

# 1 Corinthians 13:4 Commentary

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1 Corinthians 13:4 [Love](#) is [patient](#), [love](#) is [kind](#) and is not [jealous](#); [love](#) does not [brag](#) and is not [arrogant](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [E agape makrothumei.](#) (2SPA1) [chresteuetai](#) (3SPMI) [e agape. ou zeloi.](#) (3SPA1) [\[e agape\] ou perpereuetai.](#) (2SPMI) [ou phusioutai.](#) (3SPPI)

**Amplified:** Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

**NLT:** Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** - This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience - it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive: it is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Love meekly and patiently bears ill treatment from others. Love is kind, gentle, benign, pervading and penetrating the whole nature, mellowing all which would have been harsh and austere; is not envious. Love does not brag, nor does it show itself off, is not ostentatious, does not have an inflated ego,

**Young's Literal:** The love is long-suffering, it is kind, the love doth not envy, the love doth not vaunt itself, is not puffed up,

- Proverbs 10:12; 2Corinthians 6:6; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 1:11; 3:12; 2Timothy 2:25; 3:10; 2Timothy 4:2; James 3:17; 1Peter 4:8
- [Click for verse by verse commentary on 1 Corinthians 13](#)

**Related Passages** (this list could be very much longer!):

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up strife, but **love** covers all transgressions.

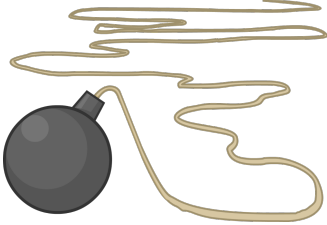
1 Peter 4:8+ Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because **love** covers a multitude of sins.

Ephesians 4:2+ with all humility and gentleness, with **patience** (makrothumia noun form of "patient" below), showing forbearance to one another in love

Colossians 3:12+ And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, **kindness** (chrestotes = gives us what we need & related to word for kindness below), humility, gentleness and **patience** (makrothumia = a "long fuse" before it "blows!")

## Paul's flow of thought

The Primacy of Love	1 Corinthians 13:1-3
The Perfection of Love	1 Corinthians 13:4-7
The Permanence of Love	1 Corinthians 13:8-13



## LOVE HAS A "LONG FUSE!"

**Spurgeon** - Always try to put the best construction on other people's actions and work. Let gentleness triumph.

**Paul** had given Timothy an example and encouraged him by saying...

you followed (like a disciple) my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, **patience** (makrothumia), love, perseverance (see **note 2** Timothy 3:10)

**Paul** went on to tell Timothy to preach with patience writing...

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience (literally "all patience" makrothumia) and instruction. (see note 2 Timothy 4:2)

You will observe that agape "love" is defined by verbs rather than adjectives--by what it does, instead of what it is. Note also that love is not a feeling and as you survey Paul's description of agape love, you note that there is not stress on personal feeling. The kind of love Paul is talking about is seen and experienced and demonstrated.

Paul begins with 2 positive aspect of love **love is patient, love is kind**. The first is passive—not retaliating. The second is active—bestowing benefits. This twofold opening statement stands as a daily challenge to every Christian! But the "descriptive definition" does not stop here but is followed with a series of primarily negative aspects of love, each preceded by the negative particle in the Greek which conveys absolute negation—love **never** brags, is **never** arrogant, etc! This description of **agape** should drive every believer to the foot of the Cross and to a complete surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the perfect fulfillment of **agape** and Who Alone by His Spirit's filling and control can enable us to work out this aspect of our salvation in fear and trembling to the glory of His Father. Amen!

Remember the context of the preceding three verses of this "crown jewel" of Holy Scripture for there we learn that love is indispensable and is more important than eloquent communication, spiritual gifts, or personal sacrifice. We may have all the trappings of true religion but if we don't have love, we don't have anything at all.

The Corinthians were impatient with each other, suing each other, tolerating sin in the church, and creating problems because they did not have love. Paul emphasizes that whatever gifts and/or qualities a believer may possess, they are nothing without love.

**A T Robertson** says that 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 pictures "the character or conduct of love in marvellous rhapsody." [1 Corinthians 13](#))

**Chrysostom** adds that here Paul...makes an outline of love's matchless beauty, adorning its image with all aspects of virtue, as if with many colors brought together with precision.

**Phillips** has a pithy paraphrase...This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience - it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive: it is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.

**Pfeiffer** has an interesting comment writing that...One might almost say that love is personified here, since the description is

practically a description of the life and character of Jesus Christ. However, the picture is directly related to the Corinthians. The observance of the truths of this chapter, as will be noted in the following remarks, would have solved their problems. ([Pfeiffer, C F: Wycliffe Bible Commentary. 1981. Moody](#))

**Hodge** introduces this famous passage noting that...Almost all the instructions of the New Testament are suggested by some occasion and are adapted to it. This chapter is not a methodical dissertation on Christian love, but shows that grace is contrasted with the extraordinary gifts that the Corinthians valued inordinately. Therefore, the traits of love that are mentioned are those that contrasted with the Corinthians' use of their gifts. They were impatient, discontented, envious, puffed up, selfish, indecorous, unmindful of the feelings or interests of others, suspicious, resentful, censorious. The apostle personifies love and places her before them and lists her graces not in logical order but as they occurred to him in contrast to the deformities of character that the Corinthians displayed. (Hodge, C. 1 Corinthians)

**Wiersbe** suggest that the careful inductive student read 1Corinthians 13:4-7...and compare this with the fruit of the Spirit listed in Gal 5:22-note, Gal 5:23-note. You will see that all of the characteristics of love show up in that fruit. This is why love edifies: it releases the power of the Spirit in our lives and churches. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

I like the practical way **Joseph Beet** explains the "**patience**" demonstrated through a man or woman (husband or wife) who is filled with the Spirit (Ep 5:18-note compare filled with the Word in Col 3:16-note) that they might be enabled to exude the fragrant fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-note, Gal 5:23-note), i.e., **agape** love which...

**continues** in spite of **conduct** likely to **quench** it. This continuance often, but not always, shows itself in restraining anger. Hence, in the Bible, the word is often (Ro 2:4-note; Ro 9:22-note etc.) used in this connection. ([A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians - Online Version](#))

**Love (26) (agape)** is unconditional, sacrificial love and a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and which God gives by means of His Spirit's production in the heart of a yielded saint, the constituent elements of this fruit being described by Paul in this famous section of Scripture. **Agape** is the caring, self-sacrificing commitment which shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved. Jesus Christ, in His sacrificial death on the Cross, is clearly the epitome and embodiment of agape love.

**Agape** is a love which impels the one loving to sacrifice himself for the benefit of the person loved. God's love must be seen in full bloom in the life of every disciple of Christ.

**Agape love** is the love of choice, the love of serving with humility, the highest kind of love, the noblest kind of devotion, the love of the will (intentional, a conscious choice) which is not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship. **Agape** is not based on pleasant emotions or good feelings that might result from a physical attraction or a familial bond. **Agape** chooses as an act of self-sacrifice to serve the recipient. From all of the descriptions of **agape** love, it is clear that true **agape** love is a sure mark of salvation and in fact is impossible to carry out unless one is genuinely born again.

**Agape** love does not depend on the world's criteria for "love". Nevertheless, believers can fall into the trap of blindly following the world's demand that a lover **feel** positive toward the beloved. This is not **agape** love, but is a love based on impulse. **Impulsive love** characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason "I can't help it. I fell in love with another person!" Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God's **decisive love**, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind. There are many reasons a proper understanding of the truth of God's word (and of the world's lie) is critical and one of the foremost is Jesus' declaration that

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** (agape) for one another. (John 13:35). (**Comment:** Agape is the badge of discipleship and the landmark of heaven! ([Jn 13:35](#)). )

**Agape** in the Greek classics spoke of a love called out of one's heart by the preciousness of the object loved. This is the idea inherent in the Father's proclamation "This is My **beloved** Son... " **Agape** is the love that was shown at Calvary. Thus **agape** is God's love, and is the love that God is. It is not human affection but is a divine love, commanded by God, produced as fruit in the heart of a surrendered saint by the Holy Spirit (God Who is at work in us to will and to work to His good pleasure) (Ro 55-note; Gal 5:22-note), self-sacrificial in nature seeking the benefit of the one who is loved, a love which means death to self and defeat for sin since the essence of sin is self-will and self-gratification, a love activated by personal choice of our will (working out our salvation in fear and trembling) not based on our feelings toward the object of our love and manifested by specific actions as described in this section of 1Corinthians 13:4-7 where we see "love in action."

