

Biblical Love

1 Corinthians 13

I. The Priority of Love v. 1-3

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 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. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

II. The Practice of Love v. 4-7

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 record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

III. The Permanence of Love v. 8-12

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

IV. The Preeminence of Love v. 13

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

I. The Priority of Love

A. Love is the priority because it sums up all Christian duty

1. Matthew 22:36-40
2. Romans 13:8-10
3. 2 Corinthians 8:8
4. Colossians 3:12-14
5. 1 Peter 4:8

All the virtue that is saving, and that distinguishes true Christians from others, is summed up in Christian love...The truth of the doctrine, as shewn by the Scriptures, appears from this, that the apostle teaches us (Gal. v.6) that "faith works by love." A truly Christian faith is that which produces good works; but all the good works which it produces are by love...true love is an ingredient in true and living faith, and is what is most essential and distinguishing in it. A truly practical saving faith, is light and heat together, or rather light and love, while that which is only a speculative faith, is only light without heat...A speculative faith consists only in the assent of the understanding; but in a saving faith there is also the consent of the heart...Now, the true spiritual consent of the heart cannot be distinguished from the love of the heart. He whose heart consents to Christ as Saviour, has true love to Him as such. -Jonathan Edwards

B. Love is the priority because without it Christian duty is hypocritical and worthless

1. 1 Corinthians 13:1
2. 1 Corinthians 13:2
3. 1 Corinthians 13:3
4. Two Dangers
 - a. Don't do it at all if not in love
 - b. Just do it out of duty
5. Why this is so (Jonathan Edwards)
 - a. *It is not the external work done, or the suffering endured, that is, in itself, worth anything in the sight of God.*
 - b. *Whatever is done or suffered, yet if the heart is withheld from God, there is nothing really given to Him.*
 - c. *Love or charity is the sum of all that God requires of us*
 - d. *If we make a great show of respect and love to God, in the outward actions, while there is no sincerity in the heart, it is but hypocrisy and practical lying to the Holy One.*
 - e. *Whatever may be done or suffered, if there be no sincerity in the heart, it is all but an offering to some idol.*

C. How to Be Motivated by Love

1. Reset affections
2. by Adjusting values
3. and Mortifying flesh

D. *Four things that belong to the nature of sincere love* (Edwards)

1. *Truth*
2. *Freedom*
3. *Integrity*
4. *Purity*

II. The Practice of Love

A. Love Is Patient (Long-suffering) v.4

Charity, or a truly Christian spirit, will dispose us meekly to bear the evil that is received from others, or the injuries that others may do to us. -Jonathan Edwards

1. No revenge or retaliation in action
2. No resentment or bitterness in attitude
3. Would rather suffer wrong than injure others in return (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:7)

We should be willing to suffer much in our interests and feelings for the sake of peace, rather than do what we have opportunity, and perhaps the right, to do in defending ourselves...Though we may defend ourselves at last, when we are driven, as it were, by necessity to it, yet we are not to do it out of revenge, or to injure him that has injured us, but only for needful self-defense; and even this, in many cases, is to be given up for peace, and out of a Christian spirit toward him that has injured us, and lest we should do injury to him. -Jonathan Edwards

4. This spirit is to be maintained for a long time in the face of continued mistreatment

5. But then I will be treated as a doormat
 - a. *Do you think the injuries you have received from your fellow man are more than you have offered to God?*
 - b. *Do you not hope that God...will still bear with you?*
 - c. *When you think of such long-suffering on God's part, do you not approve of it? Would you have liked God better, if He had not borne with you, but had long since cut you off in His wrath?*
 - d. *If such a course...be approved of in God...why should you not imitate it? Is it less heinous to offend the Lord of heaven and earth, than for man to offend you?*
 - e. *Would you be willing, for all the future, that God should no longer bear with the injuries you may offer Him?*
 - f. *Did Christ turn again upon those who injured and insulted and trod on Him...and was not he injured far more grievously than ever you have been?*

6. How love to God helps us to be long-suffering toward others
 - a. *Love to God disposes us to imitate Him*
 - b. *Love to God will dispose us thus to express our gratitude for his long-suffering*
 - c. *Love to God tends to humility*
 - d. *Love to God disposes men to have regard to the hand of God in the injuries they suffer*
 - e. *...it sets us very much above the injuries of men...the more they love God, the less they set their hearts on their worldly interests, which are all that their enemies can touch.*

