

## Loving Others

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*God is Love*

February 2024 Scripture Writing Plan and Journal

# Loving Others

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## INTRODUCTION

## SOAP METHOD

1) 1 JOHN 4:7-8

2) JOHN 13:34

3) 1 JOHN 4:16

4) 1 JOHN 4:17

5) 1 JOHN 4:18

6) 1 JOHN 4:19

7) 1 JOHN 4:20-21

8) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 PATIENT

9) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 KIND

10) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 ENVY

11) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 BOASTFUL

12) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 ARROGANT

13) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:5 RUDE

14) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:5  
SELF-SEEKING

15) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:5 IRRITABLE

16) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:5

RECORD KEEPER

17) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:6

NO JOY IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

18) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:6

REJOICES IN TRUTH

19) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 BEARS

20) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 BELIEVE

21) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 HOPES

22) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 ENDURES

23) 1 CORINTHIANS 13:8

NEVER ENDS

24) 1 CORINTHIANS 16:14

25) COLOSSIANS 3:14

26) ROMANS 12:9-10

27) ROMANS 12:13-15

28) ROMANS 12:16

29) ROMANS 12:17-21

*Some of these verses will be used several times in a row as we focus on each part of the verse. I have put the “theme” idea with the scripture.*

## Loving Others

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**T**raditionally the world celebrates February as the month of love. It can be a very fun and exciting month for those who are in healthy loving relationships. For others, it can be a dreadful month that comes with great sadness and heartache. Jesus says:

*<sup>39</sup> The second is like it:*

***Love your neighbor as yourself.***

Matthew 22:39

This scripture plan explores God's Word for instruction and examples of how we are to love others, to include our enemies. God is perfect love. It is only by allowing Him to fill our hearts can we love others. When we are filled with His love, what do we do with it? God's Word gives us perfect details on how we are to not only love Him, but love others.

Some Questions to ponder during this plan:

- \* How does God Love us?
- \* How do I love others?
- \* Who am I do love?
- \* What is the true meaning of loving others?



*And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. **God is love**, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.*

1 John 4:16

# Loving Others

Scripture writing plan & Journal

How to use this Journal:

There are many study methods out there! I encourage you to search through them and find what motivates and encourages you the most. I like to use the S.O.A.P Method.

## Scripture

Write out a verse or passage of scripture.

## Observa-

What stood out to you about this verse or scriptures? Where there any commands or instructions?

## Application

How can you apply this today to your life today? How can you live in light of this truth?

## Prayer

Write out a prayer. Ask the Lord to show you how to meditate and apply this truth to your life.

Other areas to consider:

- \* Author
- \* Audience
- \* Major Concept
- \* Theme
- \* Event
- \* Keywords and Definitions
- \* People
- \* Places
- \* When
- \* Where
- \* Who am I in this Verse?
- \* Where is God?
- \* What Is God Speaking?

Give yourself room to ponder and pray. Allow yourself time to listen for God to speak to you. Get creative! Draw, paint, make diagrams, whatever ignites your awe and wonder to studying God's Word!

Visit [It Starts Small](http://ItStartsSmall.com) for more examples and in-depth study guide ideas!  
[www.itstartssmall.com](http://www.itstartssmall.com)

# Loving Others

1 JOHN 4:7-8

Today's Date:

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# The Source of Love

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As we begin our journey through the month of February, we begin in the book of 1 John. This letter from John, I wished we had more time to work through. John speaks about the subject of love and how to love one another. As we study today's scripture, we are going to include verses within John's other letters to get an understanding of where love comes from.

John makes three appeals through out 1 John.

## Appeal #1

<sup>9</sup> The one who says he is in the light but hates his brother or sister is in the darkness until now. <sup>10</sup> **The one who loves his brother or sister remains in the light**, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup> But the one who hates his brother or sister is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and doesn't know where he's going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

*2 John 2:9-11*

If we want to walk in His light, we must love one another. IN order to love, we need the light of God to illuminate our hearts. A dark heart is a heart hat hates, but God pours His light into our hearts, so that through His love, we are motivated to do loving actions to others.

## Appeal #2

<sup>10</sup> This is how God's children and the devil's children become obvious. **Whoever does not do what is right is not of God, especially the one who does not love his brother or sister.**

*1 John 3:10*

Love is attached to our nature. If we are truly born again, we will love others.

A hallmark of the Christian life is how well we love EVERYONE. This is not just how well you love your spouse, children, or family and friends. This is the measure of how you treat those who have wronged you. It is a measure of how you treat your enemies. Love is not just reserved for a select few because God loves everyone equally.

### Appeal #3

<sup>16</sup> And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.

**God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.**

*1 John 4:16*

Love is from God.

Love is God.

If we want to know His love, we have to know Him. Without a relationship with God, a person cannot know how to love. God is love means every action of God is filtered through love. God CANNOT do anything unloving. Love IS His nature.

Love is not just one of God's activity, it IS His activity.

Read that again a few times. Love IS who He IS. He defines the substance of love. Those who are born of God and know God will know Him and His character, not just know of Him. They will have an experiential - experience or observation - relationship with Him.

People who do not love, do not know God. They are either out of an experiential fellowship with Him. They know of God but have never experienced Him personally or they have never been born again in the first place.

The believer who loves has been born of and has known God.

A peek in all our closets and I bet many of us have a variety of t-shirts that we got or bought while attending an event. We buy or receive that t-shirt to as a way of

saying I was there. Christians who have an experiential relationship with God wear the t-shirt of God's love. It is in their nature, because the nature of God dwells within them.

God is Love, Love comes from God.

<sup>9</sup> **God's love was revealed** among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> **Love consists in this:** not that we loved God, but that **he loved us** and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

*1 John 4:9-10*

Love Moved God!

John told us that God is Love and love comes from God. John fills in the details. God's love motivated and move Him to send His only Son into the world. Love is a motion, a movement, a motivation.

The incarnation is an expression of God's love and enabled by God's love. By becoming one of us, God is able to effectively love us! Jesus is God in the flesh. Without incarnation, Christianity would just be a religion. If Jesus was not God who became flesh, then He is just a man who did good things to get to God. Jesus did not come to experience humanity, He came to die.

Propitiation is a fancy word that means: a means of appeasing.

Jesus died for our sins satisfying the righteousness of God on our behalf. We were once enemies with God but through propitiation, Jesus makes us a friend to God and adopted into the family of God.

John shows us what God's love for us drove Him to do. The cross is the natural flow out of God's love, holiness, and justice. When God's love and holiness intermixed, the cross was the result. At the cross, His love and justice were satisfied.

God is love and there is nothing like God!

We must receive it by accepting the cross and what Jesus did for us out of the



same love that sent Him to the cross.

If we want love to run wild, we must believe in Jesus!

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and his love is made complete in us.

*1 John 4:11-12*

John's conclusion is if God loves us, we ought to love others. If we have experienced and have been impacted by His love, we WILL love others.

No one has seen God. Our earthly bodies cannot handle the fullness of God's holiness and glory. His majesty is too much for us on this side of eternity, but there is one amazing way for people to see God: if we love one another.

When we love one another, His love is perfected in us. The circuit of God's love is completed when we release His love to others.

# Loving Others

JOHN 13:34

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# The Mark of a Believer

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Jesus says, I command you. The Greek word for command is *entolē* and means an *order, command, charge, precept, injunction*. Notice it does not mean a suggestion. Jesus is not hinting at or making a suggestion, He is commanding us to love one another. Lets keep reading and bring in what else Jesus had to say.

<sup>34</sup> “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. <sup>35</sup> **By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**”

*John 13:34-35*

Jesus is giving us a profound commandment that encapsulates Christian love. This passage highlights the essential nature of Christian love and its significance in our relationships with one another and as a testimony to the world.

Jesus could speak on this topic because this command is rooted in the sacrificial love of Himself. Scripture calls us to love with selflessness, humility, and to forgive. Scripture calls us to be an imitator of Christ by setting the same example He set for us. These scriptures define an aspect of faith.

This love He speaks about has the power to transform lives, foster unity, and bear witness to others the reality of Christ, but it requires constant cultivation and overcoming obstacles such as pride, unforgiveness, and prejudice. By abiding in Christ's love, practicing forgiveness, embracing humility and extending love to all including our enemies, we become vessels of God's love and a source of light and hope in a world desperate for genuine love.

## *The Commandment of Love*

Jesus says, I give you a new command... (V34).

I think it is important to see where He gave this command. He was about to leave them. It is called new, not because there was no command (see Leviticus

19:18) but because it had never been made that by which any class or body of men had been know by or distinguished by it.

Everyone would know they were a "Christ follower" by the way they loved. We are known by our external titles.

Ponder: can we be tried and found guilty of being a "Christ follower" based on the evidence of love?

As Christians we are not to have worldly distinctions, rather we are to be identified by our tender and constant love for others. Everyone else separates people into categories of gender, wealth, religion, age, skin color, etc. But Jesus says, my distinction in you is the way you love others and they will identify me in you.

<sup>13</sup> No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.

*John 15:13*

<sup>16</sup> This is how we have come to know love: He laid down his life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

*1 John 3:16*

Jesus does not say men will conjure or guess that you belong to me, but they will certainly know.

Jesus does not say that by this you will know yourselves.

Jesus does not say men will know what you look like

Jesus says the best proof and evidence we can have of our relation to Christ, as his sincere disciples, is a hearty love and good will one towards another. Your love for each other shall be so decisive evident that you are like the Savior and all men shall see and know it.

# Loving Others

1 JOHN 4:16

Today's Date:

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# Come to Know and Believe

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John called himself a fascinating title:

<sup>23</sup> One of his disciples, **the one Jesus loved**, was reclining close beside Jesus.

*John 13:23*

<sup>2</sup> So she went running to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, **the one Jesus loved**, and said to them, "They've taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they've put him!"

*John 20:2*

<sup>20</sup> So Peter turned around and saw **the disciple Jesus loved** following them, the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and asked, "Lord, who is the one that's going to betray you?"

*John 21:20*

The one who Jesus loved.

It was not arrogance speaking as he wrote this. It was a profession of experiencing the love of Christ. He knew without a doubt Jesus loves him. John knows God is a great mountain and from it flows a love for all of humanity. He had taken part in the love of God through the life of Jesus. What did God's love do for John? God's love rocked him to his core. It made him fearless to love God and others with totality. John was inspired to write one of the most well-known verses in God's Word:

<sup>16</sup> For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

*John 3:16*

To have this sort of love, we need to understand the totality and triad of God's love.

### *The Spirit Loves Us*

<sup>13</sup> This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us: He has given us of **his Spirit**.

*1 John 4:13*

Other translations word it as: *by this we know*. What is John referring to in this statement? By what will we know what?

<sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and his love is made complete in us.

*1 John 4:12*

When we are born again and have received Christ as our Savior and we abide in God, He will know because He has given us His Spirit. John says we know God is in us because He gave us His Spirit. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is great evidence of God's love for us. God's Word teaches us, the Holy Spirit indwells within us. He makes His home within us. (See also Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Corinthians 1:22)

<sup>19</sup> Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.

*1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

Can we pause a moment and ponder upon how radical this is?

Throughout the God's Word we read of various temples and tabernacles built for God and He dwelled within them. God gave Moses and His people a moving temple and He dwelled with them even though they were constantly taking it down to move to the next location, God still dwelled with them. Solomon re-

built the mighty temple of Jerusalem as a permanent grand building but eventually it was destroyed. Rebuilt. Destroyed.

But now God says, in Christ, we are His holy temple. John reveals to us that the Holy Spirit living within us is evidence of God's abiding love. God wants to abide in us. The Holy Spirit is our bridge between us and God. We are never alone because He is here within us.

### *A Father who Loves*

<sup>14</sup> And we have seen and we testify that the Father has sent his Son as the world's Savior.

*1 John 4:14*

God gave us the Holy Spirit and His Son. This is the greatest expression of His love for us. Sadly, for many of us, our relationship with our earthly father (good or bad) can get projected on our Heavenly Father. The deficiencies experienced by our earthly father can get into our mind and define who God is.