**Bible.org** - The Greek word agape (love) seems to have been virtually a Christian invention—a new word for a new thing (apart from about twenty occurrences in the Greek version of the Old Testament, it is almost non-existent before the New Testament). Agape draws its meaning directly from the revelation of God in Christ. It is not a form of natural affection, however, intense, but a supernatural fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). It is a matter of will rather than feeling (for Christians must love even those they dislike—

Matt. 5:44-48). It is the basic element in Christlikeness. ([1 Corinthians 13](#))

**Agape** may involve emotion, but it **must** always involve **action**. **Agape** is unrestricted, unrestrained, and unconditional. **Agape** love is the virtue that surpasses all others and in fact is the prerequisite for all the others. Jesus when asked

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" replied "You shall **love** (agapao - related verb) the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." "This is the great and foremost commandment." (Mt 22:36-38)

**John MacArthur** explains that "**gape** love is the greatest virtue of the Christian life. Yet that type of love was rare in pagan Greek literature. That's because the traits **agape** portrays—unselfishness, self-giving, willful devotion, concern for the welfare of others—were mostly disdained in ancient Greek culture as signs of weakness. However, the New Testament declares agape to be the character trait around which all others revolve. The apostle John writes, "God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16). (MacArthur, J. *The Power of Integrity : Building a Life Without Compromise*, page 133. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books) (Bolding added)

**F B Meyer** wrote the following regarding agape **love**...Wherever there is true love, there must be giving, and giving to the point of sacrifice. Love is not satisfied with giving trinkets; it must give at the cost of sacrifice: it must give blood, life, all. And it was so with the love of God. "He so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son." "Christ also loved and gave Himself up, an offering and a sacrifice to God." (See **note** Ephesians 5:2) We are to imitate God's love in Christ. The love that gives, that counts no cost too great, and, in sacrificing itself for others, offers all to God, and does all for His sake. Such was the love of Jesus--sweet to God, as the scent of fields of new-mown grass in June; and this must be our model.

Not to those who love us, but who hate; not to those who are pleasant and agreeable, but who repel; not because our natural feelings are excited, but because we will to minister, even to the point of the cross, must our love go out. And every time we thus sacrifice ourselves to another for the sake of the love of God, we enter into some of the meaning of the sacrifice of Calvary, and there is wafted up to God the odour of a sweet smell. ([Devotional Commentary on Ephesians](#))

**Kenneth Wuest** describes **agape** love noting that...

**Agape** is a love that impels one to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of the object loved... (it) speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in the object loved, an apprehension of its preciousness.

Wuest explains that **phileo** love is "an unimpassioned love, a friendly love. It is a love that is called out of one's heart as a response to the pleasure one takes in a person or object. It is based upon an inner community between the person loving and the person or object loved. That is, both have things in common with one another. The one loving finds a reflection of his own nature in the person or thing loved. It is a love of liking, an affection for someone or something that is the outgoing of one's heart in delight to that which affords pleasure. The Greeks made much of friendship, and this word was used by them to designate this form of mutual attraction."... "We gather, therefore, that **agape** is a love of devotion (Ed note: and volition), while **phileō** is a love of emotion. There is another distinction we must be careful to note, and that is that **agape** is love that has ethical qualities about it, obligations, responsibilities, where **phileō** is a non-ethical love, making no ethical demands upon the person loving.

In contrasting **phileo** and **agape** love, we might say that the former is a love of pleasure, the latter a love of preciousness; the former a love of delight, the latter a love of esteem; the former a love called out of the heart by the apprehension of pleasurable qualities in the object loved, the latter a love called out of the heart by the apprehension of valuable qualities in the object loved; the former takes pleasure in, the latter ascribes value to; the former is a love of liking, the latter a love of prizing.

(**Agape** is) a love that denies self for the benefit of the object loved.

(**Agape** describes the) love of the Spirit-filled husband, purified and made heavenly in character.

(**Agape** is) the love which the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in the heart of the yielded believer (see note Romans 5:5)

The saint is to order his behavior or manner of life within the sphere of this divine, supernatural (**agape**) love produced in his heart by the Holy Spirit. When this love becomes the deciding factor in his choices and the motivating power in his actions, he will be walking in love. He will be exemplifying in his life the self-sacrificial love shown at Calvary and the Christian graces mentioned in [1Co 13:4-8](#)." (It is) a love that is willing to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of that brother, a love that causes one to be long suffering toward him, a love that makes one treat him kindly, a love that so causes one to rejoice in the welfare of another that there is no room for envy in the heart, a love that is not jealous, a love that keeps one from boasting of one's self, a love

that keeps one from bearing one's self in a lofty manner, a love that keeps one from acting unbecomingly, a love that keeps one from seeking one's own rights, a love that keeps one from becoming angry, a love that does not impute evil, a love that does not rejoice in iniquity but in the truth, a love that bears up against all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. That is the kind of love which God says one Christian should have for another."

(**Agape love**) speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved. (In Jn 3:16) God's love for a sinful and lost race springs from His heart in response to the high value He places upon each human soul. Every sinner is exceedingly precious in His sight. "Phileo" which is another word for love, a love which is the response of the human spirit to what appeals to it as pleasurable, will not do here, for there is nothing in a lost sinner that the heart of God can find pleasure in, but on the contrary, everything that His holiness rebels against. But each sinner is most precious to God, first, because he bears the image of his Creator even though that image be marred by sin, and second, because through redemption, that sinner can be conformed into the very image of God's dear Son. This preciousness of each member of the human race to the heart of God is the constituent element of the love that gave His Son to die on the Cross. The degree of the preciousness is measured by the infinite sacrifice which God made. The love in Jn 3:16 therefore is a love whose essence is that of self-sacrifice for the benefit of the one loved, this love based upon an evaluation of the preciousness of the one loved. ([Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans](#)) (Bolding added)

**John MacArthur** has numerous excellent comments regarding **agape** love...

We have no capacity to generate (**agape love**) on our own. The Greek word for that kind of love is agape, and it is characterized by humility, obedience to God, and self-sacrifice. ([Drawing near: August 3, 2002. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books](#))

Biblical **agapē love** is not an emotion but a disposition of the heart to seek the welfare and meet the needs of others. "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends," Jesus said ([John 15:13](#)). And that is exactly what Jesus Himself did on behalf of those God has chosen to be saved. In the ultimate divine act of love, God determined before the foundation of the earth that He would give His only Son to save us." ([Ephesians. 1986. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

(**Agape**) **Love** is an attitude of selflessness. Biblical agape love is a matter of the will and not a matter of feeling or emotion, though deep feelings and emotions almost always accompany love. God's loving the world was not a matter simply of feeling; it resulted in His sending His only Son to redeem the world ([Jn 3:16](#)). Love is self-less giving, always self-less and always giving. It is the very nature and substance of love to deny self and to give to others... We can only have such love when Christ is free to work His own love through us. We cannot fulfill any of Christ's commands without Christ Himself, least of all His command to love. We can only love as Christ loves when He has free reign in our hearts... When the Spirit empowers our lives and Christ is obeyed as the Lord of our hearts, our sins and weaknesses are dealt with and we find ourselves wanting to serve others, wanting to sacrifice for them and serve them—because Christ's loving nature has truly become our own. Loving is the supernatural attitude of the Christian, because love is the nature of Christ. When a Christian does not love he has to do so intentionally and with effort—just as he must do to hold his breath. To become habitually unloving he must habitually resist Christ as the Lord of his heart. To continue the analogy to breathing, when Christ has his proper place in our hearts, we do not have to be told to love—just as we do not have to be told to breathe. Eventually it must happen, because loving is as natural to the spiritual person as breathing is to the natural person. Though it is unnatural for the Christian to be unloving, it is still possible to be disobedient in regard to love. Just as loving is determined by the will and not by circumstances or other people, so is not loving. If a husband fails in his love for his wife, or she for him, it is never because of the other person, regardless of what the other person may have done. You do not fall either into or out of **agape love**, because it is controlled by the will. Romantic love can be beautiful and meaningful, and we find many favorable accounts of it in Scripture. But it is **agape love** that God commands husbands and wives to have for each other (Ep 5:25, 28, 33-see notes Ephesians 5:25; 28; 33 cf. Titus 2:4-note; etc.)—the love that each person controls by his own act of will. Strained relations between husbands and wives, between fellow workers, between brothers and sisters, or between any others is never a matter of incompatibility or personality conflict but is always a matter of sin... Loving others is an act of obedience, and not loving them is an act of disobedience. ([Ibid](#))

"The absence of (**agape**) **love** is the presence of sin. The absence of love has nothing at all to do with what is happening to us, but everything to do with what is happening in us. Sin and love are enemies, because sin and God are enemies. They cannot coexist. Where one is, the other is not. The loveless life is the ungodly life; and the godly life is the serving, caring, tenderhearted, affectionate, self-giving, self-sacrificing life of Christ's love working through the believer. ([Ibid](#))

**Agape love** centers on the needs and welfare of the one loved and will pay whatever personal price is necessary to meet those needs and foster that welfare." ([Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press; MacArthur, J: Romans 9-16. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Agape** is the love that **gives**. There's **no taking involved**. It is completely unselfish. It seeks the highest good for another no matter what the cost, demonstrated supremely by Christ's sacrifice on our behalf." ([Saved Without A Doubt. Wheaton, Ill.: May, 2006. Victor Books](#))