7. Love for our neighbor causes us to be long-suffering
 - a. Love covers a multitude of sins - 1 Peter 4:8
 - b. Love does its neighbor no harm - Romans 13:10
 - c. Love turns the other cheek - Matthew 5:39-42
 - d. Love returns blessing for cursing - Matthew 5:44-47

- e. We can put up with more from those for whom we have love

Cherish, then, the spirit of long-suffering, meekness, and forbearance, and you shall possess your soul in patience and happiness, and none shall be permitted to harm you more than God in wisdom and kindness may permit. -Jonathan Edwards

B. Love Is Kind

- 1. "Kind" means "to use" or "useful"
 - a. Use self and resources for benefit of others - active good-will
 - b. Ephesians 4:28 - reason for working
 - c. 1 Corinthians 10:23-24 - reason for restricting own liberty
 - d. 1 Corinthians 14:12, 26 - reason for spiritual gifts
 - e. 2 Timothy 2:2 - reason for growth & learning
 - f. Includes both material and spiritual
- 2. Kindness is opposed to:
 - a. selfish indulgence
 - b. seeking to get rather than give
 - c. inconsiderate apathy
 - d. ulterior motives in giving

3. *Those to whom we should do good* (Edwards)
 - a. *We are to do good both to the good and to the bad* (Matthew 5:43)
 - b. *We should do good both to friends and enemies* (Romans 12:17-21)
 - c. *We should do good both to the thankful and the unthankful* (Luke 6:35)

4. *The manner in which we should do good to others. -This is expressed in the single word, "freely." And this doing good freely implies three things:-*
 - a. *That our doing good be not in a mercenary spirit.* (Luke 14:12-14)
 - b. *That our doing good be free, it is requisite that we do it cheerfully or heartily, and with real good-will to the one we would benefit.* (1 Peter 4:9)
 - c. *That we do it liberally and bountifully* (Proverbs 11:24-26)

5. *Motives to Kindness*
 - a. Luke 6:38
 - b. Matthew 10:8b
 - c. Matthew 25:34-46
 - d. 2 Corinthians 8:9
 - e. James 2:13
 - f. Hebrews 13:1-2
 - g. Hebrews 13:16

C. *Love Does Not Envy (Is Not Jealous)*

1. Means "an intense desire" good or bad - here it is bad
 - a. Motive of Joseph's brothers (Acts 7:9)

- b. Motive of Paul's persecutors (Acts 13:45)
- c. 1 Kings 3:16-27
- d. Jealousy exceeds mere covetousness with attitude of, "If I can't have it, neither can you"

Envy may be defined to be a spirit of dissatisfaction with, and opposition to, the prosperity and happiness of others as compared with our own. -Jonathan Edwards

- 2. Love rejoices over success and prosperity of others
 - a. Numbers 11:24-29
 - b. Luke 1:41-45
- 3. Three attitudes necessary to put off jealousy - John 3:22-30
 - a. Recognize all anyone has is given by God (v.27)
 - 1 Corinthians 4:7
 - 2 Corinthians 3:4-6
 - Proverbs 22:2
 - b. Accept your place in the Kingdom (v.28-29)
 - 1 Corinthians 12:15-18
 - Psalm 84:10
 - c. Walk in humility (v.30)

D. Love Does Not Boast (Parade Itself)

Paul had just declared that charity was contrary to a spirit of envy, and now he declares that it is equally contrary to that spirit that specially provokes men to envy... -Jonathan Edwards

1. Love does not seek praise from men
 - a. Like Pharisees (Matthew 6:2,5,16)
 - b. Showing off, flaunting it, drawing attention to self
 - c. Boasting & bragging
 - d. Have to let everyone know
 - How much we've done for them
 - How much we've sacrificed (even for God)
3. Love seeks others' well-being without praise
 - a. Expects nothing in return
 - b. Loves without mentioning it
 - c. 2 Corinthians 12:15

