

## The Qualities of Love (Part 2)

### 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Date: August 28, 2022

Our context is spiritual gifts and, particularly, the gift of tongues. In this section Paul reminds the Corinthians that love should undergird and guide their desire for and use of spiritual gifts.

**vs 1-2** – The Corinthians were enamored with spiritual gifts but Paul informs them that all of the spiritual gifts are meaningless if they are not used in love.

**ILL** - A third-grade science teacher asked one of her students to describe salt. "Well, um, it's...," he started, then stopped. He tried again. "*Salt is, you know, it's...*" Finally he said, "*Salt is what makes French fries taste bad when you don't sprinkle it on.*"

Love is what makes life taste bad when you don't sprinkle it on.

PS – Don't get caught up in "*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels...*" It is hyperbolic. Paul says, "If." And "if" it was even possible, it would still be worthless without love which is Paul's priority in this passage.

"Gong" = "chalkos" = something bronze, tin or copper.

"Clanging" = "alalazo" = clashing, to raise a war cry.

"Cymbals" = "kumbalon" = a hollow basin. A cymbal was made of two hollow basins struck together.

### First: The Primacy of Love – 1-3

The point of the passage is 'love.'

- 1 – Eros = sexual love
- 2 – Storge = family love
- 3 – Philia = friendship
- 4 – Agape = unique love

The love that Paul means in these verses is: GR/agape = (ag-ah'-pay) = to welcome, to love dearly, to be well pleased. It is never used of romantic love and friendship is another word.

Alan Redpath – "We get our English word 'agony' from agape. "*It means the actual absorption of our being in one great passion.*"

*Agape* is almost always used to describe the love that is of and from God, whose very nature is love itself: "God is love" (1 John 4:8), but there are occasions when it is used of people also.

John 3:19 - *...people loved the darkness rather than the light...*"

1 John 2:15 - *If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

God is different from us however, because does not merely love; He is love itself.

**us.**

*Agape is a love that impels one to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of the object loved...  
(it) speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in the object loved,  
an apprehension of its preciousness.*

- Kenneth Wuest

Paul talks about love here because the Corinthians do not love each other in the way that Scripture calls us to love each other or in the way that Jesus has modeled love for the body of Christ.

1 – We cannot love this way

2 – The Holy Spirit in us can love this way

*This description of agape should drive every believer to the foot of the Cross and to a complete surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the perfect fulfillment of **agape** and Who Alone by His Spirit's filling and control can enable us to work out this aspect of our salvation in fear and trembling to the glory of His Father. Amen!*

- Charles Spurgeon

If any text, this text should bring us to the end of ourselves and cause us to bow before the throne of grace.

Tongues, prophecy, understanding, and faith are all meaningless without love.

**v 3** – The very thing that Jesus told the rich young ruler to do (Matt 16:1-23) would have meant nothing if he had not done it in love for God and others.

It is not simply what we do. It is a matter of why we do what we do.

ILL – Some early Christians thought martyrdom washed away their sin. The Pope promised Heaven to those who died in the Crusades.

Every gift or act described in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3: tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith and sacrifice - is a good thing, in-and-of-itself.

But the best thing is love and love that acts. It is not a philosophical concept but a real, demonstrable position. We are turned to love.

**ILL** - The story is told of a child psychologist who spent many hours constructing a new driveway at his home. Just after he smoothed the surface of the freshly poured concrete, his small children chased a ball across the driveway, leaving deep footprints. The man yelled after them with a torrent of angry words. His shocked wife said, "*You're a psychologist who's supposed to love children.*" The fuming man shouted, "*I love children in the abstract, not in the concrete!*"

### **Second: The Power of Love 4-7**

#### **1 - Love is patient** – long, distant, far off

When tested, it does nothing quickly

It literally describes the restraint of *'thumos,'* agitation or anger.

The word picture is of someone who does not quickly burst into flames.

Positively, it expresses persistence and perseverance.