Forbearing love could only be **agape love**, because only **agape love** gives continuously and unconditionally. Eros love is essentially self-love, because it cares for others only because of what it can get from them. It is the love that takes and never gives. Philia love is primarily reciprocal love, love that gives as long as it receives. But **agape love** is unqualified and unselfish love, love that willingly gives whether it receives in return or not. It is unconquerable benevolence, invincible goodness—love that goes out even to enemies and prays for its persecutors (Mt 5:43-note; Mt 5:44-note). That is why the forbearance of which Paul speaks here could only be expressed in **agape love**." ([Ephesians. 1986. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Giving of oneself to others is the epitome of **agape love**. Biblical love is not a pleasant emotion or good feeling about someone, but the giving of oneself for his welfare (cf. 1 John 3:16). Divine love is unconditional love, love that depends entirely on the one who loves and not on the merit, attractiveness, or response of the one loved. Christ did not simply have a deep feeling and emotional concern for mankind. Nor did He sacrifice Himself for us because we were deserving. God's love, and all love that is like His, loves for the sake of giving, not getting. With conditional love, if the conditions are not met there is no obligation to love. If we do not get, we do not give. But God's makes no conditions for His love to us and commands that we love others without conditions. There is no way to earn God's love or to deserve it by reason of human goodness. Romantic, emotional love between husband and wife ebbs and flows, and sometimes disappears altogether. But loss of romantic love is never an appropriate excuse for dissolving a marriage, because the love that God specifically commands husbands to have for their wives is **agape love** (see notes Ephesians 5:25; Ephesians 3:19; cf. notes Titus 2:4; etc.)—love like His own undeserved love for us, love that is based on willful choice in behalf of the one loved, regardless of emotions, attraction, or deserving. Romantic love enhances and beautifies the relationship between husband and wife, but the binding force of a Christian marriage is God's own kind of love, the love that loves because it is the divine nature to love. It is the love of giving, not of getting; and even when it ceases to get, it continues to give. Where there is the sacrificial love of willful choice, there is also likely to be the love of intimacy, feeling, and friendship (philia)... Those who are given God's nature through Jesus Christ are commanded to love as God loves. In Christ, it is now our nature to love just as it is God's nature to love—because His nature is now our nature. For a Christian not to love is for him to live against his own nature as well as against God's. Lovelessness is therefore more than a failure or shortcoming. It is sin, willful disobedience of God's command and disregard of His example." ([Ephesians. 1986. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Agape** is impossible for unconverted to manifest this divine love & in fact it is impossible even for a believer to demonstrate it in his own strength. It can only be exhibited by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. A believer has this love (divine nature) within (Col 1:27+) and it is progressively manifest more and more as fruit by the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22) as we obey God's truth. **Agape** love willingly engages in self-sacrificing action to procure the loved one's highest good.

Love's perfect expression on earth is the Lord Jesus Christ and He defines this **sacrificial love** for He left heaven, came to earth, took on a human form, was spit on and mocked, was crowned with a crown of thorns, nailed to a cross, abused, and had a spear thrust into His side. He loved the church enough to die for her. **That's sacrificial love.**

**Donald W. Burdick** gives the following excellent summary of *agape love*: "**It is spontaneous**. There was nothing of value in the persons loved that called forth such sacrificial love. God of His own free will set His love on us in spite of our enmity and sin. **[Agape] is love that is initiated by the lover** because he wills to love, not because of the value or loveliness of the person loved. **[Agape] is self-giving**, and is not interested in what it can gain, but in what it can give. It is not bent on satisfying the lover, but on helping the one loved whatever the cost. **[Agape]** is active and is not mere sentiment cherished in the heart. Nor is it mere words however eloquent. It does involve feeling and may express itself in words, but it is primarily an attitude toward another that moves

the will to act in helping to meet the need of the one loved. (Burdick, D W: The Letters of John the Apostle (Chicago: Moody, 1985, page 351)

As noted below Barclay has labeled **agape** as **unconquerable benevolence** for nothing the other person can do will make us seek anything but their highest good and to never feel bitterness or desire for revenge. Though the one loved even injure us and insult us, **agape** will never feel anything but kindness towards him. **Agape** gives & gives & gives. **Agape** takes slaps in the face and still gives even as Jesus did saying Father forgive them. **Agape** is not withheld. That clearly means that this Christian love is not an emotional or sentimental thing. It is the ability to retain unconquerable goodwill to the unlovely and the unlovable, towards those who do not love us, and even towards those whom we do not like.

**William Barclay** notes that **agape** indicates an...unconquerable benevolence, invincible goodwill... If we regard a person with **agape**, it means that no matter what that person does to us, no matter how he treats us, no matter if he insults us or injures us or grieves us, we will never allow any bitterness against him to invade our hearts, but will regard him with that unconquerable benevolence and goodwill which will seek nothing but his highest good."... In the case of our nearest and our dearest we cannot help loving them; we speak of falling in love; it is something which comes to us quite unsought; it is something which is born of the emotions of the heart. But in the case of our enemies, (**agape**) **love** is not only something of the **heart**; it is also something of the **will**. It is not something which we cannot help; it is something which we have to will ourselves into doing **Ed note**: enabled by the Spirit Whose "fruit" in yielded believers is "agape love"). It is in fact a victory over that which comes instinctively to the natural man. **Agape** does not mean a feeling of the heart, which we cannot help, and which comes unbidden and unsought; it means a determination of the mind, whereby we achieve this unconquerable goodwill even to those who hurt and injure us. **Agape**, someone has said, is the power to love those whom we do not like and who may not like us. **In point of fact we can only have agape when Jesus Christ enables us to conquer our natural tendency to anger and to bitterness, and to achieve this invincible goodwill to all men.**

**Agape**, is that unconquerable benevolence, that undefeatable good-will, which will never seek anything but the highest good of others, no matter what they do to us, and no matter how they treat us. That love can come to us only when Christ, Who is that love, comes to dwell within our hearts... "

(**Agape**) ... will never dream of revenge, but will meet all injuries and rebuffs with undefeatable good will. **Agape** is that quality of mind and heart which compels a Christian never to feel any bitterness, never to feel any desire for revenge, but always to seek the highest good of every man no matter what he may be. If a man has **agape**, no matter what other people do to him or say of him, he will seek nothing but their good. He will never be bitter, never resentful, never vengeful; he will never allow himself to hate; he will never refuse to forgive.

Love, **agape**, is the virtue of the man who, even if he tried, could not forget what God has done for him nor the love of God to men.

**Agape** is the word for Christian love. **Agape** is not passion with its ebb and flow, its flicker and its flame; nor is it an easy-going and indulgent sentimentalism. And it is not an easy thing to acquire or a light thing to exercise. **Agape** is undefeatable goodwill; it is the attitude towards others which, no matter what they do, will never feel bitterness and will always seek their highest good. There is a love which seeks to possess; there is a love which softens and enervates; there is a love which withdraws a man from the battle; there is a love which shuts its eyes to faults and to ways which end in ruin. But Christian love will always seek the highest good of others and will accept all the difficulties, all the problems and all the toil which search involves. ([1 Corinthians 13 Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**F. E. Marsh** writes that...Love has not an irritating thorn in its hand, nor a jealous look in its eye, nor depreciating words on its lips, nor sore feelings in its heart. Love sees the best in others, and the worst in itself. Love will wash another's feet, and think it is honored by so doing

A Peanuts cartoon shows Lucy standing with her arms folded and a stern expression on her face. Charlie Brown pleads, "Lucy, you must be more loving. This world really needs love. You have to let yourself love to make this world a better place." Lucy angrily whirls around and knocks Charlie Brown to the ground. She screams at him, "Look, Blockhead, the world I love. It's people I can't stand."

**Tertullian** the early disciple wrote, "It is our care for the helpless, our practice of lovingkindness, that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. 'Look!' they say, 'How they love one another!' Look how they are prepared to die for one another."

**People do not care how much we know  
until they know how much we care.**

**Is patient** (3114) (**makrothumeo** from **makros** = long, distant, far off, large + **thumos** = temper, passion, emotion or **thumoomai** = to be furious or burn with intense anger) (See study of related word **makrothumia**) literally describes prolonged restraint of **thumos**, of emotion, anger or agitation. It means one's temper is long (as opposed to "short tempered) and does not give way to a short or quick temper toward those who fail. It describes holding out of the mind for a long time before it gives room to action or passion. The picture of this word is that of a person in whom it takes a long time before fuming and breaking into flames!

**Trench** adds that this word refers to one who has the power to avenge himself and yet refrains from exercising this power.

**Makrothumeo** describes manifesting a state of emotional calm or quietness in the face of provocation, misfortune or unfavorable circumstances. Love never says, "I've had enough." It suffers indefinitely. It is longsuffering and continues in spite of conduct likely to quench it. This continuance often, but not always, shows itself in restraining anger.

**Makrothumeo** describes especially patience towards **people** who act unjustly toward us. Another verb meaning to be patient is **hupomeno** which describes patience under **circumstances**, although there can be some overlap for circumstances often involve people. In other words the emphasis of makrothumeo is not so much a call to patience with circumstances as to patience with people. The action indicated by both verbs is essential to development of our Christian character, for patience with people is just as important as patience with circumstances. Patience is the righteous standard God expects all believers to conform to no matter what person he places (or allows) into your life or whatever trying circumstance you might face.