We might see God as hesitant to love or forgive us. Jesus is our advocate to our Heavenly Father. He is continually holding up our righteousness before our Heavenly Father. We need to see the role of the Holy Spirit, Jesus and our Heavenly Father. The Father sent His Son. Jesus volunteered, but it was God who sent Him. When we look at Jesus, we get a glimpse into the heart of God.

Jesus is evidence of God's great love. John is giving a personal testimony of seeing the Father's partnership with the Son. John's gospel highlights Jesus doing the work of the Father, executing the Father's will, and always doing what is pleasing to the Father.

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is the outward workings of the heart of our Heavenly Father.

Why did the Father send His son?

*Jesus is love.*

<sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God — God remains in him



and he in God. <sup>16</sup> And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.

*1 John 4:15-16*

Jesus was sent to be the Savior of the world. We confess Jesus is the Son of God who came for us, died for us, and this means we belong to God and God belongs to us. He abides in us and we abide in Him.

God's Word is clear: He saved us from our sins and sin was the obstacle to God's love. Man and God are separated by sin, but Jesus made a way to repair the gap.

And we finally reach our verse for today (vs 16).

We have come to know and believe the love God has for us. God's love is robust. The Spirit, the Father, and Son aim God's perfect love at us.

God IS love. If we abide in love, we abide in God and God in us.

Someone said it like this: If I say I am going swimming in the lake, I have to get into the water in order to swim. I have to get into the lake. I can not have one without the other. You can not swim without water and in water you have to swim. The absence of the lake is the absence of swimming.

To swim in love, is to swim in God. To abide in God is to abide in love.

Before the world was created, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit said:

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "**Let us** make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."

*Genesis 1:26*

God wants you and I and all people He has created to experience Him, bear His image, and know His love. John points out to us, this is a process. It is a process and takes time. In a way, it is a lifelong journey of continually discovering

His love. John says, so we have come to know. Come to believe. To come means you arrived at a place and to get to a place it is a journey.

Ponder today: are you bold as John is and can you say you are His beloved? The one who Jesus loves?

# Loving Others

1 JOHN 4:17

Today's Date:

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# A Completed Love that Brings Confidence

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For many Christians, the love of God is spoken in past tense. They saw the love of God in the cross, became born-again, but live tip-toeing around God. John tells us we can have confidence around God. When the topic of the day of judgement is brought up many become uneasy. As Christians, our day of judgement is not about life and death. Our eternity is not hanging in the balance.

Jesus explained this in John.

“Truly I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.

*John 5:24*

Instead, our day will be an assessment of our lives.

<sup>12</sup> If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become obvious. For the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one's work. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned up, he will experience loss, but he himself will be saved — but only as through fire.

*1 Corinthians 3:12-15*

<sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

*2 Corinthians 5:10*

**Did we live for eternity or temporal?**

## Did we live for God or self?

John says, when God's love is perfected in us, we will have confidence before God that even on the day of judgement, it will not be feared. How do we obtain such confidence? John continues with *as He is, also we are in the world*. Part of God's perfecting of us is that we begin to love like Jesus. God's love in us, changes us.

Think about someone who consumes the perfect balanced diet with no sugars. They exercise and sleep the perfect amount. We can imagine they are very fit individuals. What they consumed is what they appear to be and affects the way they look.

If we consume God's love, we start to look like Jesus and have confidence before the Lord. We are not actually like Jesus all the time, but God's Word teaches us we have the same position before the Father as Jesus does.

<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! <sup>6</sup> He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus,

*Ephesians 2:4-6*

Knowing who we are - seated with Christ - gives us confidence. In Christ our seat is secured.

**Ponder:** what are you consuming in your spirit and heart? There is a silly saying, what you eat is what you are. What are you filling your

# Loving Others

1 JOHN 4:18

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## God's Love Perfected

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God's love perfected in us produces the phrase, "*fear of the Lord*." The process of God's perfect love grows within us. When we encounter God, we are uneasy, timid, and apprehensive. As we mature and have an experiential relationship with Him, that turns into a reverence and respect.

The fear of the Lord is the product of God's perfect love in us. John says fear of punishment is not the completed perfected love of God in us. This is why it is so important to understand and rejoice to the teachings of God's love. His love sets us at ease and once we experience it, it emboldens and strengthens us.

A great example of the progressions of God's perfect love is Gideon. The midianites had been holding God's people hostage for seven years. They held them in poverty by raiding their fields during the harvest and stealing their cattle. The people cried out to God, and God chose Gideon to lead His people to victory.

When God sent message to Gideon he was full of fear. He was hiding in the wine press shucking the harvest. He was hiding so the midianites would not be able to steal the harvest. Immediately Gideon was full of fear when the angel of the Lord came to him. He was afraid that just seeing an angel of the Lord would bring him certain death. Even though he was full of fear, he obeyed God in tearing down the idols. How do we know he was fearful? He did it under the cover of darkness. Then he asked God for confirmation that he was indeed chosen to lead the people, even though he had seen an angel of the Lord.

<sup>10</sup> But if you are afraid to attack the camp, go down with Purah your servant. <sup>11</sup> Listen to what they say, and then you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the troops who were in the camp.

*Judges 7:10-11*

Gideon was afraid so he snuck into the camp and overheard the enemy talking about him and the certain destruction that was to come. They were so terrified of

Gideon they came to the conclusion he, himself, was going to tumble into their camp and destroy them.

All of this was God building and developing Gideon's confidence. God partially perfected Gideon in love!

<sup>15</sup> For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father!"

*Romans 8:15*

God wants to do the same for us! He wants to perfect His love in us so that we do not have a harmful fear that resides within us, but a perfect fear of Him. A relationship not built by the idea of punishment, but a relationship built on perfect love that completes us and brings us a spirit of reverence. The Spirit we have received is not one that brings harmful fear into our hearts.

**Ponder:** Take an honest assessment of your relationship with God. Is there a level of harmful fear? Harmful fear comes about by believing the lies of the enemy. Sometimes, that fear is no fault to us, except ignorance. What do you actually know about God and do you know what He says about you? Do you have an experiential relationship with Him? Have you truly experience the love of God? If not, what is holding you back? What stands between you and Him?



# Loving Others

1 JOHN 4:19

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## God Comes to Us First

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One of the most beautiful love stories comes from the book of Ruth. The layers and depth of that book is amazing! On the surface we read Boaz was Ruth first. Then he pursued her. Its a deeper picture of God's love for us.

We must first recognize that ALL our love is in response to His love. God's love comes to us first. He initiated it, first.

Before we met God, we were rebels running from God. We were children of darkness dead in our sins.

2 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. <sup>3</sup>We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. <sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us,

*Ephesians 2:1-4*

We did not care about God or the things of God so were spiritually dead.

In our dead slumber, God's love broke through. He shattered the chains of bondage, rescued us from our dark prisons and deep pits, and broke through the lies to shout and proclaim His love for us. God initiated the conversation, the calling and the meeting.

We love others because it was God who loved us first. It's the response to a God whom we have experienced His love, that we are able to love others.

# Loving Others

1 JOHN 4:20-21

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## Are You a Liar?

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John is a straight shooter here. He does not hold back or sugar coat the love of God. A person who hates and says they love God, is a liar.

The Greek word for hate in this scripture is *miseō* and means *to hate, pursue with hatred, detest*. I have always thought detest was an interesting word. It is our polite English word for hate. I means to dislike intensely.

**Through out John's first letter he points out six terrible lies:**

People who claimed to have fellowship with Jesus but walked in darkness (1:6)

People who claimed they had sinned because they had redefined sin according to culture's standards, calling God a liar. (2:4)

People who claimed to know Jesus but did not obey Him. (2:4)

People who claim to walk in light while hating their brothers. (2:9, 4:20)

People who claim to love God but love the world. (2:15)

People who deny Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, Good incarnate. (2:22)

I wished we had time to go through each of them, but for today, we are going to focus in the lie that People who claim to love God while hating others. When John spoke of hatred for others, he means the absence of love. That would be a no brainer, but ponder what we have learned so far. If Love is God and God is Love.... The hate of others is the absence of the flow of God's love within us. We received God's love and in return we turn and love others. It is an inevitable response to God's love.

There is this false idea that we actually believe: we can love God and hate others. John busts the lie to bits with truth. We find in God's Word that He hates the sins that take advantage of others because we are ALL made in the likeness of

Him. We need to have a spiritual understanding of God's love. It's not just a characteristic, it is WHO God IS!

### **How do we discover God's Love and Experience it?**

**Ask:** Ask God to open your eyes so you can see His love fully. Never be ashamed of what you do not know. He loves us so much He desires us to know Him. We never offend God by asking to see and experience Him. In Paul's letters to the Corinthians (chapter 1,3), he prayed for them to have a spiritual understanding opened to comprehending the love and Kingdom of God.

**Make it a Goal:** Grow in the love of God! Building your relationship with Him does not happen over night and is not instantaneous. It is a process, but let it be a desire of your heart.

**Discover:** When we get anxious or apprehensive or an unhealthy fear of God, we need to discover why. Most often it is a lie the enemy has convinced us about the character of God. Discover why!

Is it because you do not know who God is?  
Is it unrepentant sin?  
You behaved unlovingly?

Don't let the moment pass by without Holy Spirit introspection.

**Jesus!:** The enemy wants nothing more than to draw us to worldly solutions, but Jesus is the only way! He must have complete lordship over our lives.

**The Enemy's Hope:** We need to learn the tactics of evil! It desires to drag you into hate. It desires to incite your emotions to respond with condemnation, judgment and to execute vengeance and human justice.

**Start Serving:** Look for opportunities to serve! In Fellowship and service we find places to love others.

**Pray for others.**

**Ponder:** Do you love God? Do you hate others? The two are oil and water. What is God calling you to do today in response to honesty?

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-PATIENT

Today's Date:

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# Love is Patient

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We have spent the last week looking at the source of love. Love is God and God is love. We can not love others without first loving Him. He chose to love us first, before we ever loved Him. If we want to love others, we have to first understand the source of Love is God.

SO now we get to see what love is and is not. What I love about studying love, is that because love is God, each of the actions of love are a characteristic of His love towards us. As we study through 1 Corinthians 13, remember this is also how God loves us.

## *Patience.*

Love is Patient... CSB, NLT  
Charity suffereth long... KJV  
Love suffers long... NKJV

The original Greek word used was *makrothymēō* and means *to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles, to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others, to be mild and slow in avenging, to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish.*

According to Webster, the English word **patience** means *the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset*. **Longsuffering** means *having or showing patience in spite of troubles, especially those caused by other people.*

What are some examples of God's Patience in His Word:

<sup>20</sup> who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. In it a few — that is, eight people — were saved through water.

### *1 Peter 3:20*

We can look at the story of Noah. The Lord was very patient with people during the days of Noah. Can you imagine, no one had ever seen rain before. I can not imagine a world without rain. Noah warned the people to repent, but they refused and all but 8 died in the flood. During that time, God was very patient with the people. SO much so, HE had Noah build an ark to save them.

We can look to the life of Abraham (Genesis 20-21) and see God's patient with his lapses of faith. Abraham learned how costly it can be to be impatient. When we try to manipulate circumstances it brings heartache. When he and his wife tried to help God out, the immediate result was jealousy, anger, and family strife. There was also a long-term consequence: a bloody conflict that still rages today between the descendants of Hagar's son Ishmael and Sarah's son Isaac. The Lord promised Abraham and Sarah a baby, but they ended up waiting for the fulfillment until childbearing was humanly impossible. When Isaac was finally conceived and born, all the glory went to God. God could have decided to give up on both of them for their dumb idea and going through with it, but instead, He remained patient with them. God's patience was teaching them patience.

We learn about God's patience in the life of Moses when the people were wandering in the desert for 40 years.

