

## 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**

## What Does Love Look Like? – Part 2

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**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.

## Love: The Way to Make Your Life Count

### Introduction:

1. I believe that every person wants to feel as if his or her life has significance. At the end of your life, you want to be able to look back and know that your life had true meaning, and that it truly counted.
2. Jesus taught us how to make our lives count. Jesus taught that the true meaning of our lives rests in one word: love. Matthew 22:36-40
  - Do you realize what a huge statement this is?
  - He just boiled down all of Israel's law (over 600 commands) into one word: love.
3. Jesus also taught his disciples that there was one characteristic that identified to others the fact that they were **His** disciples: love. John 13:35
  - God wants His family to be known for its love more than anything else.
  - Paul mentions love (or charity) 100 times in his 13 books. Paul also teaches that love is the crowning virtue above everything else. 1 Corinthians 13:13; Romans 13:9-10
4. This is why it is so important that every believer be in regular, close fellowship with other believers. It is in this fellowship that you can develop the fruit of loving, and thereby make your life truly count.
  - Love cannot be learned in isolation. You don't learn it on a deserted island or alone in your closet. 1 Thessalonians 3:12
  - You have to be around people—irritating, imperfect, frustrating people.
5. If you are to make your life count, there are three important truths that you must become convinced of.

### First, loving others is the most important part of your life.

1. Love is not simply a good part of your life; it is the **most** important part.
  - It is **good** to have a spare tire, but it is **essential** that you have a steering wheel.
  - Love is not like a spare tire that you use every once in a while when you're in a pinch. Love should be your top priority, primary objective, and great ambition.
2. Therefore, relationships must have priority in your life above everything else. Why is this?

### Because life without love is really worthless. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

- Oftentimes we act as if relationships are something to be squeezed into our schedule. We seem to be trying to "find time" for our children or trying to "make time" for people in our lives.
- This gives the impression that relationships are just a part of our lives along with many other tasks. But, God says that relationships are what life is all about. Look again at Matthew 22:36-40.

- After learning to love God (worship), learning to love others is what your life is all about.
- Relationships (not achievements or the acquisition of things) are what matter most in life. But, here is what happens: When our schedules become overloaded, we start skimming relationally. We begin cutting back on giving the time, energy, and attention that loving relationships require.
- What is most important to God is replaced by what is urgent to us.
- Busyness is the great enemy of relationships. We become preoccupied with making a living, doing our work, paying bills, grocery shopping, running here and there, and accomplishing goals, as if these tasks are the point of life. They are not.
- The point of life is learning to love God and people. Life minus love equals zero.

### **Because love will last forever. 1 Corinthians 13:7-8a**

- Love leaves a legacy. How you've treated other people and loved people—not your wealth or accomplishments—creates the most enduring impact you can leave on earth.
- **Illustration:** I've been with many people on their death beds, and I have never heard one person say, "Bring me my diplomas! I want to see them one more time. Show me my awards, my medals, that gold watch they gave me at work."
- When people are taking their final breaths, they don't surround themselves with objects. What we want around us is people—people we love and have relationships with.
- In our final moments, we realize that relationships are what life is all about. Wisdom is learning that truth **sooner** rather than later.
- Don't wait until your deathbed to figure it out.
- When we get to heaven, God won't say, "Tell me about your career, your bank account, your hobbies, your ball teams you played on, etc." He will evaluate your life based on two key questions: "Did you love God?" "Did you love people?"
- Every day, our prayer should be, "God, I don't want to waste this day. Help me to spend some time loving You and loving people."

### **Second, loving others is best expressed through the giving of your time.**

1. Time is a great indicator. What do I mean by this? The more time you give to something, the more you reveal its importance and value to you. Do you want to know people's priorities? Look at how they use their time.
2. What is the most precious gift you have? Is it money? You can make more of that. I believe it is "time," because you only have a set amount of it.
  - When you give someone your time, you are giving them a portion of your life that you'll never get back. Your time is your life.

- This is why the greatest gift you can give someone is your time.
3. It is not enough just to **say** relationships are important, we must prove it by investing time in people. Words alone are worthless. 1 John 3:18
    - Relationships take time and effort, and the best way to spell love is T-I-M-E.
  4. The very essence of love is giving of yourself. Jesus is our example (John 15:12-13). Jesus didn't just **say** He loved us. He did what was necessary to bring us close to Himself and allow us to dwell with Him forever.
    - Men, sometimes we have a hard time understanding this concept. We say, "I don't understand my wife and kids. I provide everything they need. What more could they want?"
    - They want YOU! They want your eyes, your ears, your time, attention, presence, focus—your time! Nothing can take the place of that.
    - Whenever you give your time, you are making a sacrifice, and sacrifice is the essence of love.
    - Love means giving up my preferences, comfort, goals, security, money, energy, or time for the benefit of someone else.