**NIDNTT** has an interesting note on the noun **makrothymia**...Positively it expresses persistence, or an unswerving willingness to await events rather than trying to force them. Although perseverance and persistence were familiar to the Stoics, and were, in fact, highly valued by them, makrothymia does not figure in their vocabulary. This was possibly because of the widespread though erroneous belief that its basic idea was one of passive resignation. It must be said that in ancient Greece makrothymia is concerned primarily with the moulding of a man's own character; it is not a virtue exercised towards one's fellows. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

**Vine** has this note on **makrothumeo** writing that...Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate nor promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger and is associated with mercy, and is used of God, Exodus 34:6, LXX; Romans 2:4 (note); 1 Peter 3:20 (note). ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

**Richards** adds that the word group makrothumeo and makrothumia...focuses our attention on restraint: that capacity for self-control despite circumstances that might arouse the passions or cause agitation. In personal relationships, patience is forbearance. This is not so much a trait as a way of life. We keep on loving or forgiving despite provocation, as illustrated in Jesus' pointed stories in Mt 18. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

**Makrothumeo** is found 2 times in the Septuagint (LXX) (Job 7:16, Proverbs 19:11) and times in the NT...

Pr 19:11 A man's discretion makes him slow to anger (LXX = A merciful man is long-suffering), And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.

Matthew 18:26 "The slave therefore falling down, prostrated himself before him, saying, **Have patience** (aorist imperative) with me, and I will repay you everything.' 29 "So his fellow slave fell down and began to entreat him, saying, '**Have patience** (aorist imperative) with me and I will repay you.'

Luke 18:7 now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will **Hedelay** long over them?

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love **is patient**, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant (**Comment:** Patience with an element of constraint and thus forbearing).

1Th 5:14 (note) And we urge you, brethren, **admonish** (present imperative) the unruly, **encourage** (present imperative) the fainthearted, **help** (present imperative) the weak, **be patient** (present imperative) (makrothumeo) with all men.

Hebrews 6:15 (note) And thus, **having patiently waited**, he obtained the promise.

James 5:7+ **Be patient**, (aorist imperative) therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, **being patient** (present tense) about it, until it gets the early and late rains. 8 You too **be patient**, (aorist imperative); strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. (**Comment:** In this context makrothumeo includes not just being patient but with an element of expectancy. The idea is to remain tranquil while waiting.).

2 Peter 3:9 (note) The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is **patient** toward you,



not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

**Hodge** writes that love is "slow to be roused to resentment. It patiently bears with provocation and is not quick to assert its rights or to resent an injury. (Ibid)

**Makrothumeo** means to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish, exhibiting the element of restraint, forbearing and not seeking to retaliate. It is the ability to be inconvenienced or taken advantage of by a person over and over again and yet not be upset or angry! It demonstrates a willingness to take someone's unpleasant character traits in stride and to exhibit enduring patience. As God is forbearing with us (see **note** Romans 2:4), so we must tolerate our fellow man. Writing to the saints at Ephesus Paul exhorted them...

Therefore (because God in Christ also has forgiven you) be imitators of God, as beloved children and **walk in love**, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (See **notes** Ephesians 5:1; 5:2)

It is fascinating to note that in the Greek world self-sacrificing love and non-avenging patience were considered weaknesses, unworthy of the noble man or woman. Aristotle, for example, taught that the great Greek virtue was refusal to tolerate insult or injury and to strike back in retaliation for the slightest offense. Vengeance was actually considered a virtue! The world has always tended to make heroes of those who fight back, who stand up for their welfare and rights above all else.

**Lenski** notes that...Only "longsuffering," makrothumia and never hupomone is naturally ascribed also to God. Men may resist and antagonize God and thus arouse him to anger. When he withholds his anger he "suffers long." Mere things cannot arouse God; trials, tribulations, persecutions do not apply to God, hence he cannot manifest hupomone, literally, "remaining under." When Paul thus names the ability to suffer long as the first feature of love, we should note that this is a Godlike feature. The world is full of evil men, and even in our brethren much evil meets us. When this evil strikes us, and our natural reaction would be resentment, indignation, anger, bitter words, blows perhaps, then love steps in, "suffers long," keeps calm, endures, and does this continually no matter how long the offense may persist. ([Commentary](#))

**Barnett** notes that **makrothumeo**...is a metaphorical word, literally 'long burning', as of a decent log burning for many hours in an open fire, as contrasted with light pine kindling that fizzes and sputters, sending showers of sparks in all directions. (Barnett, P. W. Focus on the Bible: 1 Corinthians)

**Makrothumeo** focuses our attention on the idea of restraint or the capacity for self-control (Spirit control for believer) despite circumstances that might arouse the passions or cause agitation. In personal relationships, patience is forbearance. This is a way of life especially as highlighted by Paul's use of the **present tense** (calls for continuous action) a characteristic action made possible by the Spirit for...

the fruit of the Spirit is (present tense) **love** (agape), joy, peace, **patience** (related noun makrothumia), **kindness** (chrestotes), goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23+)

**Pritchard** explains that selfless love that is always patient...describes the person who has been wronged, who has it within his power to get even, but chooses not to use that power. During the early days of the Civil War, Edwin Stanton was outspoken in his criticism of Abraham Lincoln. He held Lincoln in utter contempt, calling him a gorilla and a cunning clown. Although he knew about the slanders, Lincoln never retaliated. And when the time came to choose someone to oversee the war effort, Lincoln chose Stanton. When asked why, he simply replied, "Because he is the best man for the job." After the president was assassinated in April 1865, Stanton stood weeping over Lincoln's body and declared: "There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen." Patient love won in the end! ([Why Love Has a Bad Memory - sermon by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#))

An early church father, **Chrysostom** said that **makrothumeo** "is a word which is used of the man who is wronged and who has it easily in his power to avenge himself but will never do it.

**Makrothumeo** expresses the capacity to be wronged and not retaliate. It is the ability to hold one's feeling in restraint or bear up under the oversights and wrongs afflicted by others without retaliating. It is manifest by the quality of forbearance under provocation. The related noun makrothumia is used of God's patience toward sinful men (see note Romans 2:4) and of the attitude which Christians are to display.

Patience, long-suffering or being slow to anger is an attribute of God (Ex 34:6; Nu 14:18; see Ro 2:4note; 1Pe 3:20-note). In many places, God's people are called upon to be patient (see notes Eph 4:2-note; Col 3:12-note; 1Th 5:14-note).

The person exhibits **makrothumeo** who bears with annoyances or inconveniences without complaint and does not lose its temper when provoked but instead steadily perseveres.

Regarding the character of love that "Suffereth long, and is kind" the **Pulpit Commentary** writes that

Passively it endures; actively it does good. It endures evils; it confers blessings. ([1 Corinthians 13 Commentary](#) )

**J Vernon McGee** writes that the idea is "'long-burning"—it burns a long time. We shouldn't have a short fuse with our friends and Christian brethren. We shouldn't make snap judgments." ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**Evans** writes that this word group (makrothumeo, makrothumia) "could be translated "large emotions," signifying wells of endurance that will not dry up, no matter how much is drawn from them. The Christian with this patience will have refreshing water to sustain continual effectiveness even in the face of unrelenting pressures. Those with such patience and faith are those who receive or "inherit the promises." ([Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. The Preacher's Commentary Series, New Testament, 2003: Thomas Nelson](#))

**Matthew Henry** describes the **makrothumeo** of love noting that...It can endure evil, injury, and provocation, without being filled with resentment, indignation, or revenge. It makes the mind firm, gives it power over the angry passions, and furnishes it with a persevering patience, that shall rather wait and wish for the reformation of a brother than fly out in resentment of his conduct. It will put up with many slights and neglects from the person it loves, and wait long to see the kindly effects of such patience on him.

**Wesley** wrote that...The love of God, and of our neighbour for God's sake, is patient toward, all men. It, suffers all the weakness, ignorance, errors, and infirmities of the children of God; all the malice and wickedness of the children of the world: and all this, not only for a time, but to the end. And in every step toward overcoming evil with good, it is kind, soft, mild, benign. It inspires the sufferer at once with the most amiable sweetness, and the most fervent and tender affection. ( Wesley, J. Wesley's Notes)

**Pastor Steven Cole** writes that in this section Paul teaches us that...

Selfless love is the priority for every Christian. These verses are the most eloquent and profound words ever written on the subject of love. To comment on its parts is a bit like giving a botany lecture on a beautiful flower—if you're not careful you lose the beauty and impact of it. In verses 1-3 he shows the **preeminence** of love, that love is greater than all spiritual gifts because without love, gifts are empty. In verses 4-7 he shows the **practice** of love, how love is greater than all spiritual gifts because of its selfless characteristics. In verses 8-13 he shows the **permanence** of love, that love is greater than all spiritual gifts because it outlasts them... While in English most of these words are predicate adjectives, in Greek they are verbs. **Love is not talk; it is action.** We're all prone to apply verses like these to others: "My mate and my kids could sure use a lesson in love. But me? I'm basically a loving person. I'm really easy to get along with." But I ask each of you to forget about everybody else and ask God to apply these verses to you. ([What Love Looks Like 1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#)) (Bolding added)

**George Herbert** (1593–1633) captures the notion of love as waiting patiently for the understanding of the beloved

Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back,  
Guilty of dust and sin.  
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack  
From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning  
If I lack'd any thing.  
'A guest,' I answered, 'worthy to be here.'  
Love said, 'You shall be he.'  
'I, the unkind, the ungrateful? Ah my dear,  
I cannot look on thee.'  
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,  
'Who made the eyes, but I?' "

(Herbert, Love, stanzas 1 and 2)

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**Illustration of Love is patient** - Paul Tan (Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations) illustrates this trait writing that during the late 1500's, Dr. Thomas Cooper edited a dictionary with the addition of 33,000 words and many other improvements. He had already been collecting materials for eight years when his wife, a rather difficult woman, went into his study one day while he was gone and burned all of his notes under the pretense of fearing that he would kill himself with study. Eight years of work, a pile of ashes! Dr. Cooper came home, saw the destruction, and asked who had done it. His wife told him boldly that she had done it. The patient man heaved a deep sigh and said, "Oh Dinah, Dinah, thou hast given a world of trouble!" Then he quietly sat down to another eight years of hard labor, to replace the notes which she had destroyed. Next time you think you've arrived at being patient, Dr Cooper's example will give you something to imitate!

