

Love Bears all Things -

Love covers. It covers as a shield or roof to protect. It is not for publishing the faults of a brother. It will put up with injuries, without indulging anger or cherishing revenge. It will be patient with provocation and it will hold firm. Though it be shocked and borne hard upon, it will sustain all manner of injury and ill treatment bearing up under it. It will put up with all manner of hazards and difficulties. Love even gives the unrepentant sinner an advocate and intercessor that prays for their well-being. Love provides a shelter that withstands the worst circumstances. Let all reside under our sheltering love.

Love Believes in All Things -

While not naive, it hopes within reason, well for all. It will stretch its faith beyond appearances to have a kind opinion. Fueled by our faith in God it is central for developing a Christ like love - rooted and grounded in the right kind of faith.

Love Hopes all Things -

Where it cannot believe well, it will at least hope well of others. It will champion the rightful cause of the underdog. It does not give up when others might. It knows that failures are not final. It does not bend to the popular negative opinion. It understands that God can do all things and does not give up when situations seem impossible. It is undying optimism through faith in an all-powerful God providing hope to the hopeless.

Love Endures All Things -

Though it is mistreated, unappreciated, unreturned, and unevenly matched... true love remains steadfast. Through insult and abandonment and trials and tribulations... true love remains steadfast- it does not give up, it does not walk away. It may be shaken, but not broken. It is the solid rock firmament, which Christianity is built upon and like the rock it will endure.

Love Never Fails -

It is a permanent and perpetual grace. It always overcomes. It always wins out in the end. While

other worldly gifts and possessions will someday lose their luster, only love will always persevere and reside with us... even into heaven. We will take nothing else with us - it is the only of our worldly possessions that we will be allowed to retain. While all other things must some day fall away, it alone remains always with us as a parameter that we shall be judged against as our gift and celebration with the Heavenly Father.

Finally... Love Holds it All Together.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues... put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

The words "bind it all together" is the words we use for ligament. A ligament holds our muscles and bones and everything in place. They bend and stretch so that the body part can function. They are not rigid and when they work properly there is fluid motion. However, when they are frayed or torn there is not only pain but the body cannot function, as it should.

Every family needs love. Love binds together faith, trust, and respect. Love holds the family together through all the fluid moments of life. When love is absent there is pain, and a family ceases to function as it is intended. Yet, when we love as God has loved us, when we love with the true quality of love... families discover the ability to face whatever life might bring and not only survive, but grow and thrive.

Every family needs love.



Trinity Baptist Church
4815 Six Forks Rd * Raleigh, NC 27609 * (919) 787-3740



LOVE

1 Corinthians 13

TRINITY PULPIT

Is there any word that is more over used and under exemplified than love? Think of all the songs, poems, books and exclamations, which center around love. We are reminded in pop music that "love is a many splendid thing" and "all you need is love" and sometimes we are reminded of the hard part of love, with songs like "love stinks." Even at church we sing songs about God's love. We sing of the deep deep love of Jesus and we read passages about love like God so loved the world, or love each other as I have loved you, or love your neighbor as yourself, or even that very succinct definition of God...God is love and yet, the word seems to lack meaning.

Love seems to have become one of those words that is so used and so misunderstood that just to mention it leaves us without response. It seems to be one of those terms that have just lost its weight. When you use a term over and over again without example, or when you use a term to describe so many situations of feelings and intent, a word can lose its definition and meaning.

In fact, I would imagine that when you arrived this morning and saw that the word for today in our family ties series was love... your reaction was either one of disinterest, or not again, or "no kidding?" In other words, the word love is expected to be heard at church and in our families, but do we really understand the seriousness of this word and more importantly this act?

We are concluding our series on what every family needs. We have said that every family needs faith. Faith must begin at home. Every family needs trust. We must learn to trust one another again.

Every family needs respect. We need to respect one another and each other's values as God's children. Today we tie it all together and say every family needs love.

In our instructions from Paul in Ephesians, which we have been reading each week, he gives us a crowning message regarding love. We are told that husbands are to love their wives like Christ loved the church, giving himself for it. In this passage, the act of the husband is the greatest act of love. It is the greatest act of submission; it is the greatest act of sacrifice. The husband, in this example in Ephesians, sets the highest bar when it comes to relationships.

So, if we look at this passage, we can conclude that love is not only the highest act but also the one that seems to bind the other together. In the home that is described here in Ephesians, the husband's sacrificial love or Christ like love sets the tone for the whole home.

Now I want to say something here that is important. In the word that we have been reading from Ephesians, there is the model of a family where there is a husband father, a wife mother and children. However, in the Ephesus church of course there were widows, single men and women and families where there were children and not children. There were families like our families. So, although the instructions here are for what we might call the nuclear family, the principles can be applied to our families.

What can we say about love as a quality for the families that will help us all apply this command of Jesus to us? That is to love one another as God has loved us.

The first thought I had about this passage is that the love described here in Ephesians and 1 Corinthians 13 is not altered by circumstances or events. The husband is instructed to love his wife like Christ loved the church and gave himself for the church. What type of love is described here?

It does not depend on reciprocity. That is the love described here does not depend on love being returned. It is nice. It is encouraged, but the act of love is not in response to a certain other quality.

We are told that while we were yet sinners... Christ died for us. While we were in rebellion, while we were separated from God, while we were disobeying God, while we lived disregarding God... Christ died for us. God's love, as demonstrated in Jesus, did not depend on our response, our goodness or our seeking a relationship with God.

The Bible is clear that God loved us first and it is God's love for us that enables us to love God in return and to love one another. The love, which is described here in Ephesians and 1 Corinthians, is a love that originates beyond the circumstance and response of another.