#### **2 - Love is kind** – bountiful.

The Greek gives us the idea of someone who is ready and willing to provide what is needed.

Note: This begins a series of 8 negative definitions that don't spring from love.

#### **3 - Love is not envious** –

- a) You set your heart on something that belongs to someone else
- b) You are jealous over what someone else has or has achieved

#### **4 - Love does not boast** – bragging.

This love rejoices in the wellness of others.

**5 - Love is not arrogant** – Not living in vain-glory but esteeming others better than oneself.

#### **6 - Love is not rude** – tactless

"aschemoneo" = without a scheme, plan.

Great thought for the day: Do you have a plan to love people today?

#### **7 - Love is not irritable** – literally, "seek its own"

Lenski – “Cure selfishness and you replant the Garden of Eden.”

**8 - Love is not resentful** – (thinks no evil) –

- a) Does not treasure wrong done to it – keep score

Love has a bad memory.

John Chrysostom - *“As a spark falls into the sea and does not harm the sea, so harm may be done to a loving soul and is soon quenched without disturbing the soul.”*

- b) Does not presupposed a bad motive

**9 - Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth** –

Love knows what to rejoice in and when to rejoice

**10 - Love bears all things** – makes allowances

ILL – The word is used of creating a thatched roof to keep out the elements

Is our love protecting or prosecuting?

**11 - Love believes all things** –

*“This characteristic has a twofold aspect. (i) In relation to God it means that love takes God at his word, and can take every promise which begins “Whosoever” and say, “That means me.” (ii) In relation to our fellow men it means that love always believes the best about other people.*

- William Barclay

Love is not gullible but is quickly ready to believe the best.

**12 - Love hopes all things** –

We are predisposed to hope and not despair, optimistic and not pessimistic.

**13 - Love endures all things** –

“endures” = “*hupomeno*” = military term.

- a) Obeying orders at all costs
- b) Holding a position at all costs

**Conclusion:** Love has no unloveliness.

1 – Love is the foundation for spiritual gifts and unity in the church

2 – Love turns us toward Jesus

In 1975, John Molloy wrote a book called *Dress For Success*, which became the fashion guidebook for many people trying to climb the corporate ladder. Molloy's advice centered on a basic premise--always dress like your boss.

In this case, we should put on these things because they dress us like Jesus. But we should remember that Jesus is not only the model for love, he is also its source. This keeps us on our knees before the Lord so that we can appropriately love those around us and God's world.

### **Community Groups:**

1 – Alan Redpath says we get the word 'agony' from agape.' How might agony describe love?

2 – How does God demonstrate his love toward us?

3 – Take each one of these characteristics of love and speak to God's work in the Bible.

4 – Take each one of these characteristics of love and speak to God's love toward you.

5 – Why are we unable to love like this?

6 – How are we able to love like this?

7 – Which one of these characteristics come most naturally to you?

8 – Why?

9 – Which one of these characterizes are the most difficulty for you to exhibit?

10 – Why?

11 – If love has a 'scheme,' how might you create a scheme to love those around you? What would that look like?

### **Daily Devotion - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

**Monday, 29 August** – Do you know your spiritual gift? How is love valuable to your gifting? How might you use your gift today to love someone in your world?

**Tuesday – 30 August** – These qualities of love are best expressed by Jesus. Take time today to think about how God has expressed these qualities toward you. Ask yourself (and check yourself throughout the day) if you are expressing these qualities of love toward those who are closest to you.

**Wednesday – 31 August** – Which quality of love do you demonstrate the least? Today, create a 'scheme' to love better in that exact way. What steps will you take? How will it improve/increase your prayer life?

**Thursday – 1 September** – We should ‘love’ God first and most. Of these qualities, which might you lack toward God? Confess that to the Lord and ask the Holy Spirit to enable that quality of love in you toward God.

**Friday – 2 September** – Why did Paul insert this chapter into his discussion about spiritual gifts? If Paul was speaking to you, where might he insert this chapter into your life? Use the weekend to apply Paul’s definition of love to that area of your life.