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Here is a hymn by [Christopher Wordsworth](#), a paraphrase of part of 1 Corinthians 13 entitled [Gracious Holy Ghost](#) (1862):

[Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost,](#)

taught by Thee, we covet most  
of Thy gifts at Pentecost,  
holy, heavenly love.

Love is kind, and suffers long,  
love is meek, and thinks no wrong,  
love than death itself more strong;  
**therefore give us love.**

Prophecy will fade away,  
melting in the light of day;  
love will ever with us stay;  
**therefore give us love.**

Faith will vanish into sight;  
hope be emptied in delight;  
love in heaven will shine more bright;  
**therefore give us love.**

Faith and hope and love we see  
joining hand in hand agree;  
but the greatest of the three,  
and the best, is love.

From the overshadowing  
of thy gold and silver wing  
shed on us, who to thee sing,  
holy, heavenly love.

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**LOVE IS KIND: chresteuetai (3SPMI):**

- Nehemiah 9:17; Proverbs 19:22; 31:20,26; Luke 6:35,36; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12; 1Peter 3:8; 2Peter 1:7; 1John 3:16, 17, 18; 4:11

### THE KIND OF LOVE THAT IS KIND

**Love is kind** - The idea is that the kind person is disposed to be useful or helpful, even seeking out the needs of the other person in order to selflessly meet those needs without expectation of being repaid in kind! This quality of love inclines one to be of good service to others. The **present tense** calls for this component of love to be a believer's lifestyle, one that is only possible as we yield our rights to the Spirit Who controls us and brings forth this fruit.

**Is kind** (5541) (**chresteuomai** from **chrestós** = useful, gracious, kind and is related in turn to **chráomai** = to furnish what is needed) means to provide something beneficial for someone as an act of kindness. To be kind and gracious. It is an attitude of being willing to help or assist rendering gracious, well-disposed service to others. It is active goodwill. It not only feels generous, it is generous. It describes one's "gentle in behavior" (A T Robertson) Such a person not only has the attitude of generosity but manifests it in their actions. He or she not only desires others' welfare, but works for it.

In the second century the example of Christian love was so stunning to the pagans that they referred to Christians not as "christiani" but "chrestinai", those made up of mildness or kindness. Would it be that such a name would be given to Christians in our day.

**Lenski**...Trench remarks that this *benignitas* was predominantly the character of Christ's ministry, which dispensed deeds of gentle kindness among all the lowly and the needy with whom he came in contact. Thus to Godlike "longsuffering" there is added Christlike "benignity." Paul does not describe love to us in the role of performing great, wonderful, and astounding deeds; he prefers to show

us how the inner heart of love looks when it is placed among sinful men and weak and needy brethren. He does not picture love in ideal surroundings of friendship and affection where each individual embraces and kisses the other but in the hard surroundings of a bad world and a faulty church where distressing influences bring out the positive power and value of love. (([Commentary](#)))

Although this is the sole NT use of **chresteuomai**, it is interesting to see a use by Clement of Rome who wrote an epistle to the Corinthian church in which he quotes a saying of Jesus...

As you are kind, so will you be shown kindness. (1Clement 14:3)

**Hodge** comments that love is...inclined to perform good deeds; it is good-natured. The root of the Greek verb means "useful," and hence its primary sense is "disposed to be useful." The excellence indicated here is the positive side of that already mentioned. Love is not quick to resent evil but is disposed to do good. (Ibid)

When Jesus commanded His disciples (that includes all believers beloved!), to love their enemies, He did not simply mean to **feel** kindly about them but to **be** kind to them or **show** kindness toward them, declaring...

And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. (see **notes** Matthew 5:40; 5:41).

The hard environment of an evil world gives love almost unlimited opportunity to exercise that sort of kindness! **How are you doing in this area?**

Even the English dictionary definition of **kind** is convicting where kind is described as affectionate, loving, of a sympathetic or helpful nature, of a forbearing nature, gentle, arising from or characterized by sympathy or forbearance or of a kind to give pleasure or relief!

**Chresteuomai** is not merely passive but it is actively engaged in doing good to others. It's the picture of a person who spontaneously seeks the good for others and shows it with friendly acts. It is considerate and helpful to others, is gentle and mild and always ready to show compassion.

**Matthew Henry** describes this kindness as...benign, bountiful; it is courteous and obliging. The law of kindness is in her lips; her heart is large, and her hand open. She is ready to show favours and to do good. She seeks to be useful; and not only seizes on opportunities of doing good, but searches for them. This is her general character. She is patient under injuries, and apt and inclined to do all the good offices in her power. And under these two generals all the particulars of the character may be reduced.

**Spicq** observes that **chresteuomai** "suggests the warm, generous welcome the Christian always gives his brothers ... does his utmost to be thoughtful, helpful and kind, always in a pleasant way ... , and confirms the element of magnanimity in agape. (Agape in the NT, St. Louis and London: Herder, 1965)

**Chrysostom** sees this aspect of **love** as that which breaks the spiral of passion, anger, and resentment by showing kindness explaining that those who love this way do so...not only by enduring nobly, but also by soothing and comforting do they cure the sore and heal the wound of passion. ( 1Cor. Homily, 33:1)

**Ray Pritchard** has the following thoughts on a selfless love that is always kind writing that **chresteuomai** means...

something like "sweet usefulness." Love is quick to help others and eager to reach out to those in need. Perhaps you've seen this famous quote:

"I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it, or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

Mark Twain called kindness

"a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can read."

He was absolutely right. Everyone can understand the language of love. It is truly the universal language, comprehended by people from every nation, by the rich and the poor, by the old and the young, by both male and female. Kindness is a universal language for it does not speak to the intellect, but directly to the heart.

In one of his news reports, Paul Harvey told about a man named Carl Coleman who was driving to work when a woman motorist, passing too close, snagged his fender with hers. Both cars stopped. The young woman surveying the damage was in tears. It was her fault, she admitted. But it was a new car... less than two days from the showroom. How was she ever going to face her husband? Mr. Coleman was sympathetic but explained they must note each other's license number and automobile registration. The woman reached into

the glove compartment of her car to retrieve the documents in an envelope. And on the first paper to tumble out, in a heavy masculine scrawl, were these words: "In case of accident, remember, Honey, it's you I love, not the car." ([Why Love Has a Bad Memory - sermon by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#))

**Cole** writes that **chresteuomai** was used to describe...mellow wine, and suggests a person who is gentle, who has an ability to soothe hurt feelings, to calm an upset person, to help quietly in practical ways.

**MacArthur** notes that...The first test of Christian kindness, and the test of every aspect of love, is the home. The Christian husband who acts like a Christian is kind to his wife and children. Christian brothers and sisters are kind to each other and to their parents. They have more than kind feelings toward each other; they do kind, helpful things for each other—to the point of loving self-sacrifice, when necessary. For the Corinthians, kindness meant giving up their selfish, jealous, spiteful, and proud attitudes and adopting the spirit of loving-kindness. ([MacArthur, J. 1Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

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**Dress For Success** - In 1975, John Molloy wrote a book called Dress For Success, which became the fashion guidebook for many people trying to climb the corporate ladder. Molloy's advice centered on a basic premise--always dress like your boss. Every day, for work, school, or recreation, we all have to decide what to wear. And even in the dress-down 90's, people strive for the right look. But we must also make choices about another wardrobe--our attitudes and actions. If we claim to be followers of Christ, our spiritual apparel is of far greater significance than our physical clothing. Take a look at God's dress code for us. As His chosen people, we are to clothe ourselves with "**kindness**, humility, meekness, longsuffering" (see note Colossians 3:12). We are to demonstrate patience and forgiveness (see note Colossians 3:13). And above all, we must "put on love, which is the bond of perfection" (see note Colossians 3:14). Do I begin each day by acknowledging Christ as the Person in charge, the One for whom I work? Do I take time to clothe myself with attitudes that please Him? Am I wearing what people are most longing to see--compassion, **kindness**, humility, gentleness, patience, and love? If so, I'll be dressed for success in God's service. --DCM ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O to be like Him, tender and kind,  
Gentle in spirit, lowly in mind;  
More like Jesus, day after day,  
Filled with His Spirit, now and always. --Ellsworth

**Kindness is Christianity with its working clothes on.**

**AND IS NOT JEALOUS: ou zeloi, (3SPA1):**

- 1Cor 3:3; Genesis 30:1; 37:11; Matthew 27:18; Romans 1:29; 13:13; 2Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:21,26; Philippians 1:15; 1Timothy 6:4; Titus 3:3; James 3:14, 15, 16; 4:5; 1 Peter 2:1

love

**What Love is Not!**

## LOVE IS NOT A GREEN EYED MONSTER!

[Green eyed monster](#) is an idiom for jealousy from Shakespeare's play Othello.