### **Third, loving others should be done now.**

1. There are two passages I would like for us to look at in God's Word: Proverbs 3:27-28 and 1 John 3:16-17.
2. What is the point that God is emphasizing? If you are going to show love to someone, don't wait until tomorrow. Do it now!
3. Why is this? Because you do not know how long you will have the opportunity. Circumstances change. People die. Children grow up. You have no guarantee of tomorrow. Proverbs 27:1
4. If you want to express love, you had better do it now.

### **In Conclusion:**

1. Let me conclude this message by asking you a few questions:
  - How will you explain to God those times when projects or material things were more important to you than people?
  - Who do you need to start spending more time with?
  - What do you need to cut out of your schedule to make that possible?
  - What sacrifice do you need to make?
2. The best use of life is love.  
The best expression of love is time.  
The best time to love is now.

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  - It is **good** to have a spare tire, but it is **essential** that you have a steering wheel.
  - Love is not like a spare tire that you use every once in a while when you're in a pinch. Love should be your top priority, primary objective, and great ambition.
2. Therefore, relationships must have priority in your life above everything else. Why is this?

### Because life without love is really worthless. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

- Oftentimes we act as if relationships are something to be squeezed into our schedule. We seem to be trying to "find time" for our children or trying to "make time" for people in our lives.
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## Good Stewards of His Grace 1 Peter 4:7-16

### Introduction:

1. If we are saved, we have received the gift of God's grace. Paul tells us that this grace from God only comes through Jesus Christ.  
1 Corinthians 1:4
2. Peter said that as we have received this gift of grace, we should minister the same one to another. vs. 10
3. I am to minister grace to you and you are to minister grace to me. When we do this, it makes us good stewards of His manifold grace.
4. As God's grace has abounded **to** me, it should abound **through** me in my relationship with others.
5. Hebrews 13:9 states that "*It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.*"
6. What does my life look like when my heart is established with grace? What does my life look like when I am ministering grace to others?

### My life is characterized by spiritual stability. vs. 7

1. I am sober (serious) minded about the work of God, and therefore I possess a vibrant and active prayer life for others.
2. It is much easier to minister grace to you if I am praying for you fervently.
3. Too many church leaders today are occupied with the latest church growth fads or programs. They are carried from one to another. Here is what should occupy us: ministering the grace of God one to another. Hebrews 13:9

### My life is characterized by gracious words. vs. 8-9

1. My mouth should minister grace to others, pure and simple.  
Ephesians 4:29
2. If my mouth ministers condemnation, I lack grace, and the problem is with me, not the other person.
3. Love is a choice, and when we open up our hearts and choose to love others, we choose to pass over and forgive things that we could otherwise make an issue of.  
vs. 8
4. As I understand God's amazing grace to me, I can't help but minister it to you.
  - Whenever people are very critical and judgmental of others, guaranteed, they do not live in an understanding or appreciation of God's grace in their own life.
5. The Bible says about Jesus that people "*wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth.*" Luke 4:22

## **My life is characterized by an appreciation of those who are different than me. vs. 11**

1. When I am full of myself, I despise those that are different than me. When I am full of grace, I thank God that others are different than me.
2. It is this diversity that makes the body of Christ function in an effective and powerful way. 1 Corinthians 12:14-27
3. There will be people in the body that we don't particularly click with, but we need to praise God for this, and realize that God may use them in a way that He can't use us.

## **My life is characterized by spiritual strength. vs. 12-16**

1. When trials come in the life of a believer, many times people will get angry and bitter. A leader for God doesn't do this.
2. If our heart is established with grace, even during difficult times, we are consumed with ministering His grace to others.
3. As we live in an appreciation of His grace, we glorify God even through suffering and trials.

## **In Conclusion:**

1. Romans 5:20 states that "*where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*" You can't out-sin God's grace.
2. When we are filled with God's grace, this is the attitude we have towards others: "You can't cause me to quit loving you. The more you sin, the more I will seek to love you, pray for you, and minister God's grace to you."
3. "The more you may sin against me, the more I will love you and minister the grace of Christ to you."