

Love Defined

Isolation part 6:

May 29th 2022

Day 1:

In the middle of the Apostle Paul's exposition on spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 to 14 is the often-quoted chapter on love: 1 Corinthians 13. While Paul recognizes the importance of the spiritual gifts and their place in the Christian's life, he tells that there is something superior to these gifts. Without love all other gifts have little value.

Eminence of Love (v. 1-3)

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 If I speak in the tongue of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 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 do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love must be mixed in with all the spiritual gifts. Paul specifically mentions the gifts of tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith and giving. These gifts can't accomplish their purpose without the supremacy of love. Love is preeminent to all the spiritual gifts.

Thoughts?

Day 2:

Explanation of Love (v. 4-8)

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ 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.

Paul gives a concise explanation of love that describes many of its attributes. From these verses we see what love is and isn't, or what love does and doesn't do. What areas could you use some help?

Love is:

Patient

Kind

Rejoices in truth

Bears up under all problems / Protects

Believes / Trusts

Hopes

Understands the of faults of others

Never fails / Perseveres

Love isn't:

Envious

Proud

Boastful

Inappropriate / Rude

Selfish

Short-tempered

Evil

Accepting of sin

Day 3:

Endurance of Love (v. 8-13)

1 Corinthians 13: 8-13 ⁸ 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. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ 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 the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a 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.

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

Even the enduring, permanent qualities of faith and hope will be of little value without love.

While some of the spiritual gifts will be cut off or pass away, love will remain. One may have had the gift of prophecy or of knowledge, yet they wouldn't know all things. God does not reveal all things at one time to us. But there is a promise that

“but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.”

Though some spiritual gifts will cease, there is always a need for love. Love is permanent. Specifically he mentions that three items will continue and endure: faith, hope and love (or charity). Of the three, Paul says that love is superior. Even the enduring, permanent qualities of faith and hope will be of little value without love.

Day 4:

Life Application Love Defined

Love should penetrate every relationship we have, not just romantic and family relationships. Love is not confined to boyfriends and girlfriends. Love should be shown at work, the grocery store and in the classroom.

The two lists of what love is and isn't shows attitudes. Love is not just a word we say, but an attitude that we have towards others. Have you ever met someone that you immediately enjoy being around? What is it about that person that makes you enjoy their company? It is their attitude. The way they express themselves, or the feelings they can produce through their presence. Of course, people can be liars and transmit an attitude of love without really being loving. However, it usually does not take long for one's true attitude to be revealed. You have probably also been around people who immediately cause you to dislike them. That is a lack of a loving attitude. The attitudes of love express the qualities of love shown in verses 4 through 8.

Are you loving? That may be a hard question to answer. It is very generic. But what about the qualities of love? Are you patient? Are you kind? Trusting? These types of questions are more pointed. How do you stack up?

There is the other list too. Are you envious? Proud? Boastful? What about rude and short-tempered?

Go through the list of attitudes and see how you do when thinking about your work colleagues or schoolmates. What about the other parents at your children's school who probably need a change of attitude? Paul doesn't say this is a list of what you need to require of others.

There are various Greek words for love used in the Bible. The word used in this passage is the word *agape* which is the type of love God has towards us. It is a love that is not dependent on others; rather it is a personal choice. You can't make someone else have these qualities of love, but you can make a personal choice in your attitude toward them.

Day 5:

Love: A Lesson & A Command

Jesus said in John 13:35 “ *By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.* ”

Making the choice to love others is not only a suggestion given in Paul’s Bible study on love in 1 Corinthians 13, it is also a command given by Jesus to all Christians.

As we continue in our series on Isolation, I can’t help but think how important being in a community of people who are willing to sacrificially love you is. The model it shows us in our every day life’s is priceless and points to the ultimate act of sacrificial love that Jesus performed on the cross.

As a Christian you are called to be a “little Christ” and one way you do that is through agape or sacrificial love to the people in your community.

I pray that we can each spend more time living out the virtues expressed in these passages.

Thoughts?