This expression was coined by Shakespeare in Othello (3:3), where Iago says: "O! beware, my lord, of jealousy; it is **the green-eyed monster** which doth mock the meat it feeds on." It is thought to allude to cats, often green-eyed, who tease their prey.

Now Paul begins a series of **8 negative definitions** that do not spring from love, for love and jealousy are mutually exclusive. Where one is, the other cannot be.

Shakespeare called **jealousy** the "green sickness." And even today we hear someone say "So and so is green with envy"! Love is the best antidote for jealousy in that it "does not envy".

**Is...jealous (2206)** (**zeloo** from **zelos** = zeal in turn from **zeo** = boil; source of our English word "zeal") properly, to bubble over from getting so hot (boiling) and figuratively to burn with zeal (or intensity), to be fervent, to "boil" with envy, to be jealous. It can be used commendably to refer to a striving for something or showing zeal. Zeloo is (an onomatopoeic word imitating the sound of boiling

water! The idea is to be deeply committed to something, with the implication of accompanying desire – 'to be earnest, to set one's heart on, to be completely intent upon'

**Lenski** - When love sees another prosperous, rich, high, gifted it is pleased and glad of his advantages. Love never detracts from the praise that is due another nor tries to make him seem less and self seem more by comparison. The practice of the world is the opposite. The negatives used in Paul's description suggest corresponding positives. Instead of being envious love is satisfied with its own portion and glad of another's greater portion. ([Commentary](#))

**Thiselton** adds that **zeloo** "applies the notion of burning or boiling metaphorically to burning or boiling emotions, stance, or will for earnest striving, for passionate zeal, or for burning envy. Whether it is constructive zeal or destructive envy depends on the context... The envy which is carried over from a status-seeking, non-Christian Corinthian culture into the Christian church is not "of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 3:1–3), and is deemed to be incompatible with love, which does not begrudge the status and honor of another, but delights in it for the sake of the other. ([1 Corinthians - NIGTC](#))

**Zeloo** takes the notion of burning or boiling and applies it metaphorically to burning or boiling emotions, stance, or will for earnest striving, for passionate zeal, or for burning envy. Thus Williams translates this passage "*Love never boils with jealousy.*" People who are filled with the Spirit and have learned to love don't begrudge others their earthly goods, their positions, or their spiritual gifts.

Whether **zeloo** is constructive zeal or destructive envy depends on the **context**. In 1 Corinthians 13:4 **zeloo** clearly is used in a bad sense of a hostile emotion based on resentment which is "heated or boiling" with envy, hatred or anger.

**Zeloo** in the bad sense can be manifest in two forms, one in which the person sets their heart on something that belongs to someone else or a second form in which one has intense negative feelings over another's achievements or success.

**Zeloo** is used 28 times in the **Septuagint (LXX)** Gen. 26:14; 30:1; 37:11; Num. 5:14, 30; 11:29; 25:11, 13; Deut. 32:19; Jos. 24:19; 2 Sam. 21:2; 1 Ki. 19:10, 14; 2 Ki. 10:16; Ps. 37:1; 73:3; Prov. 3:31; 4:14; 6:6; 23:17; 24:1, 19; Isa. 11:11, 13; Ezek. 31:9; 39:25; Joel 2:18; Zech. 1:14; 8:2)

Zeloo 11 times in the **NT** - am jealous(1), becoming jealous(1), desire earnestly(2), eagerly seek(1), eagerly sought(1), earnestly desire(1), envious(1), jealous(2), seek(1).

**Acts 7:9** "And the patriarchs **became jealous** of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. And yet God was with him,

**Acts 17:5** But the Jews, **becoming jealous** and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and coming upon the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people.

**1 Corinthians 12:31** But **earnestly desire** the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

**Comment:** Because **zeloo** often has the negative connotation of coveting jealously or enviously and because the Greek indicative and imperative forms are identical, the verse could be translated, "*But you earnestly desire the greater gifts*" a rendering which seems much more appropriate to the context and is consistent with the tone of the letter and the sin of the Corinthians who clearly prized the showier gifts, the seemingly greater gifts. Thus it would seem foolish of Paul to command them to do what they already were eagerly doing.)

**1 Corinthians 13:4** Love is patient, love is kind, and is not **jealous**; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

**1 Corinthians 14:1+** Pursue love, yet **desire earnestly** spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

**39** Therefore, my brethren, **desire earnestly** to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues.

**Earnestly desire (2206)** (**zeloo** from **zelos** = zeal in turn from **zeo** = boil; source of our English word "zeal") properly, to bubble over from getting so hot (boiling) and figuratively to burn with zeal (or intensity), to be fervent. Zeloo is an onomatopoeic word imitating the sound of boiling water! The idea is to be deeply committed to something, with the implication of accompanying desire – and in this context to be earnest, to set one's heart on, to be completely intent upon. **Does that describe your approach toward spiritual gifts?** First keep on pursuing love (something that you can only do supernaturally as you rely on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit - [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey](#)

[NT commands](#).) But don't stop there! Be continually burning with zeal to know and use your spiritual gift or gifts (And as an aside to continually desire spiritual gifts also necessitates continual reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit!). Now tying the two clauses together (**pursue...desire earnestly**), it is clear that Paul wants **love** to be the motivation behind one's being fervent for spiritual gifts! If you reverse the order (and even leave out love), you have become like "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal (1 Cor 13:1)!!!

**Desire earnestly** - Beloved do you **desire earnestly** to know your spiritual gift and to use your spiritual gift for the glory of God? Then first pursue love. And then ponder the following note...

**Gary Hill** on **desire earnestly** (zeloo) - zēloō is used of earnestly desiring spiritual gifts. 1 Cor 14:1 literally commands, "Constantly boil over (i.e. 'with red-hot intensity') for spirituals" (= spiritual gifts)! We should literally "boil over (in intensity) about desiring spirituals" (pneumatikós; plural, ta pneumatika). This means earnestly seeking God's grace-endowments as we are convinced we should experience the Lord's fullness. **Clair D. Hutchins**, "Many Christians do not experience spiritual gifts ('spirituals') today. **Why?** Because **they lack red-hot zeal** which God requires in properly pursuing them. Rather we should be like a pro-golfer – playing at least 18 holes a day to 'keep their swing in shape.' How much more important is it to move in spiritual gifts? This will happen as we burn (boil with intensity) with desire to see 'the demonstration of the Spirit and power' (1 Cor 2:4)!"

**2 Corinthians 11:2** For I am **jealous** for you with a godly jealousy (noun - zelos); for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

**Galatians 4:17+** They **eagerly seek** you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out, in order that you may seek them. 18 But it is good always to be **eagerly sought** in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.

**James 4:2** You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you **are envious** and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

**The Pulpit Commentary** writes regarding jealous that "Its negative characteristics are part of its positive perfection. Envy—"one shape of many names"—includes malice, grudge, jealousy, pique, an evil eye, etc., with all their base and numerous manifestations. ([1 Corinthians 13 Commentary](#))

**Augustine** wrote that "The reason why love does not envy is because it is not puffed up. For where puffing up precedes, envy follows, because pride is the mother of envy.

**Johnson** - How miserable is that envy which is made unhappy by the good fortune of another. Cain is an example. Love excludes it. A mother does not envy her child. (The People's New Testament : With Explanatory Notes).

**Matthew Henry** - Charity suppresses envy: It envieth not; it is not grieved at the good of others; neither at their gifts nor at their good qualities, their honours nor their estates. If we love our neighbour we shall be so far from envying his welfare, or being displeased with it, that we shall share in it and rejoice at it. His bliss and sanctification will be an addition to ours, instead of impairing or lessening it. This is the proper effect of kindness and benevolence: envy is the effect of ill-will. The prosperity of those to whom we wish well can never grieve us; and the mind which is bent on doing good to all can never with ill to any.

**MacArthur** - The second sort of jealousy is more than selfish; it is desiring evil for someone else. It is jealousy on the deepest, most corrupt, and destructive level. That is the jealousy Solomon uncovered in the woman who pretended to be a child's mother. When her own infant son died, she secretly exchanged him for the baby of a friend who was staying with her. The true mother discovered what had happened and, when their dispute was taken before the king, he ordered the baby to be cut in half, a half to be given to each woman. The true mother pleaded for the baby to be spared, even if it meant losing possession of him. The false mother, however, would rather have had the baby killed than for the true mother to have him (1 Kings 3:16-27). ([MacArthur, J: 1Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Barclay** phrases it this way writing that "There are two kinds of envy. The one covets the possessions of other people; and such envy is very difficult to avoid because it is a very human thing. The other is worse—it grudges the very fact that others should have what it has not; it does not so much want things for itself as wish that others had not got them. Meanness of soul can sink no further than that. ([1 Corinthians 13 Commentary](#))

How significant is the sin of **jealousy**? Proverbs explains that...

Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy? (Proverbs 27:4)

It is therefore not surprising to observe that the Bible is filled with illustrations that portray the disastrous effect jealousy has on personal relationships, beginning with Cain's envy of Abel resulting in his murder of his own brother! (Ge. 4:3-8).

Moses records the jealousy of Joseph's brothers writing...

And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind... 20 "Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, 'A wild beast devoured him.' Then let us see what will become of his dreams!"... 27 "Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. (Genesis 37:11, 20, 27)

In the NT Luke records other jealousy motivated acts (in Acts) writing that...

the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were **filled with jealousy** and they laid hands on the apostles, and put them in a public jail. (Acts 5:17-18)

But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were **filled with jealousy**, and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. (Acts 13:45)

What you are filled with clearly will control you. When one is filled with jealousy, their actions are controlled by that green monster. Not surprisingly we see that the divine antidote for one filled with jealousy is to continually be being filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul instructing the saints at Ephesus...

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. (See **notes** Ephesians 5:18; 5:19; 5:20; 5:21)

Spirit borne Christian love does not manifest this attitude, again the **present tense** signifying this negative trait is never to be a part of the Christian's "wardrobe". Love does not desire for itself the possessions of or control over people. A loving person is never jealous but is glad for the success of others, even if their success works against his own.

**Pritchard** writes that **jealous**...

This is the sin of those who think others have too much and they have too little. By contrast, love is generous. It does not begrudge others their gifts. How do you respond to the good fortune of others? If they do better than you, if they prosper when you don't, if their family seems happy while yours is torn apart, how will you react? If they achieve what you cannot, if they gain what you lack, if they win where you lose, then the truth will come out. Can you lose gracefully? Can you walk away from the contest without bitterness?

If you live long enough, you'll probably find someone who does what you do better than you can do it. You'll meet people with your talents and your gifts—only much more of them. You'll find people who surpass you in every way. What will you do then? This is one test of love. And if you live long enough, you are certain to encounter people who are less talented and less gifted than you in every way, yet they seem to catch all the breaks and end up ahead of you in the great game of life. How will you respond when an inferior person passes you by? This is an even sterner test of love. ([Why Love Has a Bad Memory - sermon by Dr. Ray Pritchard](#))

**How do you react when other Christians receive blessings or benefits that we lack? Do you allow the sparks of envy to burn and then come to a full flame?**

><> ><> ><>

No one is more miserable than someone filled with jealousy or envy. They rob us of happiness and make our good accomplishments seem bad. Furthermore, they exact their own punishment.

On the wall of a chapel in Padua, an old city in northeastern Italy, hangs a painting by the Renaissance artist Giotto. The painter



depicted envy with long ears that could hear every bit of news of another's success. He also gave to Envy the tongue of a serpent to poison the reputation of the one being envied. But if you could look at the painting carefully, you would notice that the tongue coils back and stings the eyes of the figure itself. Not only did Giotto picture Envy as being blind, but also as destroying itself with its own venomous evil.

Jealousy was one of the sins hurting the church at Corinth. The people had divided into factions because they were jealous of one another's gifts. Each believer strove for preeminence. Paul therefore instructed them to follow the "more excellent way" of love (1Cor 12:31), telling them that "love does not envy" (1Cor. 13:4).

If we resent the success and accomplishments of others and find ourselves striking out at them with damaging words or insidious innuendoes, we have a problem with jealousy. But God wants to administer the antidote of love. That alone will keep us from becoming jealousy's victim. —D. C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**If we shoot arrows of jealousy at others,  
we wound ourselves.**

#### **LOVE DOES NOT BRAG: [e agape] ou perpereuetai, (2SPMI):**

- 1Samuel 25:21,22,33,34; 1Kings 20:10,11; Ps 10:5; Proverbs 13:10; 17:14; 25:8, 9, 10; Ecclesiastes 7:8,9; 10:4; Daniel 3:19, 20, 21, 22)
  - Selfless, sacrificial love does not brag
  - (love) is not pompous (NAB)
  - It doesn't sing its own praises (GWT)
  - (Love) makes no parade (Moffatt)
  - (Love does not) play the braggart (Moulton and Milligan)

**Does** (not) **brag** (4068) (**perperuomai** from a word not in the NT = **perperos** = vainglorious, braggart) means to talk with conceit or to behave as a braggart or windbag, exhibiting self display and employing rhetorical embellishments in extolling one's self excessively. Love doesn't try to prove itself and say, "Watch how loving I can be" but instead works behind the scenes. Love does not parade its accomplishments. Christian love does not vaunt (is derived from Latin *vanus* = vain and means to make a vain display of one's own worth or attainments) oneself so as to parade one's imagined superiority over others.

In the context of spiritual gifts being discussed in this section of the letter, **love** does not vaunt itself even regarding the gifts which it really possesses. Paul is issuing an indirect (perhaps direct) rebuke of those believers in Corinth who were prone to use their spiritual gifts for display or self-aggrandizement. In stark contrast to self-aggrandizement, Spirit empowered Christian love produces a genuine self-effacing stance (attitude) and not a "stifling" air of supposed superiority. **Beloved, do you ever catch yourself, vaunting yourself, in a sense reaching around to "pat yourself on your back"?** It can happen very subtly and suddenly, for though the old tyrant, **Sin**, is in fact dethroned and "defanged" as it were, it is nevertheless, ever crouching at the door of our heart ready to pounce (cp Ge 4:7, **fallen flesh**) (I know - I'm confessing that to you as you read this note).

Ostentation is the chief idea and ostentatious boasting leads easily to the next point (arrogance).

**Lenski** rightly comments that love...

never becomes a *perperos*, a braggart. The very idea is foreign to its humble nature. (Ibid)

**Thiselton** writes that...

Again the verb underlines the issue of status seeking and triumphalism at Corinth. Even believers seemed to come to act the part of braggarts, which was at odds with cruciform, Christlike love. ([1 Corinthians - NIGTC](#))

**BDAG** says this word means "to heap praise on oneself, behave as a *perperos* ('braggart, windbag)" ([Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#))

Love is not a windbag or an exhaustively talkative person who constantly talks about themselves.

**The Pulpit Commentary** adds that...

The meaning would probably be most nearly expressed by the colloquialism, does not show off. It does not, for instance, "do its

alms before men to be seen of them” (see **note** Matthew 6:1). The Latin *perperus*, which is from the same root as this word, means “a braggart,” or “swaggerer.” Cicero, speaking of a grand oratorical display of his own before Pompey, says to Atticus, “Good heavens! how I showed myself off (eneperpereusamen) before my new hearer, Pompeius!” (‘Ad. Att.’ i. 14). ([1 Corinthians 13 Commentary](#) )

Love does not parade before others any supposed superiority of our own. When one boast of superiority, the result is separation, whereas the result of selfless love is unity!

**Barclay** writes that...

There is a self-effacing quality in love. True love will always be far more impressed with its own unworthiness than its own merit. ([1 Corinthians 13 Commentary](#))

**Thiselton** comments that...

Again the verb underlines the issue of status seeking and triumphalism at Corinth. Even believers seemed to come to act the part of braggarts, which was at odds with cruciform, Christlike love. ([1 Corinthians - NIGTC](#))

**Kistemaker** adds that...

Such a person parades his embellished rhetoric to gain recognition. His behavior is marked by egotism, subservience toward superiors, and condescension toward subordinates. A braggart exhibits pride in himself and his accomplishments. But such bragging is devoid of love to God and to one’s fellow man, and is a blatant sin. Further, bragging and arrogance go hand in hand. ([Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. NT Commentary Set. Baker Book](#))

**MacArthur** has an interesting note explaining that...

Bragging is the other side of jealousy. Jealousy is wanting what someone else has. Bragging is trying to make others jealous of what we have. Jealousy puts others down; bragging builds us up. It is ironic that, as much as most of us dislike bragging in others, we are so inclined to brag ourselves... C. S. Lewis called bragging the “utmost evil.” It is the epitome of pride, which is the root sin of all sins. Bragging puts ourselves first. Everyone else, including God, must therefore be of less importance to us. It is impossible to build ourselves up without putting others down. When we brag, we can be “up” only if others are down. ([MacArthur, J.: 1Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

## AND IS NOT ARROGANT: ou phusioutai, (3SPPI)

- 1Cor 4:6,18; 5:2; 8:1; Colossians 2:18; Philippians 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

(love) is not pompous, it is not inflated (NAB)

(love) gives itself no airs (Moffatt, Goodspeed)

(love is not) inflating its own importance

nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance (Phillips)

It is difficult to surpass the vivid picture drawn by the **KJV's** rendering that love is "*not puffed up*" with the implicit emphasis on its own importance.

**Wesley** wrote that **love**...

yea, humbles the soul to the dust.

**Goodspeed** has a colorful paraphrase writing that love

gives itself no airs.

**J B Phillips** also nicely conveys the idea with his rendering that neither does love...

cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.

**Arrogant** ([5448](#)) (**phusioo** from **phusáo** = breathe, blow, inflate from **phusa** = bellows) means literally to puff up (like a pair of

bellows) and is used figuratively to describe one who becomes "inflated", proud, haughty or puffed up with pride. It means to cause one to have an exaggerated self-conception. In the **passive voice** as in this verse **phusioo** means to become conceited or proud. Love protects us from having an inflated view of our own importance.

As noted the Greek uses the absolute negative (ou) for each of these negative attributes and couples it with the present tense which means that this is never to be a trait of agape love.

**Lenski...**

Behind boastful bragging there lies conceit, an overestimation of one's own importance, abilities, or achievements. Hence the next step: "is not puffed up." From envy to boasting, from boasting to puffing oneself up is a natural sequence in the psychology of lovelessness. He that exalteth himself shall be abased; he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Thus in this case the positive virtue is Christian humility and lowliness of mind. (Ibid)

**Hodge** explains that **arrogance...**

is the root of boasting. Anyone who has a high opinion of himself is apt to be boastful and to desire praise. Love, on the other hand, is modest and humble—modest because humble. (Ibid)

**Barclay** illustrates the complete opposite of arrogant writing that...

Napoleon always advocated the sanctity of the home and the obligation of public worship—for others. Of himself he said, "I am not a man like other men. The laws of morality do not apply to me." The really great man never thinks of his own importance. Carey, who began life as a cobbler, was one of the greatest missionaries and certainly one of the greatest linguists the world has ever seen. He translated at least parts of the Bible into no fewer than thirty-four Indian languages. When he came to India, he was regarded with dislike and contempt. At a dinner party a snob, with the idea of humiliating him, said in a tone that everyone could hear, "I suppose, Mr. Carey, you once worked as a shoe-maker." "No, your lordship," answered Carey, "not a shoe-maker, only a cobbler." He did not even claim to make shoes—only to mend them. No one likes the "important" person. Man "dressed in a little brief authority" can be a sorry sight. ([1 Corinthians 13 Commentary](#))

This ugly trait of puffing one's self up, of overestimating or of flaunting one's self was clearly a problem in Corinth **Love** however is free of this vice which characterized the Corinthian Church a vice Paul repeatedly alludes to...

**1Cor 4:6** Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you **might become arrogant** in behalf of one against the other.

**1Cor 4:18** Now some **have become arrogant**, as though I were not coming to you.

**1Cor 5:2** And you **have become arrogant**, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst.

**1 Cor 8:1** Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge **makes arrogant** (phusioo), but love edifies. (**Comment:** Kistemaker concludes that "*Without love knowledge degenerates into obnoxious arrogance; with love it is a valuable asset. Arrogance is inflated selfishness, while love is genuine humility. Arrogance is devoid of love and love is devoid of arrogance; indeed both are mutually exclusive.*" - [Ibid](#))

The only other NT use is **Colossians 2:18** (note) Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, **inflated** without cause by his fleshly mind,

**Thiselton** comments that...

Paul hammers home the incompatibility of love as respect and concern for the welfare of the other and obsessions about the status and attention accorded to the self. How much behavior among believers and even ministers is actually "attention seeking" designed to impress others with one's own supposed importance? Some "spiritual songs" may appear to encourage, rather than discourage, this preoccupation with the self rather than with others and with God. ([1 Corinthians - NIGTC](#))

**Matthew Henry** adds that those who exhibit agape...

will do nothing out of a spirit of contention or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind will esteem others better than

themselves, Phil. 2:3 (see note). True love will give us an esteem of our brethren, and raise our value for them; and this will limit our esteem of ourselves, and prevent the tumours of self-conceit and arrogance. These ill qualities can never grow out of tender affection for the brethren, nor a diffusive benevolence.

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**THE CRY FOR LOVE** - A father sat at his desk poring over his monthly bills when his young son rushed in and announced, "Dad, because this is your birthday and you're 55 years old, I'm going to give you 55 kisses, one for each year!" When the boy started making good on his word, the father exclaimed, "Oh, Andrew, don't do it now; I'm too busy!"

The youngster immediately fell silent as tears welled up in his big blue eyes. Apologetically the father said, "You can finish later." The boy said nothing but quietly walked away, disappointment written all over his face. That evening the father said, "Come and finish the kisses now, Andrew." But the boy didn't respond.

A short time after this incident the boy drowned. His heartbroken father wrote, "If only I could tell him how much I regret my thoughtless words, and could be assured that he knows how much my heart is aching."

Love is a two-way street. Any loving act must be warmly accepted or it will be taken as rejection and can leave a scar. If we are too busy to give and receive love, we are too busy. Nothing is more important than responding with love to the cry for love from those who are near and precious to us. Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, teach us the secret of loving,  
The love You are asking today;  
Then help us to love one another -  
For this we most earnestly pray. - Anon.

Nothing is more costly than loving -except not loving.

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**LEARNING HOW TO LOVE** - Tracey Morrow, who goes by the name of Ice-T, delights in his role as a controversial rap singer whose lyrics are blasphemous and obscene. Yet, inspired by a truce between two violent gangs in Los Angeles, the Crips and the Bloods, he wrote a surprisingly sentimental song, "Gotta Lotta Love."

Orphaned when young, and brought up by relatives who considered him a burden, Ice-T never experienced loving care. "I first found the word love in a gang," he told an interviewer. "I learned how to love in a gang, not in a family atmosphere."

No matter how little or how warped the love we may have known in childhood, it is never too late for any of us to learn how to love. In God's sovereignty we may catch a glimpse of love through some individual or a support group (even a gang!). But to learn the full meaning and reality of true love, because [Jesus] laid down His life for us" (1John 3:16). The death of Jesus, in all of its sacrificial unselfishness, discloses the heights and depths of love.

We will know better how to show love when we think of how much Christ loves us, and when we trust Him as our Savior and Lord. - Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Unfailing is Christ's matchless love,  
So kind, so pure, so true;  
And those who come to know that love  
Show love in all they do.- Dennis J. De Haan

**We learn the true meaning of love  
when we look at how much Christ loved us.**

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**THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT** - A third-grade science teacher asked one of her students to describe salt. "Well, um, it's... ," he started, then stopped. He tried again. "Salt is, you know, it's..." Finally he said, "Salt is what makes French fries taste bad when you don't sprinkle it on." Many foods are like that -- incomplete without a key ingredient. Imagine pizza without cheese, strudel without apples, a banana split without bananas.

The Christian life also has an essential element: love. Paul emphasized its value as he wrote his letter to the Corinthians. Right in the middle of a section about spiritual gifts, he paused to say that even if we have gifts of service, speech, and self-sacrifice but

don't have love, we are nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3). We've missed the "more excellent way" (12:31). A follower of Jesus should love his family, his friends, his fellow believers, those who don't know Christ, and even his enemies (Lk. 6:27-31). A true Christian is known by his love.

Doctrinal purity is important. Faith is a magnificent quality, as are actions of obedient service to the Lord. But without love, we're about as bland as French fries without salt.

Ask God to help you grow in love until it flows from your heart to others. That's the essential ingredient. -- David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, grant me a loving heart,  
A will to give and share,  
A whispered prayer upon my lips  
To show I really care.-- Brandt

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**As Christ's love grows in us His love flows through us.**

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**When To Speak Up** - Good communication is essential for a happy marriage. Poet Ogden Nash seems to have hit on a formula to help us remember how to communicate effectively. Nash, in his witty style, wrote:

If you want your marriage to sizzle  
With love in the loving cup,  
Whenever you're wrong, admit it;  
Whenever you're right, shut up!

There's some immensely helpful truth in that four-liner--truth that is supported by Scripture.

Let's look at the two major points. First, if we are wrong we need to admit it. Not only marriage, but all relationships benefit from this kind of honesty (Pr 12:22). Protecting ourselves when we're wrong makes resolution impossible.

On the other hand, we can be equally hard to live with if we insist that we're always right--and afraid to let our spouse know that we are fallible. According to 1 Corinthians 13:4, "[Love] does not parade itself, is not puffed up." No one likes to be around someone who always seems to be patting himself on the back.

Two simple guidelines for a marriage that pleases God: Admit wrong and keep quiet about being right. It's a good way to keep the relationship strong. --J D Brannon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Button up your lip securely  
'Gainst the words that bring a tear,  
But be swift with words of comfort,  
Words of praise, and words of cheer. -Loucks

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**Let your speech be better than silence; otherwise be silent.**

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**CONCRETE LOVE** - The story is told of a child psychologist who spent many hours constructing a new driveway at his home. Just after he smoothed the surface of the freshly poured concrete, his small children chased a ball across the driveway, leaving deep footprints. The man yelled after them with a torrent of angry words. His shocked wife said, "You're a psychologist who's supposed to love children." The fuming man shouted, "I love children in the abstract, not in the concrete!"

I chuckled at the alleged incident and groaned at the play on words, but the story rang true for me. While I agree in principle with the concept of self-giving love, I find myself failing to express it to the people I live and work with each day.

First Corinthians 13 describes Christian love in terms of its tangible expression: "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil" (1Corinthians 13:4, 5).

As a theory, love isn't worth much; as a practice, it is the world's greatest treasure. When footprints are in the driveway, people discover whether our love exists in the abstract or in the concrete. --D C McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries,](#)

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Follow with reverent steps the great example  
Of Him whose holy work was doing good;  
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,  
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude. --Whittier

**Love is an active verb!**

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A man selling individual books of the Bible was stopped and robbed one night as he passed through a forest in Sicily and was ordered to burn his wares. After lighting a fire, he asked if he might read aloud a brief portion from each before surrendering them to the flames. Given permission, he read from one the twenty-third Psalm, from another the Sermon on the Mount, from another the parable of the Good Samaritan, and from another Paul's hymn of love in **1 Corinthians 13**. After each excerpt the outlaw exclaimed, "That's a good book. We won't burn that, give it to me." So none were destroyed but all were taken by the thief. Some years later the robber appeared again, but now as an ordained minister. Reading the Bible had accomplished the miracle.