6:31-33; Luke 6:35).

**Conclusion**

1. It is hard for many people to understand this kind of love, but this is the love God has toward us, and it is the love He expects us to have toward one another.
2. We can benefit from His love, but we must be willing to seek Him and learn how to have that love in our own lives.
3. Jesus is waiting, will you come? Read John 3:16; Mark 3:16.

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September, 2004*