The Lord passed in front of him and proclaimed:

The Lord – the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth,

### *Exodus 34:6*

Over and over we read of the heart breaking tale of humanity. God would show up and the people would rejoice. They would be delivered from suffering and once the celebration was over, they'd return to their doubting and fear. But God never gave up on them. They had to deal with the consequences of their sin, but because God loves us, He will correct us to make our path straight.

Yet he was compassionate;  
he atoned for their iniquity



and did not destroy them.  
He often turned his anger aside  
and did not unleash all his wrath.

*Psalm 78:38*

God forgives us of our sin and does not destroy us. He loves us so much that he brought a new covenant between us and Him through Christ.

I will delay my anger for the sake of my name,  
and I will restrain myself for your benefit and for my praise,  
so that you will not be destroyed.

*Isaiah 48:9*

God is not quick tempered and the Son is patient. The patience of Jesus was the patience of His heavenly Father. God has great patience towards us by delaying Christ's return. God shows us His love even though the world is full of rebellion and hate. God is perfect grace, kindness, and forbearance because He is perfect love and His acts are motivated by a perfect love.

Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that **God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?** <sup>5</sup> Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed.

*Romans 2:4-5*

God is patiently waiting for all to repent and to turn to Him.

The problem we face is we take His patience and use it as a license to sin, but God's punishment and judgement has been spoken. God's mercy with holds the waters of judgement upon all.

God's mercy and patience is not endless. He waited for repentance in the days of Noah but it did not last forever. The flood still came. Later God told Abraham there would come judgement on the Canaanites, but not until it came to full measure. God pronounces judgement, but allows for time between His spoken

Judgement and following through.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people despise me? How long will they not trust in me despite all the signs I have performed among them? <sup>12</sup> I will strike them with a plague and destroy them. Then I will make you into a greater and mightier nation than they are."

*Numbers 14:11-12*

God's justice requires that He punish those who do not respond to His patience and loving kindness. Remember, God is not fair, He is a just God. He is compassionate, but holds ALL accountable. Jesus warned (John 12:37-40) the people and us to not go beyond the patience of God. The people knew the scriptures but rejected Him. They refused to believe even though they had witnessed miracles and His own testimony. As a result, God blinded and hardened their hearts.

### *How do we grow in Patience?*

**Accept Discomfort!** Our modern day definition of patience is enduring without complaint. Paul urges us to be patient in affliction. This is NOT putting a lid on anger and resentment. It means crucifying our anger through surrender and detachment to it. Patience is born out of acceptance and surrender. We need to be ruthless over our complaining.

**Discipleship of Forgiveness.** Never once do we see God blow a gasket and scream, "I'm done with you." This is because God forgives us and lets us start over. Impatience erupts when we hang onto the past.

**Extend Grace.** We need to learn to give the grace given to us to others. Our entire lives are spent taking two steps forward and one step backward or sometimes one step forward and two back. BUT!! God affirms us, loves us, and encourages us with His grace. We need to extend that grace to others. The greatest poison to others and our relationships is to withhold grace.

A person's insight gives him patience, and his virtue is to overlook an offense. *Proverbs 19:11*

Have you considered that delays in your life can also glorify God? Or are you trying to help Him out in an attempt to get what you want more quickly? Waiting is difficult, but it's the only way we learn patience, which is precious to the Lord. When you experience a delay, use it as an opportunity to build your trust in God and your confidence in His wisdom and perfect plan. When others test your patience, know that it is actually an opportunity to extend grace.

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 KIND

Today's Date:

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# Love is Kind

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Our modern day definition of kindness is to show one's self mild. Kindness is a lifestyle, daily practice, and a choice. Being kind should be faithful service, a default mode, a habit of goodwill, and a heart that continually serves others each day.

Kindness requires intentionality. Kind acts are often on the spot acts of love, in the moment and are unplanned. Specific or planned, kindness requires being continually ready to serve. Kindness is not done when we feel like it or when we think about it.

Kindness requires intentional looking. When love is the motive for our hearts, we continually seek out the needs of others. For three years, Jesus looked to the needs of others and never turned others away.

**Ponder:** *How many people and opportunities to show God's love do we miss each day because we are too busy and wrapped up in ourselves?*

God's Word is full of great examples of people showing kindness towards others.

**Good Samaritan** Luke 10:25-37

**Abraham shows hospitality to strangers** Genesis 18

**Rehab hides spies** Joshua 24:17-19

**King David spares Mephibosheth's life** 2 Samuel 21:7

**Jesus healed the sick and fed the hungry** Matthew 14:14-21

**Zacchaeus gives to those in need** Luke 19:1-10

**Woman who pour perfume on Jesus** Matthew 26:6-13

Not only does God show us people who perform kind acts, He gives us instructions on how to be kind and why kindness is important:

<sup>29</sup> No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. *Ephesians 4:29*

Kindness builds another up.

<sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> And **be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another**, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

*Ephesians 4:31-31*

Kindness imitates God's example of forgiveness.

<sup>35</sup> **But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.** Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil

*Luke 6:35*

Be kind to your enemies.

<sup>27</sup> When it is in your power,  
don't withhold good from the one to whom it belongs.

*Proverbs 3:27*

Always help those in need.

<sup>34</sup> "I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

*John 13:34-35*

Kindness reveals the reflection of Christ to others.

A gentle answer turns away anger,  
but a harsh word stirs up wrath.

*Proverbs 15:1*

Kindness heals relationships.

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

*Galatians 5:22*

Kindness is a reflection of God's heart!

So this brings us to the question, what is the difference between kindness and niceness?

Kindness is proactive and a care-oriented actions.

Niceness is a reactive action and I-oriented.

Kindness moves beyond feelings and conveniences. It is a deliberate choice to support or encourage others.

Niceness is being pleasant but does not require "pain," Niceness rarely makes a lasting difference or impression.

Kindness is inconvenient. It costs a person something: time, effort, comfort, pride, etc. Kindness is the intentional act of sacrifice that makes it meaningful.

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 DOES NOT ENVY

Today's Date:

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# Love Does Not Envy

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What is envy?

Desiring what is not yours.

Fear of loosing something.

Painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with desire to possess the same.

The Greek word used is *zēloō*. It means *to burn with zeal, to desire earnestly, pursue, to envy*. I think we can get a clearer idea of what Paul is talking about by looking where else this same word is used.

The **patriarchs became jealous** of Joseph and sold him into Egypt, but God was with him

*Acts 7:9*

Paul is speaking about Joseph's brothers. (Genesis 37:11-35) They were envious of their father's favoritism towards Joseph. It led them to conspiring to murder him, and eventually they sold him into slavery and told their father a wild animal had killed him. I believe we can learn that this sort of behavior destroys relationships.

**But the Jews became jealous**, and they brought together some wicked men from the marketplace, formed a mob, and started a riot in the city. Attacking Jason's house, they searched for them to bring them out to the public assembly.

*Acts 17:5*

Reading various commentaries on this verse, we could spend all day debating what exactly the Jews were getting jealous about, but God's Word says they were

Jealous and as a result, they incited others to mob together and be violent.

In other places throughout God's Word we see examples of jealousy. The most famous is the jealousy of Cain towards Abel. Abel simply obeyed God and God was pleased. This upset Cain to the point he committed the first murder in humanity.

<sup>8</sup>Saul was furious and resented this song. "They credited tens of thousands to David," he complained, "but they only credited me with thousands. What more can he have but the kingdom?" <sup>9</sup>So **Saul watched David jealously** from that day forward.

*1 Samuel 18:8-9*

Saul had lost the favor of the Lord because He refused to repent. He had become a people pleaser. He cared more about what the people thought than what God commanded. He admitted as much, but never repented. Favor of the Lord had come to David and David loved and served Saul, even though he was the appointed king. As David became a mighty warrior, the people began to sing praises of David that he was mightier than Saul. Saul could not see David's loyalty and service to him. Instead He grew a root of bitterness and became jealous of David.

Sadly, David experienced jealousy the moment He saw and desired another man's wife. In 2 Samuel 11, we read of David's mighty fall. His desire to have what he could not, lead him to murder.

Another example is our enemy's jealousy of God. Satan is jealous of God. His jealousy of wanting to be God destroy his relationship with God, took a host of angels with him in rebellion and lost. Is it not interesting how envying and jealousy, coveting, gathers others to destroy and take what another has. It is no wonder that he employs this tactic in our lives. (See Ez 28, Isaiah 14:12-14)

**Envy, coveting, jealousy is a dangerous and powerful sin.**

Fury is cruel, and anger a flood, but who can withstand jealousy?

*Proverbs 27:4*

In Proverbs, we read that this behavior is destructive and leads to a remorseful life. Proverbs also reveals it destroys the body.

A tranquil heart is life to the body,  
but jealousy is rottenness to the bones.

*Proverbs 14:30*

This sin leads to our estrangement from God.

<sup>28</sup> And because they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God, God delivered them over to a corrupt mind so that they do what is not right. <sup>29</sup> They are filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of **envy**, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, **God-haters**, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> **senseless, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful**. <sup>32</sup> Although they know God's just sentence — **that those who practice such things deserve to die — they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them.**

*Romans 1:28-32*

**God's Word tells us what the Consequences are to this behavior:**

**Denies our uniqueness.** Psalms 139:13-16 speaks about how God made us all. He made us all different and when we envy and covet what we do not have, we decide that God made a mistake. He is some how shorting us on what we deserve or want.

**Divides your attention.**

"No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

*Matthew 6:24*

We can not serve two masters. If you recall, God is love and love is God. You can not claim God to be God and envy others. You can not serve God with a

heart that desires what others have.

### **Wastes Time and Energy.**

<sup>4</sup>I saw that all labor and all skillful work **is due to one person's jealousy of another.** This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind.

<sup>5</sup>The fool folds his arms  
and **consumes his own flesh.**

<sup>6</sup>Better one handful with rest  
**than two handfuls with effort and a pursuit of the wind.**

<sup>7</sup>Again, I saw futility under the sun: <sup>8</sup>**There is a person without a companion, without even a son or brother, and though there is no end to all his struggles, his eyes are still not content with riches.** "Who am I struggling for," he asks, "and depriving myself of good things?" This too is futile and a miserable task.

*Ecclesiastes 4:4-8*

Envious pursuits is like chasing the wind. It leads to a lonely road because it destroys relationships and when we finally get it, it does not satisfy. It brings not relief to struggles. You end up being miserable and never satisfied.

Leads to every other sin.

For where there is **envy and selfish ambition, there is disorder and every evil practice.**

*James 3:16*

Envy is a severe heart problem. It destroys everyone and everything around you. Notice, James says there is disorder and EVERY evil practice.

Your worship and desires gets misguided:

I desire **that.**

I want **that.**

I live for **that.**

*When "that" is not God, it's an idol.*

What can we do to run in the opposite direction?

Develop a heart of gratitude.

Be content with what you have!

Jealousy is the fear of losing - trust what you have is what God wants you to have. Take care of what you have. If you want more, take care of what God has given y

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 3:4 IS NOT BOASTFUL

Today's Date:

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# Love is Not Boastful

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The different translations use the following words:

CSB: brag

NIV: boast

KJV: vaunteth not itself

NLT: boastful

The original Greek word is *perpereuomai* and means *a self display, employing rhetorical embellishments in extolling one's self excessively*.

Paul tells us:

in order that, as it is written: **Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.**

*1 Corinthians 1:31*

The Greek word for boast in this scripture is *kauchaomai* and means *to glory (whether with reason or without)*. It is interesting that the Greek for for boast in 1 Corinthians 13:4 for boast is only used in this verse throughout the New Testament! Can you see the difference between boasting in the Lord and boasting for one's self?

In our scripture for today, Paul says, the type of boasting that is not loving is extolling one's self excessively. It is bragging and the root of bragging is pride and giving a testimony of self and not God. Let's look at scripture concerning bragging about one's self.

'This is what the Lord says:

The wise person should not boast in his wisdom;

the strong should not boast in his strength;

the wealthy should not boast in his wealth.

