

I Love

God

A More Excellent Way

The Necessity, Character,
and Permanence of Love
(1 Corinthians 13)

Corinthian Church Problems



Division because of Pride & Self Interest



Sexual Immorality



Lawsuits



Confusion about Marriage and Singleness



Abuse of the Lord's Supper



Competition among Spiritual Gifts



Confusion about the Resurrection

“Love is primary for [Paul] because it has already been given concrete expression in . . . Jesus Christ” (Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:16).

Gordon Fee

The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 628

*“Love is not set over against the gifts, precisely because it belongs to a different category altogether . . . love is the way the gifts are to function. To desire earnestly expressions of the Spirit that will build up the community is **how** love acts in this context.”*

Gordon Fee

The First Epistle to the Corinthians, 628



Biblical Idea

Paul dissected the *character* of the gospel ethic of love against the flawed Corinthian view of spirituality.

Verses 4–7

**Paul described love positively -
*Love ...***

- *Is patient*
- *Is kind*
- *Rejoices with the truth*
- *Bears all things*
- *Believes all things*
- *Hopes all things*
- *Endures all things*



Verse 4–7

Paul described love negatively – Love

...

- *Is not envious*
- *Is not boastful*
- *Is not arrogant*
- *Is not rude*
- *Is not insistent on its own way*
- *Is not irritable*
- *Is not resentful*
- Does not rejoice at wrongdoing



A photograph of a sidewalk with chalk writing. The text "I Love one another" is written in three lines. "I Love" is in blue, "one" is in white, and "another" is in white. A small pink star is drawn to the left of the word "I". The sidewalk is made of dark grey concrete slabs. A white curved line separates the image from the dark grey background on the right.

* I Love
one
another

The Basics of Love's Character

Love bears up under provocation
without complaint. As the old KJV
puts it, “Love suffereth long.”

**Love Is
Patient.**



Love shows mercy and
compassion.

Love Is Kind.



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The Seven Don'ts of Love's Character

Love does not have intense negative feelings over another's achievements or successes.

**Love Does Not
Envy.**



Love does not heap praise on oneself, like a braggart or a windbag.

Love Does Not Boast.



Love does not have an
exaggerated self-conception.

**Love Is Not
Arrogant.**



Love does not have a pattern of disgraceful (lacking favor or benevolence) behavior. Basically, love isn't a jerk all the time.

**Love Is Not
Rude.**



Love is not intent on striving for one's own advantage (Jn. 5:30).

**Love Does Not
Insist on Its Own
Way.**



Love is not easily provoked to
anger and wrath.

**Love Is Not
Irritable.**



Love doesn't keep score of
wrongs.

**Love Is Not
Resentful.**



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The Gladness of Love's Character

Love is not happy in the proximity
of injustices and violations of
standards of right conduct.

**Love Does Not
Rejoice at
Wrongdoing.**



Love experiences joy in the truth
—virtuous living (Philippians 4:8–
9).

**But Love
Rejoices with
the Truth.**





The Tenacity of Love's Character

Love keeps undesirable or displeasing things about another confidential instead of using them for self-interest. Love springs no leaks when the storm comes, like a ship tightly sealed.

Love Bears All Things.



Love is true, worthy of trust,
faithful (1 Jn. 4:16).

**Love Believes
All Things.**



Love waits confidently.

Love Hopes All
Things.



Love stands one's doctrinal ground
and maintains relational resolutions
in the face of opposition (Mk.
13:13; 2 Tim. 2:10).

**Love Endures
All Things.**





Timeless Truth

The Holy Spirit empowers a new Christ-looking love of being and doing.



A More Excellent Way

- Step #1: Love as *being* — Are you a lover? This is our ethical identity as new creations in Christ by the Spirit. *I am a lover*. People could come to Christ and **know** that they would be met with love. Do people **know** when they come to us that they will find love? Are we lovers?
- Step #2: Love as *doing* — How do I love? What do I do? This is gospel ethics in action. *I will love so-and-so by doing X*. This may take a little research and attention to detail. Do we **know how** to love?



Today's Message

Test the character consistency of your love.

Love as *being and doing* creates responsibility and readiness that *reaches* others effectively.

Responsibility Narrows

- “Choose this day whom you will serve!” (Josh. 24:15)
- “Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau have I hated” (Mal. 1:2–3).
- Jesus’ circles of disciples (Luke 6:12–16)
- A husband chooses one wife (Gen. 2:24).

Readiness Widens

- “And should not I pity Nineveh?” (Jon. 4:11)
- “Which of these three proved to be a neighbor?” (Lk. 10:36)
- Prepared to speak to anyone (Col. 4:2–6; 1 Pet. 3:15)

Testing the Character Consistency of Love

First, test the character consistency of your love toward those for whom you have obligations and responsibilities. Does your activity toward these people match the biblical character of love?



Testing the Character Consistency of Love

Second, test the character consistency of your readiness to love your neighbor. What's your default ethic? How do you act in situations of providential spontaneity? What does this reveal to you about the Spirit's work to make you a being who loves?



Testing the Character Consistency of Love



Third, test the character consistency of your love toward the local church at West Lisbon. Every church is made up of relationships. Our problem-solving and solution-seeking activity, the activities that we commit to for the mission of God should match love's character.

Testing the Character Consistency of Love

Fourth, test the character consistency of your love for God.



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- *Does not rejoice at wrongdoing*



Internalizing 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

[_____] is patient and kind; [_____] does not envy or boast; [_____] is not arrogant or rude. [_____] does not insist on [.] own way; [_____] is not irritable or resentful; [_____] does not rejoice at wrong-doing, but rejoices with the truth. [_____] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

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