

## What Does Love Look Like? – Part 2

### 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**

**Love refuses to be self-centered. Vs. 4-5**

1. There are several phrases in these two verses that basically lead us back to the same thought. Love is not consumed with itself. *Charity envieth not.*
  - It isn't possessive and jealous. It doesn't have the attitude, "They have something I want and I've got to have it."
  - Love rejoices in the blessings of others and is genuinely happy for them. *Charity vaunteth not itself.*
  - This is simply a person who loves to boast and draw attention to himself - Somebody who makes themselves bigger than they ought to be - a braggart.

- A person who has never grown in the love of Christ has a very self-centered, egotistical attitude and it will greatly hinder their closest relationships in life.
- A person who vaunts himself has the attitude, "It's all about me."

*Charity is not puffed up.*

- This phrase means "to blow up, inflate, make proud and haughty."
- You've heard people say, "He's got the big head" or "He's too big for his britches."
- This is the picture of an arrogant snob who thinks he is just a little bit better than others. When you learn how to truly love people through the power of Christ, that arrogant, brassy, and aloof disposition begins to come down.
- You no longer have to impress anybody. You are real and genuine and your heart just loves people for who they are. You don't have to be better than everybody else.

*Charity seeketh not her own.*

- True love doesn't pursue self-advantage and exaltation at the expense of others.
  - When you love somebody you live for them and their happiness and advantage.
  - It is interesting that charity is personified as a lady in verse five. Why is this? I think it is because there is not a better example of charity than a humble, godly lady.
2. All of these different phrases explain in a little different way the idea that love is not self-centered. You cannot be consumed with yourself and show forth true, Christ-filled love to others.
  3. The very essence of love is that you are choosing to give to somebody else when you do not have to. **John 3:16**

### **Love demonstrates good behavior.**

1. Love is not just words. Everybody loves to hear the words "I love you", but love is not just surface words. Love shows up in the way you treat others.
2. This is what it means when it says in verse 5 that love, "*doth not behave itself unseemly.*"
  - "Unseemly" simply means "unbecoming."
  - The Bible says that a spiritual leader should demonstrate "good behavior." **1 Timothy 3:2**
  - It also teaches that more mature ladies in the Lord should teach the younger ladies to be "in behavior as becometh holiness." **Titus 2:3**
3. Love is polite and has good manners, which is almost a thing of the past. I've opened the door for a lady and heard her say, "A gentleman - there aren't many of those any more."
4. Today guys think nothing of cursing and swearing at their wives or girlfriends and the sad part is that the ladies give it back to them.
5. When you are filled with true godly love for another person, you just want to treat them right, with respect and with common courtesy. Yelling, screaming, slamming doors, interrupting each other, refusing to listen to each other - these all demonstrate a lack of behavior which godly love is supposed to have.

6. The Bible says that a man should treat his wife with the same respect he would his own body, and the wife should demonstrate respect for her husband.  
**Ephesians 5:28, 33**

#### **Love is honest.**

1. One of the leading causes in the breakdown of relationships is a lack of honesty. Trust is such a key factor in any relationship. When the trust factor breaks down things begin to deteriorate.
2. When a person is filled with Christ's love, they rejoice in truth, not sinful deceptions.
  - Satan is a liar and the father of lies (**John 8:44**). Satan thinks nothing of lying and distorting the truth in order to use and abuse people.
3. When a person makes a fool out of somebody else by lying and deceiving them, they do not love that other person. They may **say** they love them, but God's Word says that love does not rejoice in iniquity, but in the truth.

#### **Love thinks the best about others.**

1. In verse 5 Paul says that love, "*thinketh no evil.*"
  - The word "thinketh" carries the idea of taking an inventory.
2. Love doesn't keep account of wrong-doing in the past. It doesn't focus on the past sins and failures of others.
3. The same idea is presented when in verse 7 it says that love, "*believeth all things and hopeth all things.*"
4. This doesn't mean that love is gullible or hides its head in the sand. It simply means that love thinks the best, not the worst about those we love. Love isn't always suspicious and questioning people's hearts and motives.
  - Therefore love would never gossip or even receive gossip from others.
5. Love is full of hope, not doom and gloom. Love encourages others with hope.

#### **Love is enduring.**

1. Love can be tested and when tested, it bears up. It doesn't give in when the pressures come. Paul makes three statements that clearly reveal this aspect of love:
  - Love beareth all things.
  - Love endureth all things.
  - Love never faileth.
2. You can't stop it. It is tenacious, like a bull dog. It is the idea of, "I'm going to love you no matter what."
3. When everything else is falling down around it, it remains!
4. Too many people in this day and age do not understand that love is enduring. People give up on marriage so easily today. Wedding vows carry the idea of an enduring love, but I'm afraid that too many times, they are just words.
5. Aren't you thankful that God's love for us is not conditional, but enduring?  
**Romans 8:35-39**

**In Conclusion:**

1. What a picture this text paints for us concerning the nature of true godly, Christ-filled love.
2. May we all take it to heart and pray and ask God to love those around us with a Christ-filled love.