*Jeremiah 9:23*

Jeremiah says, **do not** boast about how smart you are, your own strength, or wealth.

But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> So it is sin to know the good and yet not do it

*James 4:16-17*

James reveals that boasting is arrogance (we will dive deeper in understanding of that tomorrow) is evil. Evil is the absence of God's love. It is a sin to be a boastful person.

<sup>2</sup> In arrogance the wicked relentlessly pursue their victims;  
let them be caught in the schemes they have devised.

<sup>3</sup> For the wicked one boasts about his own cravings;  
the one who is greedy curses and despises the Lord.

<sup>4</sup> In all his scheming,  
the wicked person arrogantly thinks,  
"There's no accountability,  
since there's no God."

*Psalms 10:2-4*

Someone who only speaks about themselves and vaunts themselves is wicked. They devise schemes, speak about their heart's desires and are greedy. A boastful person despises the Lord and thinks there is no accountability for their actions and words because there is no God. Yikes! When we engage in boasting about who we are, what we have, we are testifying to others that there is no God.

<sup>4</sup> I say to the boastful, 'Do not boast,'  
and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horn.

<sup>5</sup> Do not lift up your horn against heaven  
or speak arrogantly.'"

*Psalms 75:4-5*

<sup>16</sup> These people are discontented grumblers, living according to their desires; their mouths utter arrogant words, flattering people for their own



advantage.

*Jude 1:16*

Those who boast about themselves are discontent grumblers who live according to their own selfish desires. They use their words to flatter people and impress people for their own advantage.

<sup>18</sup> For by uttering boastful, empty words, they seduce, with fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have barely escaped from those who live in error. <sup>19</sup> They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption, since people are enslaved to whatever defeats them.

*2 Peter 2:18-19*

Boastful words are empty and used to seduce people with seduction and debauchery. That is a word that is not really used in modern English. It means excessive indulgence in pleasures. People who boast are those who seek sensual pleasures. They are slaves to corruption and their own defeat.

King Nebuchadnezzar is our best example of someone who was boastful.

<sup>30</sup> the king exclaimed, **“Is this not Babylon the Great that I have built to be a royal residence by my vast power and for my majestic glory?”**

<sup>31</sup> While the words were still in the king’s mouth, a voice came from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared that the kingdom has departed from you. <sup>32</sup> You will be driven away from people to live with the wild animals, and you will feed on grass like cattle for seven periods of time, until you acknowledge that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms, and he gives them to anyone he wants.”

<sup>33</sup> At that moment the message against Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people. He ate grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with dew from the sky, until his hair grew like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws. *Daniel 4:30-33*

He stood overlooking "his: kingdom and spoke look at what I built. In an instant God struck his mind and he went insane for seven years acting like an animal.

Jesus speaks about the boastful pharisee and the humble tax collector.

<sup>10</sup> "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> **The Pharisee was standing and praying like this about himself: 'God, I thank you that I'm not like other people – greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get.'**

<sup>13</sup> "But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even raise his eyes to heaven but kept striking his chest and saying, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner!' <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this one went down to his house justified rather than the other, **because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled**, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

*Luke 18:10-14*

This person was exalting himself above others. Bragging is elevating yourself above others. It's the ultimate I statements... I, I, I... and not God is in the midst of I.

The next example is interesting:

<sup>21</sup> On an appointed day, dressed in royal robes and seated on the throne, Herod delivered a speech to them. <sup>22</sup> The assembled people began to shout, "It's the voice of a god and not of a man!" <sup>23</sup> At once an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give the glory to God, and he was eaten by worms and died.

*Acts 12:21-23*

King Harod gave a speech and the people began shouting, Herod is God. Harod should have stopped the people and said, it is God who gets the glory....but he sat there on his throne relishing the people's praise and them calling him a god. Terrible way to die if you ask me.

SO how do we get as far away from boasting as we can?

Cultivate a lifestyle of humility and gratitude.

<sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.

*Philippians 2:3-4*

Consider and focus on the needs of others rather than your own. DO not seek to do good acts for your own praise and vaunting. Make everyone else higher on the ladder than you.

in order that, as it is written: **Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.**

*1 Corinthians 1:31*

Direct your attention and glory to God and not yourself. Put your energy into pleasing God and not yourself.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise.  
Give thanks to him and bless his name.

*Psalms 100:4*

Develop a lifestyle and attitude of gratitude. Take the focus from yourself to setting it on God.

The heart of humility is taking credit from ourselves and giving it to God.

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 3:14 IS NOT arrogant

Today's Date:

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# Love is Not Arrogant

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Others translations say:

is not puffed up - KJV

is not proud - NIV

is not proud - NLT

Is not arrogant - CSB

The original Greek word used is *physioō* and means *to inflate, blow up, to cause to swell up, to be puffed up, to bear one's self loftily, be proud.*

All who fear the Lord will hate evil.

Therefore, **I hate pride and arrogance,**  
corruption and perverse speech.

*Proverbs 8:13*

This is something we must take very serious in our lives if we are to love others. God says I hate pride and arrogance. In God's Word we can look at a few examples and hold them up to us as a mirror to examine our own hearts for pride and arrogance.

King Nebuchadnezzar is the best example of ultimate pride. We learned yesterday that his boasting got him in serious trouble, but the heart of it was his pride. He loved himself so much that he took credit for everything he had done. He built his mighty nation and desired everyone worship him. Pride drove him to insanity.

The pride and arrogance of Pharaoh in Exodus caused his heart to become so hard he refused to listen to God and repent. His pride brought destruction to Egypt and as a result he lost his first born son. Pride destroys everything around us and our relationships.

A man named Korah took his position to his own self-made special status. He

believed he was so important that he gathered 250 men and challenged the authority and position of Moses. He believed he could do a better job than Moses and Aaron and in effect, he was better at it all than God. All the 250 people were swallowed up by the earth. Pride gathers up others to rebel against authority.

King Saul was an unrepented prideful leader. He refused to obey God and relied on his own strength to fight the Philistines. Saul had a heart for power and did whatever he had to do to keep it, including using witchcraft. Prideful ambition brings destruction but there is hope in repentance and transformation through God's grace!

Queen Jezebel was the queen of pride. She manipulated people into doing her bidding. She used manipulation to intentionally hurt others. She used elaborate lies, schemes, and evil tactics to get what she wanted. She went so far as to kill a neighbor to take what was his. Do not engage in devious lifestyles. DO not devise evil plans or tactics to get something you want.

Nabal was a surly mean and cruel man. His name literally means fool. He belittled people and he was stingy. When King David asked for provisions, which he had plenty, he said no. Pride is a person who is stingy with what they have. In the end he lost everything, including his wife to David. Pride causes us to lose everything and everyone. DO not ever decide that others are below you.

Finally, the ultimate example, Satan. He is the father of all evilness, wickedness, and sin. His pride does not care about anyone but himself. He does not care who gets hurt as long as he gets what he wants: to steal, kill, and destroy humanity. He is the father of abuse and manipulation. Copying the behavior of Satan only in the end hurts us.

It is easy to understand why Paul writes, love is not arrogant. There is no room for others in an "I" centered life. The only way to not be arrogant is to practice humility. Repentance and humility are the key to breaking the chains of pr

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:5 IS NOT RUDE

Today's Date:

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## Love is Not Rude

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Let's go deeper and see Paul is not talking about behavior that is not socially expected. It's deeper.

The original Greek word is *aschēmoneō* and means to act unbecomingly. When we look at other Bible translations it is translated as rude, behaves unseemingly (KJV), does not act disgracefully (NLT), and unbecomingly (NASB).

Our modern English definition of unbecomingly means not fitting or appropriate.

I pondered upon this but was not really grasping the idea Paul was speaking. So I decided to see where else Paul used the word and it is used only in one other place:

If any man thinks he is **acting improperly** toward the virgin he is engaged to, if she is getting beyond the usual age for marriage, and he feels he should marry — he can do what he wants. He is not sinning; they can get married.

*1 Corinthians 7:36*

In other versions it is written dishonorably, not honorably, and without honor.

The synonyms for unbecomingly are coarse, indecent, unmannerly, impervious, or blithely acting arrogant, deformed, or indecent.

This goes beyond socially perceived right and wrong behaviors. This is more than cutting someone off in your car or refusing to hold the door open. These are actions and words that dishonor another person. Our behavior, words and actions are to bring honor to God. The type of behavior Paul is talking about is dishonoring another person.

Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in **honoring one another**.



### *Romans 12:10*

Christians are called to honor one another without limitation. We are to make others feel like they are of high value by the way they are loved and cared for.

### *To Honor is to Value*

One of the main ingredients to honoring someone is to value them.

<sup>29</sup> Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's consent. <sup>30</sup> But even the hairs of your head have all been counted. <sup>31</sup> So don't be afraid; **you are worth more** than many sparrows.

### *Matthew 10:29-31*

Jesus says, you cannot put a price tag on how important people are to God. Part of loving people is to value them as God does. God loves us so much and valued us so much He:

For **God loved the world** in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

### *John 3:16*

Honoring people is placing the same value God has for us on them. Jesus spoke honor to those He loved, those who other despised, and those who despised Him because He knew God valued them all.

### *Honor involves Humility*

This is being a servant to others to help them succeed and win. When their gains and wins are more important than your own. This means you do not call special attention to yourself or demand attention. We are to all work together to help each other without hope of selfish gain or recognition. Love does not demand recognition, but elevates others to be recognized and to succeed.

## *Honor involves Respect*

Be eager to show respect to one another. Honor and respect go hand in hand. Where one is lacking, chances are, the other is lacking also. To show respect is to give someone special attention. Even when you do not agree, you still respect them and are not rude.

Showing respect does not always have to be about a person's position.

Honor everyone. Love the brothers and sisters. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

*1 Peter 2:17*

God created everyone with a purpose and each person is significant. Cutting others down, belittling, and rude sarcasm should never hold a place in the life of a Christian character.

## *Honor involves Enthusiasm*

We need to take delight in honoring each other! Be eager with the attitude trying to out do each other in honor.

Think about it for a moment. What would our lives be like if we were motivated and driven, inspired and enthusiastic about honoring the people in our lives?

What if couples out did each other in honoring each other?

Brothers and sister?

Employees?

Church members?

The power of honoring each other has the potential of revolutionizing every relationship. Instead of the motive of selfishness to get out what you give, when if instead we just honored one another?

## *Honor involves Grace*

Love and honoring people, involves... people.

All people struggle with sin and weaknesses. This does not qualify them from being honored. Their life is still important to God no matter where they are in life. A life that is on the right path with God is no more honorable than a life deep within the pit of darkness. They equally matter to God. No life is more important or less important to God and we need to have the same love for people and place the same importance on people as He does.

It takes grace to honor people who make it hard to honor by the choices, life-styles, and attitudes they have. Showing honor is an act of grace. It takes God grace upon us to give His grace to others.

Honoring others is about treating them and talking to them as if they have value and matter. If God says we have value and matter to Him, then we need to love others with honor as He loves us.

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:5 IS NOT SELF-SEEKING

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## Love is Not Self-Seeking

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The Greek phrase here uses two words. The first is *zēteō* and means to *crave, demand something from someone*. The second Greek word is *heautou* and means *himself, herself, itself, themselves*. We can put these together to simply say, love is not selfish.

Someone who truly loves does not demand or insist upon their own way or rights. You never take a thought for yourself to pursue your own interest or state in an action or word. We serve others to not get something but give. We serve with no hope of return.

Paul is teaching us to not look for our own happiness exclusively in what we can get from other people. We should instead be focused on the welfare of others as more important than our own.

Do not seek your own advantage, comfort, ease, honor, pleasure, or profit, but instead sacrifice it for others. This does not mean we destroy regard for our own wellbeing and completely neglect our own safety, health and welfare. It means we do not pretend to love or do acts of service to get something. I use the word pretend because that is exactly what we are doing. You fool people into the idea you love them or are doing a good work, but your actual motive is yourself. This makes you a liar, manipulator and a deceiver.

Everything God's Word teaches us goes against the doctrine of selfishness. I call it a doctrine, because selfish people worship and idolize themselves. They only think of themselves and how to gain the advantage, control, and desires of their hearts. This is not a person who honors and loves God above themselves. It is someone who serves evil.

**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit**, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.

*Philippians 2:3*

In our everyday lives, we are a mirror to Christ and cause others to see Him through our actions.

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

*Matthew 5:14-16*

The trait of selfishness will not shine Christ’s light to the lost world. Those who are selfish will tear down others in order to elevate themselves or to get what they want. Selfishness is a very ugly quality for an individual to have and can do great damage to others. Since selfishness is a sin, it impairs our walk with Christ. Whenever we are actively living in sin, our relationship with Christ will be affected. Selfishness will also cause us to lose friendships and relationships.

One who isolates himself pursues selfish desires;  
he rebels against all sound wisdom.

*Proverbs 18:1*

We need to always place others’ interests over our own. Jesus tells us to love others as He loves us.

“This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.

*John 15:12-13*

When we love others, we are going to place their own wants and desires over our own. **This is ultimately what love is all about — placing someone else’s needs or wants above our own.** Jesus shows us the ultimate image of someone who is unselfish and who truly loves everyone by dying on the cross for our sins.

**For God loved the world in this way: He gave** his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the

world, **but to save the world through him.**

*John 3:16-17*

A young man is mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew (19:21-22) that allowed his selfishness to turn himself away from Jesus. Selfishness causes us to drift from God and like the young man it causes to completely fall away from God.

### **What is God's Solution to overcoming selfishness?**

We came out of the womb with selfishness written in our hearts. Because we are born in a fallen world, we are inherently selfish. It is only through the saving grace of Jesus and the transformation of the Holy Spirit that we can work to fight against the sin of selfishness.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.

*Galatians 5:22-23*

We need to intentionally walk in the Spirit and by walking with Him, we get better at producing His fruit. We need to soak our hearts and minds in God's Word. The more we read and understand, the more we know who God is and strive to be like Christ.

The Holy Spirit is the one who can help us transform our lives. Through His work in our lives we can fight the natural flesh of selfishness.

I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh.

*Galatians 5:16*

Paul says, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the evil desires of your heart. It takes a willing heart to intentionally put others above ourselves. As a Christian and follower of Christ, we are commanded to put other's interests above our own because this is exactly what Christ did when He died for all of us.

The first step is to turn away from the sin. Accept you are struggling with selfishness and repent of it. Admit you are having a problem. Pray to God and ask Him to help you turn away from selfishness and place a conviction in your heart to put others above yourself.

You can also ask Him for strength and opportunities to help others in your daily life. Reading the Bible doesn't need to be overlooked either because the Bible contains everything we need to know, including morals.

Turn my heart to your decrees  
and not to dishonest profit.

*Psalm 119:36*

This is a great pray to pray in overcoming selfishness. God answers all prayers according to His will, and He will help you in this struggle. Never doubt God's faithfulness and the power of prayer.

**By truly loving others as Christ commanded us will help us overcome selfishness on many levels. When we truly love others, we will place their needs above our own. True love for others is placing the other person's interest above our own.**

Selfishness causes us to think we should get everything we want, but if we are truly living for Christ, we should be willing to do the things that bring Him glory and to help others. By placing Jesus as the center of your life and by living according to the Bible, you will be able to sidestep selfishness. **Choose to love others rather than seeking out your own wants and desires.**



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## Love is NOT Irritable

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The KJV says love is not provoked and the NIV says love is not easily angered. The Greek word used is *paroxynō* and means *to stimulate, spur on, urge, to irritate, provoke, arouse to anger, to exasperate, to burn with anger*.

Love is not easily angered. What was Paul speaking here? Paul is encouraging us to not become someone who is easily angered or person who has anger outbursts. He's telling us to not be a person who masks anger, rather be someone who has self control to control our anger.

Love is also not something you use as a stick to poke another person. We should never poke another person to the point the other person responds violently and aggressively. Psychology calls this reactive abuse. When someone intentionally does something to get a rise out of another person, it is done intently so the other person looks like the abuser and aggressor. This is not love, this is an abuse tactic.

How do we respond when those in our lives poke us or how do we respond when we ourselves get angry? The first step is to always walk away and take it to God first. Do not confront people with assumptions, anger, dishonoring behavior or words, rudeness or character assassinations.

Sadly, myself included, we can come up with a million excuses: bad day at work, a car pulled out in front of us, exhaustion, stress... None of these excuses would fly in the face of God. We need to take responsibility when we know we have provoked others to anger. We need to seek their forgiveness and return to God with repentance and confession. We not only hurt others, but we hurt our relationship with God.

We need to practice allowing the Holy Spirit to work self control in us. With the Holy Spirit's help, we can control the response to being angry and not become someone who is irritable. Today's scripture says we need to not become easily angered. So the first important question is: What angers me? Be honest with your-

self.

Biblically, anger is a complex issue. We are going to explore three aspects of anger.

### ***Destructive Power***

Anger is not always bad. We will look at this later on. Anger can be explosive. Anger is like dynamite. It has a fuse and all it takes is a tiny flicker and that fuse is lit. It burns slow until the smallest of things cause a huge explosion. Anger has the power to pull your life apart just like an explosion destroys.

### **Anger is Bad for your Health!**

<sup>29</sup> A patient person shows great understanding,  
but a quick-tempered one promotes foolishness.

<sup>30</sup> A tranquil heart is life to the body,  
but jealousy is **rottenness to the bones**.

*Proverbs 14:29-30*

Proverbs links anger with jealousy and envy. We learned earlier in our journey that love does not envy. If you struggle with envy and jealousy, you will struggle with anger. This verse says it is a cancer of the bones. When anger lingers it becomes a habit. When we get good at anger, research suggests that it weakens the immune system, can lead to headaches, high blood pressure and heart disease.

### **Anger Destroys Relationships!**

A gentle answer turns away anger,  
but a harsh word stirs up wrath.  
A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict,  
but one slow to anger calms strife.

*Proverbs 15:1,18*

Anger leads to relational tension and conflict. Words are turned into a weapon that makes tempers flare. Explosive anger can lead to physical violence, abuse,

and even murder.

### **Anger blocks Wisdom!**

A patient person shows great understanding,  
but a quick-tempered one promotes foolishness.

*Proverbs 14:29*

When in the heat of anger, if you do not walk away, it only festers and you have an inability to make wise choices. Foolishness is the opposite of wisdom. When all is said and done and the dust settles and you look back, how often do you feel foolish for the things you said and done? Punching a hole in the door, throwing things, or screaming at the top of your lungs did not accomplish anything. Anger distorts reality and harmful and unwise choices are made.

### **Habitual anger handcuffs your will!**

A person with intense anger bears the penalty;  
if you rescue him, you'll have to do it again.

*Proverbs 19:19*

Angry people are often repeat offenders. Anger is like an addictive substance. The more angry you are, the more you feel the need to get angry. Read that again! The more angry you are the more you feel the need to be angry. Being angry has become a normal feeling and without it, you feel lost and not in control. Anger then becomes a vicious cycle and controls you.

Misguided expectation of "no" anger

No anger is just as much of a sin as dynamite anger. Paul says love is not easily provoked, not that love never gets angry. Let's pause and read that scripture again. Love is not easily angered. It does not say it never gets angry.

**Be angry and do not sin.** Don't let the sun go down on your anger,

*Ephesians 4:26*

This is how God does anger. God's anger flows from His love. God could not be a God of love if He never got angry at the sin and injustice in the world. Yes, God is love, but He is also a just God. From the pure holiness that He is, His anger is righteous.

Our anger should navigate us to prayer. We need to program or train ourselves that the slightest feeling of anger, we need to quickly run to God. We need to ask Him for righteous responsibility be taken, but love never turns to hate and revenge. This is where anger spills over to the next morning. Be angry, but do not sin!

After looking around at them with anger, he was grieved at the hardness of their hearts and told the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

*Mark 3:5*

A great example of how to handle anger, is how Jesus handled the pharisees. Jesus was angry because they value ritual and rules more than they value life of this man. He did not respond back in anger or start an argument. Instead he focused on the man and reformed God's work of healing.

### **Biblical call to Anger**

When Paul says love is not easily provoked, he was saying love is not explosive anger or "no" anger, but SLOW anger. James puts it this way:

My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be **quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger,**

*James 1:19*

God is slow to anger. Imagine if the next sin you commit, He reacted to it as we do when we get angry?

If we want to be His reflection we need to learn and practice:

The Lord is compassionate and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in faithful love.

*Psalm 103:8*

We can put to practice prayer in place of anger. Tell God everything. Tell Him everything in the heat of your adrenaline rushing and your face is hot with anger. God has big shoulders. What do you think He would be more approving of: unleashing fury on others, or coming and yelling to Him? We are not going to take God by surprise. The healthiest place to take our anger is to Him.

**Listen more and speak less!**

James says listen more and speak less. If you speak, speak with gentleness. A gentle answer turns away explosive anger.

**Get professional Help!**

Some of us have been seriously injured and wronged. Undealt trauma can be the leading cause of anger in our lives. Trauma leaves deep wounds, challenging forgiveness, and some issues can not be worked out alone. It may be critical to find a good Christian counselor to guide you through a jo

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:5 DOES NOT KEEP RECORDS

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# Love Does Not Keep Records

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Pastor Adrian Rodgers explained this in a great way. When I was younger, the supermarkets (grocery stores) used to have certain items you would buy and you would get stamps. They gave you a little stamp book and each stamp would fill a spot in the book. When you got a certain number of stamps you got certain items. Honestly, I barely remember this as a kid. Today we look at record keeping. What is Paul saying here? Just like my mom collecting stamps, we collect the wrong doing of others and tally them in a book in our mind.

This is not just any old memory book. This book is resentment and unforgiveness. Love does not nurse resentment of others who have wronged us. When we fixate on how we have been wronged, our anger takes on a life of its own and becomes disproportionate to the original offence.

A person's insight gives him patience,  
and **his virtue is to overlook an offense.**

*Proverbs 19:11*

We need to take that petty book of grievances and shred it.

Resentment is the feeling of anger or displeasure about someone else or something unfair. Resentment and bitterness are best friends. Where one is, you can find the other holding hands or lingering together.

Resentment harbors bitterness.

Cain held anger, bitterness and resentment in his heart because God accepted Abel's sacrifice and not his. From this resentment and bitterness, jealousy gripped his heart and the combination led him to murdering Abel. Satan LOVES a heart full of bitterness and resentment. It is an open door and party ground for him to influence all sorts of unloving words and actions. He is able to persuade us to justify destroying lives and relationships because the root of ALL bitterness is unforgiveness.



If someone has forgiven you, truly forgiven you, they will not keep a record of your wrong doing and their actions and words will not continually remind you of your wrong doing or fuel and justify their own wrong doing.

If you are holding a book full of wrong doings, you are willingly choosing to not forgive.

<sup>14</sup> “For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. <sup>15</sup> But if you don’t forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

*Matthew 6:14-15*

Resentment has no place in our hearts. Paul tells us to let go - shred the book - of resentment and bitterness.

<sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice.

*Ephesians 4:31*

Jesus spoke about this many times!

<sup>25</sup> And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your wrongdoing.

*Mark 11:25*

It is not about forgetting offenses or agreeing what was done is okay. Forgiveness is intentionally choosing to forgive them as God has forgiven us, We do not deserve God's forgiveness but He extends it to us. If we want to love as God loves, we need to also extend forgiveness to others.

Intentional forgiveness loosens the grip of anger and resentment on our hearts. The Lord can help us let go of the offenses and replace it with care and compassion.

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## Love finds no Joy in Unrighteousness

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Today we look love does not rejoice in unrighteousness. What is Paul saying here?

