

What Does Love Look Like? – Part 1

1 Corinthians 13

Introduction:

1. Chapter 13 is known as "the love chapter." It certainly isn't the only chapter of God's Word that deals with the subject of love. 1 John 4 is another example.
2. Many people lift this chapter out of its context and forget the issue that Paul is dealing with in chapters 12-14. Paul is attempting to bring some much-needed rebuke and instruction regarding the Corinthian's abuse of spiritual gifts.
3. The supernatural sign gifts were operative in this local assembly and we have discussed previously the reasons why this was so. The problem is that the Corinthians were misusing and abusing these gifts as a child would a play-toy.
4. The Corinthians mistakenly thought that the measure of spirituality was the ability to manifest supernatural signs. In this chapter, Paul will readjust their thinking and remind them that there is a more excellent way (12:31), and this is the way of true love.
5. This chapter will prepare their hearts for the corrective discipline that Paul will bring to them in chapter 14.
6. In this chapter Paul is showing them how charity would look and how it would work if it were present in their local assembly. This chapter is meant to demonstrate the **lack** of charity in their midst.
7. Though the direct doctrinal application of this chapter is dealing with the abuse of spiritual gifts, what wonderful and incredible teaching and insight it gives us into true, godly love. This, of course, can apply to every area of our lives.
8. What does love look like?

Love is not performance based. vs. 1-3

1. The Corinthians made a huge mistake. They were esteeming value to people in the assembly based on their outward performance.
2. He uses a series of illustrations designed to hit home to these Corinthians:
 - The person with a supernatural gift to speak in every known language eloquently - vs. 1
 - The person with supernatural, divine understanding and faith - vs. 2
 - The person with supernatural benevolence, even to the point of death - vs. 3
3. The Corinthians loved, esteemed, and valued people like this in their midst, but Paul makes it clear that all of these things can be manifested without a proper heart attitude.
4. When I put all my stock in my performance instead of my heart attitude, Paul says:
 - "*I am become...*" - vs. 1 - It is just empty, noisy clanging.
 - "*...I am nothing.*" - vs. 2 - My outward performance doesn't change who I am inwardly.
 - "*...it profiteth me nothing.*" - vs. 3 - It may bring some profit to others physically, but it does nothing to change my spiritual, inward condition.
5. There are two mistakes people make:
 - They think, "If I perform well enough, he/she will love me."
 - They think, "If I perform well enough, he/she will believe that I love them."

6. Paul is making it clear that love is an inward work of God's Spirit. It is a proper mental attitude that has been shaped by God's Word and God's indwelling Spirit. **Philippians 1:9**
7. If my inner thinking processes are wrong and my heart is not full of love, then my outward performance is meaningless, shallow, empty, vain, and nothing.

Love is patient and quick to forgive. vs. 4-5

1. The phrase "*suffereth long*" means "forbearing, patient."
 - In other words, love has a long fuse. We are slow to anger and we stand ready to forgive any offenses that may come to us.
2. The idea of forbearance and forgiveness go hand in hand. **Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:2, 32**
3. Love means that we have the proper mental attitude, fully realizing all that Christ has forgiven us, so we stand ready to forgive others, not hold grudges.
4. Love is "*not easily provoked*." This literally means "to exasperate." This is a person who is the opposite of patient. They are touchy, sensitive, resentful, quick-tempered, and short-fused.
5. Have you ever said one thing to somebody and then they go into a tirade and go off on you? This is indicative of built up resentment in their heart. The principle of love is not guiding their heart, but bitterness and anger.
6. Love deals with issues as they come along and doesn't allow this inward brooding to take place.
7. One of the qualifications of a pastor is "patient" and "not soon angry." These characteristics are indicative of a person who has spiritually matured in godly love.

Love is kind. vs. 4

1. When is the last time you heard a message on kindness? Christian people should be the kindest people on earth, the kindest people at work, the kindest people on the block, etc.
2. Love looks for way to be helpful and kind to others. **Ephesians 4:32; Galatians 6:10**
3. You say, "But people will take advantage of you." Yes, they will, but "*Charity suffereth long*."
4. Why are Christians so full of lovingkindness? Because nobody knows more about lovingkindness than a believer who has been forgiven and saved. **Titus 3:3-4**