

THE LOVE CHAPTER

1 Corinthians 13:1-6, (Part 1)

We are going to look at one of the most beautiful chapters in all the New Testament, *1 Corinthians 13*. This chapter is famous not only for majestic language, but also for its practical teaching on how we can decide to love even the unlovely.

The Apostle Paul explores three aspects of love in these verses:

The Preeminence of love

The Principle of love

The Permanence of love

After teaching on the gifts of the spirit in *chapter 12*, Paul made this beautiful statement, “*And now I will show you the most excellent way*” (*1 Corinthians 12:31b*).

LOVE IS INDISPENSABLE

“*But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, against such things there is no law*” (*Galatians 5:22-23*).

Love is not only the first fruit of the spirit, but also the one fruit that contains all the rest. All the other qualities are different forms of the first one, love.

- Joy is ... Love enjoying itself.
- Peace is ... Love at rest.
- Patience is ... Love that is willing to wait.
- Kindness is ... Love's reaction to other people.
- Goodness is ... Love making righteous decisions.
- Faithfulness is ... Love keeping its word.
- Gentleness is ... Love empathizing with others.
- Self-control is ... Love resisting temptation.

The Fruit of the Spirit is expressed in different ways, but love is the key to them all. The word Paul used in *1 Corinthians 13* is “*Agape*,” “... the love that is commitment to do good to others.” It is the only kind of love that can obey the command of Jesus to “*love your enemies*.”

THE CAPACITY OF GODLY LOVE

The theme of this chapter is, “*Now that you have the capacity to love others, ... do it! Here is what your love should look like.*”

Then Paul shows us some of the qualities of Christ-like *Agape* love. Paul begins by describing the “*preeminent*” value of love. Paul contrasts love with some of the things that were highly regarded in the culture of Corinth at that time.

There is the ability to speak eloquently and persuasively (v.1)

“*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not loved, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging symbol.*”

Without Agape love, the greatest orator is nothing but a brassy noise maker.

There is the ability to have knowledge and faith (v. 2)

“*If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*”

Paul refers to those who have the intellectual ability to understand the mysteries of the scripture, and then he also speaks of faith. Power without love has no value.

There is the ability to have religious zeal (v. 3)

“*If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*”

If we display sacrificial zeal but we have no love, then our sacrifices are for nothing.

There is love that never let's go (v. 4-6)

Next Paul shows us that love must be practical, and he gives us a series of benchmarks, by which we can measure our own love.

“*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no records of wrongs. love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*”

We cannot express God's “*Agape*” love until we empty out the “self” in our lives.