E. Love Is Not Proud (Puffed Up)

1. Refers to an inflated ego
 - a. pride, arrogance, conceit
 - b. superiority complex
2. The Corinthians were proud
 - a. 1 Corinthians 4:6-7 (spiritual gifts)
 - b. 4:18-21 (Paul's authority)
 - c. 5:1-2 (tolerance of sin)

- d. 8:1 (knowledge)
3. Love is Humble
- a. Romans 12:3
 - b. Romans 12:10
 - c. Romans 12:16
 - d. Philippians 2:3-8
4. *Humility disposes a person to -*
- a. *heartily and freely acknowledge his meanness or littleness before God...He freely confesses his own nothingness and vileness, and owns himself unworthy of any mercy, and deserving of all misery.*
 - b. *be distrustful of himself, and to depend only on God.*
 - c. *renounce all the glory of the good he has or does, and give it all to God.*
 - d. *wholly subject himself to God...And he is equally disposed to be subject to the providence and daily disposal of God, and to submit cheerfully to His will as manifested in what He orders for him; and though God orders affliction, and low and depressed circumstances, as his lot in the world, he does not murmur, but feeling his meanness and unworthiness, he is sensible that afflictive and trying dispensations are what he deserves, and that his circumstances are better than he merits.*
5. *Humility tends to prevent -*
- a. *an aspiring and ambitious behavior amongst men...he acts on the principle of that saying of the prophet (Jer. xlv. 5), "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not."*
 - b. *an ostentatious behavior...if he does anything well...he does not affect that men should take notice of it...*
 - c. *an arrogant and assuming behavior...when he is amongst others, he does not carry it toward them as if he expected and insisted that a great deal of regard should be shown to himself.*
 - d. *a scornful behavior...they that are under the influence of a humble spirit...are not found treating with scorn and contempt what others say, or speaking of what they do with ridicule and sneering reflections, or sitting and relating what others may have spoken or done, only to make sport of it.*
 - e. *a willful and stubborn behavior...They will not be stiff and inflexible, and insist that everything must go according to what they happen first to propose, and manifest a*

disposition by no means to be easy, but to make all the difficulty they can...and to prevent anything from being done with any quietness, if it be not according to their own mind and will.

- f. *a leveling behavior. Some persons are always ready to level those above them down to themselves, while they are never willing to level those below them up to their own position. But he that is under the influence of humility will avoid both these extremes.*
- g. *a self-justifying behavior. He that is under the influence of an humble spirit, if he has fallen into a fault, as all are liable at some time to fall, or if in anything he has injured another, or dishonored the Christian name and character, will be willing to acknowledge his fault, and take the shame of it to himself.*

6. How to be Humble

- a. *Gain a sense of the infinite distance between God and ourselves. We are little, despicable creatures, even worms of the dust, and we should feel that we are as nothing, and less than nothing, in comparison with the Majesty of heaven and earth.*
- b. *Focus on God's infinite perfections. And it is the discovery or sense of God as lovely, and not only as lovely, but as infinitely above us in loveliness, that works humility in the heart.*
- c. *Realize God's love. Divine love does not only imply humility in its nature, but also tends to cherish and produce it...*
- d. *Live under the cross. The excellency of Christ, and the love of Christ, more appear in His yielding Himself to be crucified for us, than in any other of His acts, so that these things...tend to draw forth on our part the exercises of humble love.*

F. Love Is Not Rude

- 1. Love has Manners
- 2. Love is Considerate (1 Corinthians 11:21)
- 3. Love is Respectful (1 Corinthians 14:40)
- 4. Love is Gracious (Ephesians 4:15)

G. Love Is Not Self-Seeking

- 1. Love Is Not Selfish
 - a. Covetousness
 - b. Greed
 - c. Self-Indulgence
- 2. Love Seeks the Glory of God

- a. Philippians 2:21

- b. John 14:15

- 3. Love Seeks the Good of Others
 - a. 1 Corinthians 10:23-24

 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:33

 - c. Romans 15:2

 - d. Philippians 2:30

- 4. *The selfishness which charity, or a Christian spirit, is contrary to, is only an inordinate self-love.*
 - a. *The inordinateness of self-love does not consist in our love for our own happiness...For I apprehend that self-love, in this sense, is not a result of the fall, but is necessary, and what belongs to the nature of all intelligent beings, and that God has made it alike in all...The change that takes place in a man, when he is converted and sanctified, is not that his love for happiness is diminished, but only that it is regulated with respect to its exercises and influence, and the courses and objects it leads to.*