Everyone remembers when we learned the old spelling rule "I before E except after C." One preacher said that love has a different rule. "Love's rule is U before no matter what I "C." Love's rule, as described here in Ephesians and in 1 Corinthians, is a love that puts others before self... even to the place of sacrifice.

In our homes we need a love that does not originate from the circumstance, the events or another's ability to respond to us. It comes from the heart and just like the heart of God it is dependent not on others, but on love for another.

A second quality we might mention is that love exceeds our feelings. We might say that it is intentional in every way. In 1 Corinthians we are given a list of qualities of love. Although we read this passage often, sometimes we don't stop to really hear these beautiful qualities. This is not simply a beautiful passage to read at a wedding, it is instruction from God's word on how to love one another. Let's look at this definition of love. What we will discover is that these qualities give

love true weight.

Love Suffers Long -

It will endure. It is not quick to anger. It puts up with the inadequacies of others stoically. It can endure evil and provocation. It endures with many slights and neglects from the person it loves and has patience to await the eventual good that it believes shall eventually prevail in others thru faith in God's ability to change them. It has self-restraint.

In our current day of domestic violence, sexual unfaithfulness and broken relationships it is an important aspect of true love and one against which many of us will surely be tested. For in it we see that love can and must be able to suffer the pain of betrayal without ceasing to truly care for and continue to love those who have betrayed us, wronged us, or who simply do not accept or understand what true love is.

Love is Kind -

It is useful, benign, not rough or harsh. It seeks to do good, it is patient though injured by others. The purpose of love is to seek the welfare of the one loved. We also learn that kindness is more apt to encourage good in another person. This kindness brings out the best in they who are loved.

Let us now look at Paul's exhortations about what love is not.

Love does Not Envy -

It rejoices in the successes of others. It is content with what the Lord has kindly allowed it. Envy is least productive of all sins as it wishes less for someone else while doing nothing productive for they who envy. In real love we are not envious of those who appear to be getting a better break than us.

Love does not Parade Itself -

It subdues pride; it will esteem others and limit its own esteem. It will wait patiently until others praise it. It is anonymous. It does not brag about its own accomplishments, and is guardful of even carefully worded subtle statements of self-promotion. It does not put itself in the spotlight. It handles its own prosperity and successes in a humble manner - it does not boast.

Love is not Puffed Up -

It is not bloated with self-conceit. It abhors flattery. It understands that one who is full of themselves has no room to feel the pain of others. Puffed up people have an exaggerated opinion of their own importance and often feel that their happiness and well being are the most important thing in life, as such it is easy for them to dismiss the needs and feelings of others.

Love does not behave Rudely -

It behaves with reverence and respect toward all mankind and towards love, itself. It does not unduly censure or despise others conduct. It will do nothing that is unbecoming to it. It holds true love as a precious thing deserving of respect and does not publically parade it. It does not ever ask any one do something that is contrary to the good principals of conscience, faith and God's Moral Principals as established in the Holy Bible. In essence, don't misuse the name of love for ungodly purpose. For it is the clear indication of a love that is not - for real love always seeks the best for they that are loved and does not look for personal gain, pleasure or control.

Love does not Seek Its Own -

It is an enemy of selfishness, does not seek its own praise or profit. It often neglects its own for the sake of others. It prefers the welfare of others before itself. It is self-sacrificing.

It looks out for the interest of others. As Paul notes in Philippians Ch2 vs. 3-4..."let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind. Let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his interests, but also for the interests of others."

Love is not Provoked -

It is not sharp tempered - it sweetens and softens. It is not quick to display its passions. It confines

them within proper limits.

It is never angry without a truly just cause and even then, tempers it to good Godly purpose alone.

Love Thinks no Evil -

It has no malice, thinks not of revenge and has no long anger. It does not ascribe guilt to others by inference or innuendo. It is not jealous or suspicious. It will never indulge suspicions without proofs. It will only reluctantly give into a poor opinion of another and only with regret and reluctance when the evidence cannot be reputed.

It will never suspect ill or reason itself into bad opinions upon mere appearances. It will always think the best it can, even when circumstances might appear damning. It does not store up the memory of wrongdoing.

Love does not Rejoice in Iniquity -

It takes no pleasure in hurting others. It thinks no evil without clear proof. Real love cannot treat evil as an innocent option, but hates the evil and not the doer. It wishes ill to none. Nor

will it rejoice in the faults or failings of others. In fact, the sins of others will stir all its compassions. Love does not gossip or publish the news of someone else's shame. It does not find delight in anything God says is wrong.

Here again Paul exhorts us with what love does:

Love Rejoices in the Truth -

It is happy in the success of the Gospel and rejoices to see man molded by it. It takes no joy in the sins of others, but is highly delighted to see them do well as a result of being led to the truth. It wants to see truth and justice prevail. He who does not believe in truth takes pleasure in unrighteousness. We know that the Bible is truth and rejoice in it, and lead others to do likewise while also rejoicing in the presence and fellowship of the like minded. Celebrating truth and joyfully fellowshiping with our Christian brothers and sisters to honor it and He who gave it to us.

EVERYONE REMEMBERS WHEN WE LEARNED THE OLD SPELLING RULE "I BEFORE E EXCEPT AFTER C." ONE PREACHER SAID THAT LOVE HAS A DIFFERENT RULE. "LOVE'S RULE IS U BEFORE NO MATTER WHAT I "C." LOVE'S RULE, AS DESCRIBED HERE IN EPHESIANS AND IN 1 CORINTHIANS, IS A LOVE THAT PUTS OTHERS BEFORE SELF... EVEN TO THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE.