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God Loves You Pt 6

Characteristics of Godly Love, Pt A - I Corinthians 13

Adapted from Pastor Ralph Drollinger 2/13/2012. Capitol Ministries Bible

I Corinthians 13:1-13... ¹ *If I speak human or angelic languages but do not have love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal.* ² *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.* ³ *And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body in order to boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.* ⁴ *Love is patient, love is kind. Love is not jealous, does not brag, is not conceited,* ⁵ *does not act improperly, is not selfish, is not provoked, and does not keep a record of wrongs.* ⁶ *Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth.* ⁷ *It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.* ⁸ *Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for languages, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.* ⁹ *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.* ¹⁰ *But when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end.* ¹¹ *When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things.* ¹² *For now we see indistinctly as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part,*

but then I will know fully, as I am fully known.

¹³ *Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

This passage has been commonly referred to as some of the Apostle Paul's best writing. It has found its way into most wedding ceremonies and is a favorite passage for many. I am sure we all would agree that love is the key thought and driving force in human existence. John Stott, a well known theologian has stated that "A fish are made for water, humans are made for love". A 16th century poet wrote "Not when I breathe but when I love, I live". Love is truly the theme of the Bible and is the best one word summary for God and His relationship with us.

Love has two key concepts:

1. It is how we are to be recognized as a disciple...

John 13:35... ³⁴ *A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another.* ³⁵ *By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."*

2. It should be the key motivation for our evangelism and our disciple-making. If we are to effectively and completely pass on a true and genuine faith to other people we need to be well grounded in that faith ourselves. It is very difficult to pass on what you don't actually have.

In this 1 Corinthians passage we find 15 characteristics of Biblical love. “All 15 are in the present continuous tense “denoting actions and attitudes which have become habitual, ingrained gradually by constant repetition.”¹

These characteristics should become habitual responses in one’s life even though they are more difficult to cultivate than the former illustration. However, before examining the fundamental aspects of objective love, Paul first emphasizes—and appropriately so—the superiority of love”. (Drollinger)

LOVE IS ESSENTIAL...13:1-3

¹ If I speak human or angelic languages but do not have love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² 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. ³ And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body in order to boast but do not have love, I gain nothing

“In these three opening verses, Paul makes three stark comparisons in order to underscore the incomparability of love. These introductory remarks exclaim the dominance of love as a virtue over all other character traits”. (Ibid)

A. LOVE IS MORE THAN MERE WORDS – 13:1... *If I speak human or angelic languages but do not have love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal.*

“One’s love for others is more important than their speaking abilities. The metaphorical meaning of one becoming a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal relates to empty philosophizing. Someone who knows and exclaims all the right answers but has no love is like to the Church of Ephesus as described in Revelation 2:1-7. That church had all the right doctrine but had lost their love for God.

Proverbs 3:3 summarizes the necessary virtues a disciple should possess “***Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.***”

Solomon’s use of the word neck and heart refer to both love (kindness) and truth as being a part of one’s outward and inward adornment. The meaning of the Hebrew word for heart **leb** includes the aspects of one’s intellect, emotion and will. The mature believer possesses love and truth simultaneously in full measure. The loving disciple, because their priorities are straight, is neither inwardly nor outwardly a noisy gong or clanging cymbal-- even when he or she speaks the truth in a public setting, such speech should be seasoned with love and grace” (Ibid)

B. LOVE IS MORE THAN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE OR ACTIONS

13:2... *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.*

“It is not a stretch to interpret the second verse of chapter 13 to be a statement of the primacy of love over leadership. A disciple who knows the Word of God, who is knowledgeable of all the policy issues and possesses faith—visionary leadership for his or her personal and party’s future—who possesses not a love for people, Scripture states emphatically herein amounts to nothing. The phrase so as to remove mountains is a Pauline hyperbolic expression (*as will also be seen in verse 7*) intended to convey and emphasize the meaning “to make what seems impossible possible.”³

One may be a great leader, or an up-and-coming powerful leader in American government—one who may be able to achieve what others deem impossible, a man or woman of great faith—but forget not that it is more important to love people, especially those who have nothing to do with accomplishing one’s leadership objectives”. (Ibid)

C. LOVE IS MORE THAN SELF-SACRIFICE- 13:3... *And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body in order to boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

“For sure, one who gives sacrificially of time, talent and treasure is to be exalted above the lazy and uncommitted that do not. But in comparison to love, sacrificial qualities are of lesser significance. In fact a life of personal sacrifice for one’s cause will profit nothing when all is said and done in eternity. One is woefully deficient who lacks love.

“Love is the indispensable addition which alone gives worth to all other Christian gifts.”⁴

Life in the community, or in the home without love is nothing *oudeis* meaning “nothing at all.” How are you doing as a preeminently loving person—a lover of people and especially your mate? What follows are the biblically-objective indications of love; they should help to answer the above question more realistically, versus analyzing subjective feelings that may or may not accurately reflect one’s real love Quotient”. (Drollinger)

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:4-7...⁴ *Love is patient, love is kind. Love is not jealous, does not brag, is not boastful/arrogant,*⁵ *does not act improperly, is not selfish, is not provoked, and does not keep a record of wrongs.*⁶ *Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth.*⁷ *It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

1. Love is patient- *makrothumeo*

ἀγάπη *agape* (noun form) **Has the idea of “Being”**

The 15 individual characteristics are all in the verb form. This shows an inseparable link between BEING LOVING & DOING LOVING ACTIONS

μακροθυμέω = to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart 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 **Usage:** AV - be patient 3, have patience 2, have long patience 1, bear long 1, suffer long 1, be longsuffering 1, patiently endure 1; 10

“This first characteristic is the ability to be taken advantage of by a person many times and not be upset. The root word means “to persevere.” James

uses this same Greek word in describing the attitudinal response of the prophets of old whose words went unheeded by their peers.

Program your mind with **Philippians 1:6...** *And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.*

It will help you to sober to the fact that God is not through sanctifying the other person—nor am I perfect either! So be patient”! (Ibid)

2. Love is kind – *chresteuomai*

5541 χρηστεύομαι *chresteuomai* to show one's self mild, to be kind, use kindness

The counterpart to longsuffering, it means “to show one’s self mild.” This characteristic is a willingness to give to another, including one’s enemies, to be gentle and slow in avenging. The Greek root means “one desires and works for another’s welfare.” It is the idea of good will, generous responses and actions, in opposition to holding onto past bad memories and being bothered by another in the future (aka “he or she gets on my nerves”). (Ibid)

3. Love is not jealous - *zeloo*

2206 ζηλόω *zeloo* = to burn with zeal 1a) to be heated or to boil with envy, hatred, anger 1a1) in a good sense, to be zealous in the pursuit of good 1b) to desire earnestly, pursue 1b1) to desire one earnestly, to strive after, busy one's self about him 1b2) to be the object of the zeal of others, to be zealously sought after 1c) to envy, jealous

Usage: AV - zealously affect 2, more with envy 2, envy 1, be zealous 1, affect 1, desire 1, covet 1, covet earnestly 1, misc 2; 12

“Literally the root means “earnestly desire.” Jealousy is similar to covetousness as used here; it is a desire to have what another possesses. Choose to be glad for those who have—be they more talented, successful, popular or beautiful—versus envious. Are you the biggest cheerleader of another? (Ibid)

4. Love does not brag – *perpereuomai*

4068 περπερεύομαι {per-per-yoof'-om-ahee}

Meaning: 1) to boast one's self 2) a self display, employing rhetorical embellishments in extolling one's self excessively **Usage:** vaunt itself 1

“Literally “to talk conceitedly.” A bragging action that seems to indicate a self-sufficient attitude of not needing other people .The mature in Christ have forgotten about self-importance. Center on others, not

self. “*Let another praise you and not your own mouth, a stranger and not your own lips*”(Proverbs 27:2).

Further, be characterized by asking another sincere questions (cultivate personal curiosity), talking little about self.

Think when approaching a Conversation, “What can I learn from this person?” Versus “what can I tell this person?” (Ibid)

5. Love is not boastful/arrogant – *phusioo*

5448 φυσιόω {foo-see-o'-o} **Meaning:** 1) to make natural, to cause a thing to pass into nature 2) to inflate, blow up, to cause to swell up 2a) to puff up, make proud 2b) to be puffed up, to bear one's self loftily, be proud **Usage:** AV - puff up 7

“Literally, “to puff or blow up.” An attitude of over - confidence. One who overinflates their importance usually at the expense of others value and dignity. William Carey who translated the Bible into 34 languages was once put down in a banquet. An arrogant man said to him, “Mr. Carey, I understand that you were once a shoemaker?” Carey replied, “I was not a shoemaker, only a shoe repairman!” Strive to be big-hearted, not bigheaded. Make it a habit to playdown self in the presence of others”. (Ibid)

“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling” (Proverbs 16:18), and “God...gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6).

6. Love does not act improperly – *aschemoneo*

807 ἀσχημονέω Meaning: 1) to act improperly or unbecomingly **Usage:** AV - behave (one's) self uncomely 1, behave (one's) self unseemly 1; 2

“This is the characteristic of someone who cares so little for others around them that they act without proper decorum for the occasion. It is to act rudely or impolitely, maybe even crudely. Work always on sensitivity for others. Always display respect for another regardless of their position or ability to assist in your objectives”. (Ibid)

The take-away for today is that love should be our distinguishing characteristic as a Disciple of Christ and it should motivate us to evangelize and disciple

other people to
BE LOVING & ACT LOVING.

References – by Drollinger

1 Prior, David The Message of 1 Corinthians (Nottingham, England: Inter Varsity Press, 1985) p. 229-30

2 (cf. E.W.Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible [London: Messrs, Eyre, and Spottis-woods, 1889], pp. 171ff.) Such insights defy a wooden literalistic approach (of which Evangelicals are often falsely accused of) to biblicalinterpretation/hermeneutics.

3 H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, 1922-1928. As quoted in Barrett, C.K. The First Epistle To The Corinthians, Blacks New Testament Commentary Series (London: Hendrickson Publishers, 1968) p. 301

4 Ibid, p. 303.