 - b. *The inordinateness of self-love, wherein a corrupt selfishness does consist, lies in...its being too great comparatively...If we compare a man's love of himself with his love for others, it may be said that he loves himself too much - that is, in proportion too much...self-love, by this excess in its proportion, itself becomes...inordinate in its influence and government of the man.*

 - c. *Self-love, or a man's love to his own happiness, may be inordinate, in placing that happiness in things that are confined to himself...It is not the degree in which he loves his own happiness, but in his placing his happiness where he ought not...A man may love himself as much as one can...and yet he may so place that happiness, that, in the very act of seeking it, he may be in the high exercise of love to God; as, for example, when the happiness that he longs for, is to enjoy God, or to behold His glory, or to hold communion with Him.*
 - 1) Psalm 37:4

 - 2) Psalm 73:25

 - 3) Hebrews 12:2

 - 4) 2 Corinthians 9:7

5) Matthew 5:3-12

6) Luke 12:33

H. Love Is Not Easily Angered

1. Love is not easily offended, but is forbearing

a. Proverbs 19:11

b. 1 Peter 4:8

c. Ephesians 4:1-2

2. Love is without sinful anger (Ephesians 4:26)

a. Righteous anger

1) Out of zeal for God and His Law - John 2:13-17

2) Not accompanied by self-interest - 1 Peter 2:21-23

3) Directed at correcting sin not taking revenge - Romans 12:19

4) Accompanied by good works - Mark 3:1-5

b. Sinful anger

1) Genesis 4:3-8

2) Genesis 49:5-7

3) Numbers 20:1-12

4) 2 Chronicles 16:7-10

- 5) Esther 3:1-5
- 6) Proverbs 14:17
- 7) Proverbs 15:18
- 8) Proverbs 19:19; 22:24-25
- 9) Proverbs 29:22
- 10) Jonah 4:1-9
- 11) Matthew 5:21-22
- 12) Acts 15:36-41
- 13) Ephesians 4:31
- 14) I Timothy 2:8
- 15) Titus 1:7
- 16) James 1:19-20

3. How to Keep from Being Provoked

- a. Psalm 37:8
- b. 1 Peter 2:21-23
- c. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

d. Proverbs 16:32 & 19:11

e. James 1:19

f. Colossians 3:8, 12-13

g. Philippians 2:3-4

h. Matthew 5:44

i. Romans 12:17-21

I. Love Keeps no Record of Wrongs

1. logi,zomai - to account, reckon, impute

a. to put together with one's mind and occupy oneself with reckonings

b. to reckon something to be on another's account (imputation)

c. a book keeping term in which all the transactions of one's account are recorded

2. "Love does not take into account a wrong suffered" (NASB)

a. Love does not keep track of another's evils

b. Love is not occupied with the sins of others, even those against oneself

c. Love does not hold a grudge or continue to hold another's sin against them

3. Love Forgives

a. Love never brings the other's sin up again to use against them

b. Love treats the one who has sinned against you as if they had not*

c. Love forgives in a way that covers the other's sin from sight/knowledge

Psalm 85:2 -

Proverbs 10:12 -

Proverbs 17:9 -

4. Why must we forgive? - Matthew 18:23-35

5. How must we forgive? - Ephesians 4:32

a. Isaiah 38:17

b. Isaiah 44:22

c. Psalm 103:12

d. Micah 7:19

6. How much must we forgive? - Matthew 18:21-22

7. *When are we to grant forgiveness? - Luke 17:3-4

*Matthew 18:35 instructs us to forgive our brother from the heart (cf. Matthew 6:12). We must have a spirit of forgiveness (love) always, but cannot justly grant forgiveness until the offender repents (cf. I John 1:9 with Ephesians 4:32). To grant forgiveness is to treat the person as if they had not sinned against you (not excluding any restoration process). If he does not repent, Matthew 18:15-20 goes into effect until he does.