He is asking us to take a good look at ourselves with a question: Have you ever secretly rejoiced when someone you did not approve of or did not like got into some sort of trouble? Did your heart desire to tell everyone you know about the woes of another or maybe you told yourself, that they deserved it? Maybe you secretly or in your close circle of friends and family ignited gossiping about another because after all they did to you, why should they not get themselves into trouble? Paul says, brothers and sisters, THIS IS NOT LOVE!

This is not how God behaves! Remember back a few weeks ago we learned that the love of God within us grieves over the sin of the world. This includes grieving over the sin that has ensnared fellow believers and the unsaved world. We should inwardly grieve over the conditions of people that ensnared and trapped people.

The KJV phrases it: *...rejoicetheth not*. The phrase "rejoiceth not" is translated from the Greek phrase *ou chairei*. The Greek word "ou" means *no, or not*. *Chairei* is from the word *chario* and means *joy*. It is further defines as a person who is euphoric over something that has happened. The Greek word for iniquity is *adikos* and means *an injustice or something that is wrong or bad*.

A way to paraphrase *ou chairei adikos* is: *love does not feel overjoyed when it see and injustice done to someone else*.

What a temptation it is when we see an enemy stumbling and falling to the point their consequences have brought on terrible woes to them. The secret desire to rejoice at another's hardships is completely contrary to the love nature of God. Even though the person may have wronged you or others you know, the right response is to pray for restoration. Real love simply does not rejoice at someone else's misfortune, no matter who it is.

<sup>17</sup> Don't gloat when your enemy falls,  
and don't let your heart rejoice when he stumbles,  
<sup>18</sup> or **the Lord will see, be displeased,**  
and turn his wrath away from him.

*Proverbs 24:17-18*

**Ponder:** *Do I rejoice when I hear bad news about someone who did me wrong in the past?  
Or does it break my heart to hear about the problems that person is facing?*

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:6 REJOICES IN TRUTH

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## Love Rejoices in Truth

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Paul is teaching us what love is and is not. Yesterday we walked through pondering if in our lives, we celebrate when others fall. We secretly tell them they deserve the darkness and the pit they are in based on their wrong doings and choices they have made. We are quick to gossip and talk about those we do not like when they have fallen. This is not love! Paul says Love does NOT rejoice in iniquity.

The verse continues, "*but rejoices in truth.*"

Today we ask ourselves:

When you see other people blessed — perhaps receiving a blessing or special attention that you have longed to receive yourself — are you able to truly rejoice with them? Does it thrill you to know that other people are moving upward in life? Or does it threaten you and make you sad when you see someone else receiving a blessing you wished was yours?

When we think someone else has gotten a blessing that should have been ours, this can lead us to bitterness, resentment, and is the root of envy and jealousy. Remember, we learned, love does not envy.

How we respond to others when they are blessed (by their own consequences or by the Lord) is our own fruit inspection of the love or a hate we have within our hearts.

What we need to do is **reclaim the love — God's love — that rejoices with the truth.** This is:

**Love** with *integrity and honesty.*

**Love** that is *God-honoring.*

**Love** that is not *manipulative or defensive.*

**Love** that takes *no pleasure in the failures of others*.

**Love** that *sacrifices for others*.

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 BEARS ALL

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# Love Bears All

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Paul has so far given us an amazing and challenging list of what love is:

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, <sup>5</sup> is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth.

*1 Corinthians 13:4-6*

Paul then gives for more points to love in verse 7. He starts this with, *Love bears all things...*

The word bears is our English word for Greek word *stegō* and means *by covering to keep off something which threatens, to bear up against, hold out against, and so endure, bear, forbear*. It gives the idea of a roof that covers a house. Built within the idea of this word is a means of protection. A roof protects, shields and guards the people within the house from exposure to outside influences of weather. A roof is designed to shield us from storms. They are designed to protect us from inclement weather, cold, heart, etc.

Paul is giving us a powerful illustration. Just as there are season to our weather, our lives are going to go through many seasons. Not all seasons are going to be pleasurable. Some seasons are stormy and difficult. There will be circumstances that assail us from external attacks. If we do not use our shield of faith, it becomes much more difficult for us to survive spiritually.

Paul says the love we have serves as a protection to you and others. Like a roof on a house, a friend who moves in the love of God will stay near in times of trouble. A friend hovers over us to protect us from the storms of life. Rather than expose us and our flaws to others, the love of a friend will conceal, cover, and protect us and always be there in times of trouble to lend support and encouragement.

Paul is teaching us that love protects, shields, guards, covers, conceals, and safeguards others from exposure.

Paul is teaching us two practical applications. Love will conceal the imperfections, faults, and errors of others.

A gossip goes around revealing a secret,  
but a trustworthy person keeps a confidence.

*Proverbs 11:13*

Love refuses to dwell on or promote that which is negative. We see this in the essence of 1 Peter 4:8:

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since **love covers a multitude of sins.**

*1 Peter 4:8*

Second, Paul is teaching us that love covers others to keep away outside forces that threaten. Love protects, preserves, and sustains by covering. Love keeps out harmful influences, like a roof keeps out water, wind, harsh sunlight. The one who loves will not allow affliction, detriment, insult, offense, or indignity to come upon his affection for others.

Paul also says, in ALL things. This encompasses every season and every circumstance. There is no feasible situation in which genuine love would fail to cover and protect. Love is consistent and true. Love keeps personal matters confidential. When we love others, they should never fear the things they have shared with you will be disclosed to outsiders. They should never have to worry that the conflicts and problems that take place will be revealed to others.

Love does not dwell upon the imperfections, faults, or errors of others. Love covers weaknesses and mistakes and never demands justice, judgement, or revenge. Love quickly dismisses and disregards the negative happenings of another and instead chooses to focus on God within the situation or person.

Ponder: is your love towards other a roof or what put holes in the rooves of others?

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 BELIEVES ALL

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# Love Believes

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When we see belief, we usually associate it with faith. The Greek word used here is *pisteuō* and is used in an ethical sense, of confidence in the goodness of men. This is constant, continuous entrusting of one's faith in something or someone - involving the "never give up" kind of belief that someone or something will turn out the very best. Translated into our modern English, it could state: love believes the best in every situation.

Love is not stupid or blind. It sees everything - the good, bad, and ugly. God's love within us is filled with faith and pushes the disconcerting, disturbing, and negative realities out of the way. It does not ignore problems or challenges. It makes the choice to see beyond problems and conflicts, to strain forward to see the highest potential that resides in every person.

Let us apply this to a relationship with another. Perhaps someone you love is having problems and they have done some things in the past they should not have done. But there is still hope! Today is a new day and love does not simply give up believing they will turn around. Although the past may have been filled with troubled times, choices and actions, the future is bright for those who believe in God. Love continually presses ahead full of faith. Love reaches forward by faith to see the other person whole, sound, healed, saved, redeemed, and right in the middle of God's will for his or her life.

God's love within us does not know how to quit. It hangs on when the going gets tough. It keeps believing the very best, no matter what.

Ponder: Do I operate at this level of love for all around me? Do I strain forward to believe the best, or do you pick people apart and point out their flaws and weaknesses? Do you see their potential through eyes of love, or do you look at them through eyes of condemnation and criticism?

*...Love strains forward with all its might to believe the very best in every situation....*

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 HOPES ALL

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# Love Hopes

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rather than assuming failure or a bad result in someone's life, love always expects the best in someone else. It not only expects it, but it is filled with an *anticipation* to see the manifestation of the thing hoped for.

For this reason we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

*1 Timothy 4:10*

Paul says we put our hope in a living God because He is the Savior of all people. Paul says to "hope all things," means that we never consider another person or situation a lost cause. We do not give up on each other, even when we see another fall and fall hard. As a Christian, we must believe that that every one who God calls will see maturity and eventually glorification. Hoping all things yields a willingness to encourage fellow runners in the same race.

We MUST be DETERMINED that no one gets left behind!

This sort of love understands that we are all works of progress and have confidence that we are all becoming more like Christ, even if the season is a tough and challenging season. When we fail to "hope all things," we consider failures of sin to be the final judgement.

It is the quickness to write others off. We can build these critical notions of others and when they meet our expectations of weakness, we cross them off the list and push them out of our lives.

Do you make your mind up about some people?

Do you get tired of others doing the "same old things" and just "move on"?

Are your negative opinions of others hardened and resistant to change?

Do you see everything some people do through the same critical filter?

When we fail to “hope all things” we separate ourselves because we feel we have to move on, as if the offender has fallen out of our boat and won’t recover. What is most awful about losing hope is that it can be so silent. We usually will not even bother to confront them in hopes of producing repentance, simply receding from them, quietly, withdrawing from their orbit. We even convince ourselves that we are actually “covering their sin in love” by staying quiet.

Like failing to “believe all things”, failure to “hope all things” is unbelief. It is unbelief in the nature of God’s work. It is unbelief that God finishes what He starts, as though He forgets or walks away.

Walking away is what WE do, not God.

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 ENDURES ALL

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## Love Endures

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The Greek word for endures is *hypomenō*. It means *to remain i.e. abide, not recede or flee*.

Many times when this word is used in scripture it gives the idea of enduring to life's end. It means waiting for our eternal prize and living through long-term trials. It is similar to the word used in the phrase bears all things and refers to the patience required in the face of provocation. To endure all things means taking on a longer view.

Paul is teaching us that God's love motivates us to remain in difficult situations for the sake of another, rather than seeking our own ease through escape. It means when our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ are making life difficult for us, we do not look for a way out. Since Paul is talking about a long-term perspective, we need to admit that "[hoping all things](#)," is not enough. If we are going to endure, we need a front row seat. It means we are willing to stand in there for someone else to see each other through to the other side.

It is not God's plan for us to grow alone. The time we grow the most is within the storms of life. If we continually run from others because things get tough, how are we loving them when they need us the most? Can we agree our lives are one train wreck after another? Some more than most. It is not God's plan for us to go life alone. When we love others, we do not just walk out and decide to come back when it's less messy. Enduring is enduring in the rain and sunny days.

Being close to people means hassle, heartbreak, and offense, but God provides us with a ticket to board the train even if it is known it will wreck. This means the love of God within *us* never quits or throws in the towel. It simply doesn't know how to quit. Real love says, "I'm committed to be here — to stay with you and to work it out, regardless of the cost or the time involved. I am not quitting. I am here to stay!" This kind of love is completely contrary to the flesh, which says, "I've done all I'm going to do. I'm not wasting any more of my life. I'm finished, and I'm leaving!"

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8 NEVER ENDS

Today's Date:

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# Love Never Ends

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When we combine all of verse seven according to the Greek words we have learned, we could translate 1 Corinthians 13:7 to say:

*Love protects, shields, guards, covers, conceals, and safeguards people from exposure; love strains forward with all its might to believe the very best in every situation; love always expects and anticipates the best in others and the best for others; love never quits, never surrenders, and never gives up.*

Then Paul says in verse 8: Love never ends. Other translations say it never faileth (KJV) or lasts forever (NLT). The Greek word used for ends is *piptō* and means to perish, to come to an end, disappear, cease.

I am not sure about you, but as you read Paul's letters, you get a sense of his voice. I can not help but ponder as he wrote this, that He paused with a sigh and a smile. He loved the lost and he loved his fellow brothers and sisters. He write with compassion and he's teaching us love.

The Greek word here gives the idea of something that never ends. The more you practice and use it, the more it just keeps coming in. Think of it in terms of a boat with a hole in it. As much as you are scooping the water out, it's pouring in just as fast. There is NO end to the love of God and for us, there should never be an end to our love for all of humanity. Not just the ones we get along with, but those who are our enemy.

Paul says, love will not quit. Despite all the obstacles that stand in the way; love that refuses to give heed to what would turn off anything less, but keeps right on. God's love is like that, he says. It will never quit, even though for the best interest of another person it may temporarily turn its back, or appear to. God does this with us, as a mother eagle does with its young. To kick it out of the nest may look cruel, but the eagle knows that is the only way the young will learn to fly. It braves the wrath of its young in order to force it into maturity.