8. Forgiving Unbelievers
-Romans 13:9

-Matthew 5:43-47

-Matthew 6:14-15

9. Encouragements to Forgiveness

a. God's Purposes

-Ephesians 1:11-12

-Genesis 50:17-20

-Romans 8:28-29

b. Our Growth

-Matthew 5:3-12

-Galatians 5:22-23

-Luke 6:27-36

J. Love Does Not Delight in Evil

1. Love does not find joy in unrighteousness - Love does not enjoy sin

a. Love is not entertained by sin

-Romans 1:32

-2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

b. Love does not gossip

-Proverbs 11:13

-Proverbs 16:27-28

-Proverbs 17:9

-Proverbs 18:8

-Proverbs 26:20

-Galatians 5:13-15

c. Love is not glad when another falls

-Obadiah 10-12

-Proverbs 24:17

2. Love hates sin
 - Psalm 69:9-10

 - Ephesians 4:26-27

3. Love mourns over sin
 - a. One's own sin
 - Psalm 32:3-5

 - Psalm 39:8-12

 - Matthew 5:3-4

 - James 4:7-10

 - b. The sin of others
 - Psalm 119:136

 - Jeremiah 9:1

 - Luke 19:41-42

 - 1 Corinthians 5:1-2

K. Love Rejoices with the Truth

1. Love finds joy & pleasure on the basis of truth
 - a. That which is honest
 - Proverbs 12:22

 - b. That which is real and genuine
 - Isaiah 1:10-17

c. That which is right and good

-Psalm 40:8

-Psalm 119:16,24,35,47,70,77,174

2. Why Love Rejoices with the Truth

a. Love is rooted in the character of God - 1 John 1:5 & 4:7

b. Love does what is best for others - John 8:32

c. Love is dependant upon truth - 2 John 1-3

3. How Love Rejoices in Truth

a. by Walking in Truth (Obedience) - 2 John 4 & 3 John 3-4

b. by Speaking the Truth (in love)

-Ephesians 4:15-16

-Ephesians 4:29

-Colossians 4:6

-Proverbs 15:1-2

-Proverbs 16:21

-Proverbs 23:16

c. by Seeking the Truth (not jumping to conclusions) - Joshua 22:10-33

L. Love Always Protects (Bears All Things)

1. Always (all things) consistent with truth & righteousness - v.6
-Hyperbolic
2. 'Protects' or 'Bears' - a roof
-protection

-shield from harm with yourself
3. Examples
-John 10:11-13

-Exodus 32:31-32

-Romans 9:1-3

-1 John 3:16

M. Love Always Trusts (Believes All Things)

1. Love is not naive nor blind
-Philippians 1:9

-Ephesians 4:14
2. Love is not suspicious or judgmental
-Job's friends

-1 Timothy 6:4

-John 7:24
3. Love gives the benefit of the doubt - 2 Corinthians 9:1-5
4. Love produces mutual trust

N. Love Always Hopes (Hopes All Things)

1. Love expresses a confident expectation - Hebrews 6:19

a. Romans 8:24-25 - Love perseveres in hope

b. Psalm 43:11 - Love does not despair

c. Prodigal Son - Love lets people change

2. How to keep love hopeful

a. 1 Timothy 1:1

b. Romans 15:13

c. Psalm 62:5

d. Romans 15:4

e. Titus 2:13

f. Colossians 1:5

g. Philippians 1:20

O. Love Always Perseveres (Endures All Things)

1. "To remain under;" "to persevere"

a. Matthew 10:22

b. Romans 12:12

- c. 2 Timothy 2:10
 - d. Hebrews 12:7
 - e. James 5:11
 - f. 1 Peter 2:20
2. This patient endurance is in relationship to circumstances
 - a. vs. longsuffering which is in relationship to people
 - b. vs. bearing all things which is a protection of the one loved from both people and circumstances
 3. Love is not a wet watermelon seed
 - a. Love doesn't run away from problems
 - b. Love doesn't quit because of difficulties
 - c. Love never says..."I've had enough"
 "I can't take it any more"
 "I refuse to live this way"
 4. Love tucks and rolls
 - a. Love hangs tough
 - b. Love grows stronger through trials
 - c. Love attacks the problem not the person
 - d. Love is totally committed
 5. Hebrews 12:2-3