Love will do that too: God's love will, and true love will, but even then it is hover-

ing there, waiting and watching to see lest disaster strike, ready to help in time of need. This is surely what Paul is describing here. He contrasts this quality of love with the things that will not last, the things that do quit, the things that pass away.

# Loving Others

1 CORINTHIANS 16:14

Today's Date:

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# DO Everything in Love

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The command to love is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian. Jesus preached that to love God and others are the greatest commands. The call to live a life marked by love is a consistent message found throughout Scriptures. When the apostle Paul wrote to the church of Corinth, he instructed them to do everything in love. Love is not something we should do when it is right or we feel like it. Jesus said:

<sup>37</sup> He said to him, **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.** <sup>38</sup> This is the greatest and most important command. <sup>39</sup> The second is like it: **Love your neighbor as yourself.**

*Matthew 22:37-39*

What is Jesus and later Paul, talking about? What does it mean to do all things in love?

We just concluded a study of 1 Corinthians 13. Paul went into great lengths to explain what love means. This earlier passage helps give context and meaning to what it means to do everything in love. To do everything in love means we intentionally make choices each day out of love that results in being patient, kind, and forgiving. We can live in ways that reflect obedience and trust in God by doing everything in love.

Doing everything in love holds our motives accountable to righteousness rather than selfish gain. When our words and actions are motivated by love, it means we do nothing out of selfish ambition or to make ourselves look good in front of others. Doing all things out of love helps us be more Christlike.

Paul was certainly disheartened with the opposition and tensions in Corinth, but he demonstrated hope that they would pursue righteousness and follow God's truth. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:8 that hope endures. This was his example that he hoped the people would hear the Word of God and turn away from the

squabbles and issues present in the church. Paul did not give up on the church, but rather, he continued to teach them God's truth and remained hopeful that they would rid themselves of worldly beliefs that were contrary to God's truth, sinful behavior, and become more spiritually mature.

The members of the church in Corinth were spiritually immature. They had begun to live in ways that were contrary to righteousness. They were having disagreements about divorce, sexual immorality, and a variety of other issues. These discrepancies resulted in divisions within the church and threatened the unity and longevity of the church.

Paul reminded them to instead do everything in love. What he was teaching them and us is by doing everything in love we accept one another, correct ours and their misbeliefs, and fleeing from sinful behavior. Why do we do this?

It is through love for God and others we grow and deepen in spiritual maturity. When we do everything in love, we can walk in the ways that God would have us do so. It is an active choice to walk in righteousness and leaving the sinful desires we have behind us. It means we will be more like Jesus: patient, kind and humble.

This kind of love means that at times we are going to have to do something hard or uncomfortable for the good of others or to further the gospel. It may not be easy, but obedience to God is never a choice we will regret.

### **How do we do everything in love?**

It takes intentionality. Love can look different in each day and season in life. We love because God loved us first and Jesus empowers us to do everything in love. We can not love in our own strength or intent, but with God's help, it becomes possible.

<sup>43</sup> "You have heard that it was said, **Love your neighbor** and hate your enemy. <sup>44</sup> But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

*Matthew 5:43-45*

We can show love towards our enemies by praying for them, acting good and kind towards those we do not think deserve it. God says love them, let your motivation be by love, not hate.

Prayer. Showing love may look like praying over others. Check in on someone who is lonely and pray for them. Showing more love can mean getting involved in prayer chains and prayer meetings at your place of worship. Giving your time to pray over others is a powerful way to show love.

Forgiveness. Love can look like forgiveness and mercy. Love lets go of the hate you have towards someone who has hurt you. Love is slow to anger and quick to listen.

Love means that everything is guided by love in our thoughts, actions and words. To do everything in love means we let love guide our choices each day to reflect obedience to Jesus and follow His ways rather than our own. Love means walking the path of becoming more like Jesus who loves all of humanity.

Let each of us live in such a way that we would do everything in love.



# Loving Others

COLOSSIANS 3:14

Today's Date:

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# Love the Perfect Bond of Unity

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a Christian can have: love.

Paul is teaching us, and other writers inspired by the Holy Spirit, is teaching us the most important virtue and most important thing to a Christian is the subject of love. Jesus was asked what the most important commandment was and he spoke: "love the Lord your God with all you heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

<sup>9</sup> Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in honoring one another.

*Romans 12:2-10*

Paul encourages our love to be sincere and to honor others above ourselves. Notice what John, who called himself the beloved disciple had to say about love:

<sup>20</sup> If anyone says, "I love God," and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup> And we have this command from him: The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.

*1 John 4:20-21*

John tells us that true measure of how much we love God is how much we love others.

Today our scripture says, over all these virtues, put on love.

Paul is telling us, of all characteristics of a Christian, we should be known for our love.

How are you known by others? Lets be honest with each other this morning. Are you theologically sound? A good speaker? Are you an active member of your church? Are you involved in your community? Are you known for your gifts?

But, God is not asking about who you are, He's asking, DO YOU LOVE?

Paul was writing to the church in Corinth and challenging them about their relationship with each other. I believe today we can challenge ourselves and look at our relationships with each other. Paul testifies to what God is asking each of us today:

If I speak human or angelic tongues **but do not have love, I am a noisy gong** or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains **but do not have love, I am nothing.** <sup>3</sup> And if I give away all my possessions, and if I give over my body in order to boast but **do not have love, I gain nothing.**

*1 Corinthians 13:1-3*

All those things you believe about yourself or others speak about you, friends, they mean nothing if you do not have love. All these experiences, all these abilities are empty without love being present. True faith has a practical expression. Love is the foundation of all the other virtues. We spent an extensive amount of time examining the type of love Paul teaches us... So can we honestly identify with the following statements?

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I am patient with you because I love you and want to forgive you.

I am kind to you because I love you and want to help you.

I do not envy your possessions or your gifts because I love you and want you to have the best.

I do not boast about my attainments because I love you and want to hear about yours.

I am not proud because I love you and want to esteem you before myself.

I am not rude because I love you and care about your feelings

I am not self-seeking because I love you and want to meet your needs

I am not easily angered by you because I love you and want to overlook your offenses

I do not keep a record of wrongs because I love you , and love covers a multitude of sins.

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Sadly, the practice is there but the motive is not. How many times do we read in the comments sections that Christians are the most hateful people on the planet? Paul said we are to be known above all else with the virtue of love. SO where has it all gone wrong?

If you ask someone what they think of a Christian and they will answer you, most often, from a political stance or speak about what Christians stand against. There is a disconnect and wrong message being sent out.

Notice Paul says, put on love. It is something we are required to do. Paul does not say, when the sun is shining, when the storm comes, when a fleeting moment or tickle of the ear comes. He is saying every moment of every day we are to put on love. In order for that to happen we have to understand what love is in a practical sense.

We need to define love as God's definition and not our own or the world's definition. We need to start comparing ourselves, not to each other, but to the standard God gives us. In other words, those statements above we need to ask the question from the statement.

Am I patient, kind, and without envy in my relationships?

Am I seeking to help those in need?

Am I desiring the best for those who God has brought in my life?

Am I seeking to build others up or only myself through others?

If we are going to love others, we need to stop having a prerequisite before we love them. When we were walking through God's Word to discover that God is love and love is God, we learned that God did not first create us and then decide later on to love us. He loved us before He ever allowed us to take our first breath.

God did not instruct us to have a relationship and decide later to love or not love a person.

No one thinks, understands, and believes exactly as we do and that's life. This is a fact we must accept before we will ever be able to love people. Before we ever love another we need love to where people are at and not where we want them.

Jesus is the example of this. He met the fisherman, tax collector, adulterer, military leader, worried woman, where they were. Notice Jesus did not tell the fishermen, go be preachers, then I will love you. He did not tell the tax collector, go serve in the church then I will love you. He did not tell the adulterer, go cleanse yourself and restore the relationship, then I will love you. None of these people were told to go first, then I will love you. Jesus was right where they were and he loved them before they ever took a first breath.

Jesus longed to cleanse them and make them holy, but he started this process at the point at which he found each individual. He spoke their language and started with what they could understand. He worked to meet their unique needs. Love does not demand that everyone be like us. It doesn't demand that people have the same experience, the same tastes, the same background. True love embraces people as they are.

Love means overlooking small irritations and blemishes. There is not a day that goes by that we don't do something stupid, inappropriate, or foolish. There is not a day when we don't say something we shouldn't have or react when we should have shrugged something off. If we are going to fight about every little irritation in life then we are going to be fighting all the time.

We need to remember that each person is created in the image of God and each one has been made for a particular purpose. Learning to love means learning to spotlight potential and strengths rather than problems and demands we learn to build up, rather than tear down. Love diligently roots out unloving behavior from our lives. Love is important. We also need to realize that the devil and our sinful nature will quickly get sidetracked. We do not love naturally. We must be on guard for cancers that eat away at love.

Love does not happen naturally. We must focus on love. We must remind ourselves over and over, day in and day out that love is the characteristic that is to define our relationships and our dealings with others. When we see unloving feelings beginning to creep in, we must stand against them. We must repent of

our attitude and return to love.

We need to eliminate the harmful buts.

She's a nice person but....

She works hard but....

I like them but....

Finally, Paul argues not only are we to put on love, but love is the superglue in all our relationships. Love is the glue that holds us together and the oil that keeps us from rubbing each other the wrong way. Love is what brings Christians together and unites them in the body of Christ. Love tears down the walls of division and draws people closer rather than pushing them away. Love picks up those who have fallen rather than kicking them while they are down and for extra measure throws rocks at them. Love is the motivation to work together rather than competing against.

Jesus tells us to love one another as He has loved us. He then says, by this all men will know you are my disciples. The trait should characterize us as individuals and the church as love. Unfortunately, we bring the tactics of the world into our personal self and the church. We rely on manipulation and competition rather than authenticity.

We do not need the demonstration of great power or a more solid theology. We need the practical outworking of our faith which is seen in our love for each other.

It is easy to see how others are missing the mark and begin to criticize how you are being loved, but Paul is challenging us to look no further than your own heart. You can not change someone else, but you can change your own life.

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Let us take time to ponder these questions about ourselves and seek our Heavenly Father for help and understanding.

How would others describe your attitude toward them: Loving, harsh, angry, indifferent?

What are you relying on to bring change in the world around you: political clout,

loud protests, subtle manipulation, intimidation, or love? Which of these approaches speaks most powerfully when others approach you?

Where do you need to be more loving? How can you begin today?

# Loving Others

ROMANS 12:9-10

Today's Date:

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## Let Love be without Hypocrisy

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The CSB uses the word hypocrisy. The definition of hypocrisy is the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not. The KJV uses the word dissimulation. Dissimulation refers to a type of deception in which one aims to obscure the truth. NIV uses the word sincere.

The Greek word used is *anypokritos* and means unfeigned, undisguised, sincere. True love is to be sincere, real and genuine.

Paul is teaching us that we should never use the idea of love as a method of getting something we want. We should never disguise loving actions as a method to deceive and manipulate others. We also have to guard ourselves from the flattery of others because we think someone is speaking or doing nice things for us. We need to guard ourselves against someone or ourselves being buttered up so that when we or they are not around, they are stabbed in the back.

### **True love manifests in word AND deed.**

True love is holy. Paul teaches us to genuinely love and then we are to hate evil and cling to what is good. The KJV uses the word abhor. It means that we are to view sin as with disgust and hatred. This does not mean we view the sinner this way, but sin. Paul is also reminding us that love must not be confused with warm sentiment or warm feelings. Love does not only express its self with a pat on the back or encouragement. Love does not tolerate evil. Love might mean speaking kindly and gently towards each other when we have done wrong.

Paul then states that true love is also a familial love. He says love your brothers and sisters, deeply. Fellow believers in Christ understand that we are all one big huge family. We call each other brothers and sisters. We can take for granted the word brothers and sisters. When we journey through God's Word we see that we do not call each other friend, or fellow citizen of heaven, or even fellow church member. No we address each other as a brother and sister in Christ. The church is not four walls and a roof. The church of Christ is made up of all those who have

received Him.

The love we're called to as Christians is utterly unlike the world's definition of love, and infinitely better.

Holy love is the type of love that does not love bomb others. It never seeks to satisfy your own selfish needs and desires. Paul says be genuine in love. To be genuine we must never use the idea of love to get what we want, but instead, allow the love of God to motivate encouragement and building up of others.

# Loving Others

ROMANS 12:13-15

Today's Date:

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## Love Reflects God's Empathy

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Paul is writing to the Romans and teaching them how to love others. Yesterday we looked at Romans 12:9-10. Paul was teaching us that our love must be authentic! We should never use love for selfish gains. Today He gives us three more details about love.

### **Love is Sharing!**

Paul says share with the saints, our fellow brother and sisters in Christ, in their needs. As you study Paul's letters, he has this constant command: love one another. He is constantly making sure that we are focused on the needs of not only the unsaved, but the needs of each other. Paul says, love has care and generosity. He gives us two commands.

First, Paul says contribute to the needs of other believers. In Biblical days, it was common practice in the early church for the wealthy Christians to sell their belongings to meet the physical needs of the Christians who were not as well off. This is a demonstration of sacrificial giving and a sincere serving of God. They demonstrated to other believers and the world that they practiced what they preached.

Paul also says we are commanded to show hospitality. This world is cold and lonely to both unbelievers and believers. It can be a dangerous place. A hallmark of the Christian community is meant to offer a safe and welcoming place to believers through hospitality with other believers.

No matter what our pocket book has in it, we can all play a role in helping provide for the physical needs of our family in Christ. There are those who are in need, those who can help serve those in need, and those who help provide the means for the needs. If we all work together we can show the love of God by serving others.

### **DO NOT Curse!**

Paul gives an echo of a command by Jesus.

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

*Matthew 5:44*

Followers of Jesus should be seen as those who can love and take care of each other in powerful self-sacrificing ways, and this command is a powerful display of a true love for others. The normal instinct by humans is to do the opposite when being persecuted. It is a natural desire to curse those who have harmed us and avoid doing good for them at all costs.

Paul says, do not curse them, bless them. Doing this will stand out in every situation. This is imitating Jesus word's and example to us. He says pray for your enemies. Nothing communicates sincere love back to others who are being hurtful than doing good for them and refusing to strike back.

### **Masters of Empathy**

A sign of a Christian love is empathy. Paul continually calls us to be submissive to each other and that includes emotional events. Nothing can communicate a sincere love like recognizing another person in their highs and lows. We show love by empathizing their seasons of celebration and allowing ourselves to feel broken with them in their season of heartache.

Jesus powerfully molded this:

<sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled. <sup>34</sup> "Where have you put him?" he asked.

"Lord," they told him, "come and see."

<sup>35</sup> Jesus wept.

*John 11:33-35*

Jesus was deeply moved and wept with Mary and the others after Lazarus had died. Jesus knew He would raise Lazarus from dead, but that did not keep Him from joining in the sadness of those experiencing the loss.

As saved believers we have been shown a great grace by God, we experienced our temptations and sufferings and have experienced God's mercy. We need to to

be merciful, graceful, and empathetic to others and God has been to us.

In doing so, we reflect God's empathy through compassion for others.

# Loving Others

ROMANS 12:16

Today's Date:

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## Love Adjusts Our Pitch

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Paul gives us a different meaning to getting along with each other. Previously he commanded us to love and honor one another, but this verse carries a slightly different idea. I like the CSB version of this verse. The KJV says to be of the same mind with one another. Harmony is agreement of ideas, feelings, or actions, or a pleasing combination of different parts. Musically, it requires each one to adjust his pitch, not to perfectly match each other, but to be compatible and pleasant when played together.

Paul is not telling us to be cookie cutter Christians. We will never be exactly alike in behavior and opinion. In Romans 14, Paul discusses the fact that Christians will have differing opinions. What Paul is commanding is that believers adjust themselves to each other in a way that produces healthy order. This requires a mutual submission. This requires a willingness to make different choices that allow everyone to get along.

Living in harmony requires humility. This is why Paul's next instruction is important: do not be proud. DO not be haughty, arrogant, or stuck up. Paul makes it very clear when he follows up this command with associate with those who are humble. Paul is telling us, do not think so highly of yourself that you are too good to hang out with anyone else.

Christianity attracted many followers in the early days of the first church because of people with low stature, women and slaves, were welcomed to come to faith in Jesus Christ. The result was that the people began to not associate with anyone who was a Roman or within Roman culture. Paul commands us to leave all societal levels, class rivalries and cultural barriers out of the church.

He ends this verse with a final command. Do not be wise in your own sight. This is not the same as saying we are never to be wise. Paul gives us the idea that we should never accept our own opinion as gospel or the final word. To live in harmony, all must submit to the Word of God.



# Loving Others

ROMANS 12:17-21

Today's Date:

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## Love Adjusts Our Pitch

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I know many of my close friends and family do not understand the love I have for my ex husband. I still have compassion and care for him, despite 24 years of abuse. It is a different type of love. I am no longer under his authority as he chose divorce over God, but I still care about him, it is just different than if we were married. Love, looks beyond wrong doings and is motivated by the love, grace, and mercy that God has given us. I look beyond this man's wrong doing and place my hope in a God who loves not just me, but him also. There is always a chance for that man to turn away from his path and choose repentance. I pray for him daily, but he is no longer my concern or charged to my care.

I would be a liar if I said the idea of vengeance was lost to me. I have videos and pictures from two decades of an abusive drunk. I thought about posting them on social media to slander him, shame him, to get others to wake up and realize this man was a sheep in wolf's clothing. I desired to take screen shots of messages he sent while love bombing me, claiming God this and God that.... to reveal he was a blasphemer. I thought about posting the email of him twisting scripture and using it in a disgusting way.... Hiring a lawyer and taking everything I possibly could from him. So many text messages written and erased. So many emails written and deleted. I struggled with wanting to pay that man back for spending 24 years in hell. The biggest problem was the Holy Spirit's conviction to stop it. I knew what I was thinking was wrong but I did not know what to do with it. Then I came across this passage of scripture while crying out for help from the Lord:

<sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Give careful thought to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. <sup>18</sup> If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup> Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is written, **Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay**, says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> But **If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For in so doing you will be heaping fiery coals on his head.**

<sup>21</sup> Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

*Romans 12:17-21*

DO not pay evil for evil. I cried that morning. I knew I was on the tip of a knife and about to cut myself if I pursued the path of vengeance against this man. God speaks in both the Old and New Testament that vengeance is HIS and HIS alone.

Vengeance and retribution belong to me.  
In time their foot will slip,  
for their day of disaster is near,  
and their doom is coming quickly."

*Deuteronomy 32:35*

God tells us, the people who have done us wrong, who refuse to repent, take responsibility, their disaster is near and their doom is coming quickly.

Paul quotes Deuteronomy in Romans. Our English definition of vengeance is retribution or repayment for wrongs committed. The Hebrew word used here is *nāqām*. It means *avenged, quarrel, vengeance*. In Greek, the word is *ekdikēsis* and means *vindication, retribution*: – (a-, re-)venge(-ance), *punishment*.

When we put these definitions side by side we learn that **God punishes the wicked**. We are not to exact punishment on behalf of God for His honor, He will satisfy His own wrath. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah out of vengeance for their iniquity. He withheld vengeance from Nineveh when Jonah preached the truth and they turned to God.

We also learn from these definitions, **we are saved to offer mercy, NOT vindication**. Thanks to Jesus we do not receive retribution (vengeance) from God for our sin. If someone hurts us, we must not become absorbed in proving who was right or wrong (vindication).

*So How do we apply these verses to our lives?*

A question we need to ask ourselves, how far would you go in order to be "right"? What motivates your actions? Is it a desire of the flesh or righteous anger?

Remember what Paul writes earlier in Romans:

as it is written:

**There is no one righteous, not even one.**

*Romans 3:10*

The only way to righteousness is through faith in Jesus.

The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction.

*Romans 3:22*

If we are saved by grace, then grace has set us free from punishment, but also from condemnation under the law. The contrast to this freedom with our former depravity should make us actively aware that we are not owed anything by God, yet he already bought our freedom at the cross. Ideally, with this truth in mind, **we will let God avenge us when we suffer** for Christ and we will not seek vindication from the world. **His glory is all that matters.** Read that again, **HIS glory is all that matters!**

Focusing on today's scripture, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:35 in his letter to the Romans. He has been teaching them not to *"repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone"* (Romans 12:17-18).

Paul's is counseling us not to seek to be made right in the eyes of others and to concentrate on God's glory and not our own.

Indeed, you put them in slippery places;  
you make them fall into ruin.

*Psalms 73:18*

The Psalmist writes, God will ensure the Psalmist's enemies are defeated. We also read that God is the judge of His people:

For we know the one who has said, **Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay,** and again, **The Lord will judge his people.**

*Hebrews 10:30*

We have a tendency to want justice for ourselves and to be treated fairly. Our so-

ciety is hyper focused on "rights." This position that you have particular rights is a self-centered expectation. God never said we would be treated fairly on earth. God's word also says we do not deserve or get what we think we deserve.

For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under the law but under grace.

*Romans 6:14*

As Christians we live under grace, not the law. We are better off under grace than "human rights." Our rights are to belong to Jesus, to stand justified before a holy God, to own everything and inherit everything, to love our enemies, to return good for evil, to treasure Christ above all things. These were blood-bought rights. They can not be secured for us through a law.

The cross is the only unfair thing in all of history. A sinless man went to Golgotha and died so that all repentant sinners could be saved. The resurrection was God's vindication of Jesus in a sense. By His resurrection Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father and demonstrated His mighty power over Satan and sin. And, where we deserve judgement and vengeance, God instead gave us something better than vindication – we receive justification.

When we think it matters to be proven right, remember that only a sinless man bought the inheritance for us by His own blood. No matter what the injustice is, God's gift of grace is eternal. His gift is the remedy for the injustices of this earth.

I had to decide to step off the knife and give it to the Lord. Lay it at His feet and decide I did not need validation from others. I did not need to prove who was right or wrong. I no longer desired to return hurt for hurt. I had to decide that, that man may never know the hurt he dished out in his own hands, words and actions. I had to come to a place in God that it was okay if he never took responsibility for what he had done, because someday, before God he would have to answer for the choices given to him.

I decided not to take a higher road, there is no egotism, rather I had to walk in humility and decide it was in God's hand what happen moving forward. God's Word speaks that all things will be made known and all things in secret will be revealed. It was not my place to seek retribution through humiliation or any other means. It was God's place. He was there every minute of those 24 years. He knows the heart of that man. It is up to God to deal with him, not me. I let go and

moved forward knowing that just as I was condemned for my own sin, it was God's grace and mercy that forgave me when I did not deserve to be forgiven. All I could do was extend that grace and mercy to that man by choosing to forgive and laying down an weapon the enemy tried to put in my hands.

An eye for an eye is hate. It is what keeps generational cycles of abuse and violence going. Let us always remember than we have a choice. Let us always remember to give the option to God and not take it upon ourselves to exact revenge. Let us instead choose to forgive and walk in the Spirit of forgiveness and choose to bless, pray for and be kind to our enemies instead of repaying them with evil.

But

**If your enemy is hungry, feed him.**

**If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.**

**For in so doing**

**you will be heaping fiery coals on his head.**

*Romans 12:20*

In the end I had to ask myself... What benefit to the kingdom of God would there be in taking revenge? How would revenge lead others to Christ? What would revenge reflect to others? A God who loves, give grace and mercy or evil which seeks to hurt and destroy?

What is something you learned studying these scriptures?

What is God calling you to respond to in obedience?

What Questions do you still have? Bring these to your Heavenly Father in Prayer, today.





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