

Love-Agape (Greek Word Study)

Love (26) (**agape**) is unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is ([1Jn 4:8,16](#)), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and that God gives as a manifestation of His Spirit's bearing fruit in the heart of a yielded saint (see note on fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22-note).

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It is not surprising that Greek literature throws little light on its distinctive NT meaning. Biblical **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) and 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.

Agape is volitional
Phileo is emotional

Agape love does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Believers can easily 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).

Agape is used 115 times in the NT in the NASB ([Click here for all uses](#)) Agape is translated in the NAS as "beloved, 1; love, 112; love feasts, 1; love's, 1." The KJV translates it 27 times as "charity". Since the following analysis only references a few of the 116 verses, a more fruitful study would be to [study the 115 NT uses](#) inductively and in context.

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 5:5-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 (1Co 13:4-8-note is an excellent definition of "love in action") not just to fellow believers but to all men everywhere. Note that all the "actions" in 1Co 13:4-8 are verbs and all are in the [present tense](#), which indicates that "1 Corinthians 13 type" agape love is to be our lifestyle, our habitual practice. Now, stop and think for a moment. Is there any natural way I can love my spouse or my children or my irritating relatives (or neighbors) with "[present tense](#)" actions (patient, kind, etc continually)? No way! At least no natural way! In our strength it is literally **impossible** to carry out this description of supernatural love, but it is "**Him**" **possible** as we yield to the enabling power of the indwelling Holy Spirit recalling that agape is the first component of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-note).

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 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, 37, 38)

John MacArthur explains that "**Agape 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" (1John 4:16)". (MacArthur, J. The Power of Integrity : Building a Life Without Compromise, page 133. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books) (Bolding added)

F B Meyer has the following description of 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." (Ep 5:2-note)

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 - Love: On God's Side](#))

APPLICATION: **Beloved, are you contemplating breaking your covenant bond of marriage?** Then take some time and meditate on the profundity of the truths inherent in agape love and please reconsider, for the sake of your testimony and for the sake of the glory of the Lord and His Kingdom. (see also **Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage**)

Kenneth Wuest describes **agape** love as follows (these descriptions are gleaned from multiple different sections of his wonder[Word Studies](#))...

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, 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 (Ro 5:5-note)

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 13:4-7, - see notes 1Co 13:4; 13:5;13:6 ; 13:7." (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: Erdmans](#)) (Bolding added)

Agape does not condone or gloss over sin in the one loved but actively, purposely seeks the welfare of the one loved. **Philadelphia** "love" springs from personal warmth and affection and God teaches it (1Th 4:9).

Agape love does not derive its motivation from the desirability of the object of one's affection but gives with no expectation of return (unconditional) so that if given and not returned then you don't stop giving it.

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. ([MacArthur, J. 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." ([MacArthur, J. Ephesians. 1986. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

"(**Agape**) **Love** is an attitude of selflessness. Biblical agapē 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 (Eph. 5:25, 28, 33; Titus 2:4)—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." ([MacArthur, J: 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." ([MacArthur, J. 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. 5:43,44). That is why the forbearance of which Paul speaks here could only be expressed in **agapē love**." ([MacArthur, J: 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** (Eph. 5:25; 3:19; cf. 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." ([MacArthur, J: 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 (Ga 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** (Ed: While I agree, it still necessitates a choice to depend on the Spirit to enable me to display this "spontaneity."). 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 lovableness 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. **Agape** is the badge of discipleship and the landmark of heaven for "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love (**agape**) one for another." (Jn 13:35).

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.

([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series](#))

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.**

God's Love Through Me - Love never fails. —1 Corinthians 13:8

During a devotional session at a conference, our leader asked us to read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, and substitute the word

“Jesus” for “love.” It seemed so natural to say, “Jesus suffers long and is kind; Jesus does not envy; Jesus does not parade Himself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek His own ... Jesus never fails.”

Then our leader said, “Read the passage aloud and say your name instead of Jesus.” We laughed nervously at the suggestion. “I want you to begin now,” the leader said. Quietly, haltingly I said the words that felt so untrue: “David does not seek his own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. David never fails.”

The exercise caused me to ask, “How am I hindering God from expressing His love through me?” Do I think that other expressions of faith are more important? Paul declared that from God’s perspective, eloquent speech, deep spiritual understanding, lavish generosity, and self-sacrifice are worthless when not accompanied by love (vv.1-3).

God longs to express His great heart of love for others through us. Will we allow Him to do it?

To love our neighbors as ourselves
Is not an easy thing to do;
So Lord, please show us how to love
As we attempt to follow You. —Sper

Living like Christ is loving like God.

A small South American fish called "four eyes" knows how to make the best of two worlds. His secret is his large bulging eyes. The Creator designed them so that he can see above the water and below it at the same time. The fish does this by cruising along through the water with the upper half of his eyes above the surface. This top half has an air lens, and the bottom half has a water lens. Together, the two lenses outfit "four eyes" with a set of natural bifocals, allowing him to see both the upper world and the underworld. In a sense, Christians must be like this little tropical fish. We should look up longingly into the idealism of heaven while looking down lovingly into the realism of earth. The heavenward look is to reflect a hunger and thirst for truth and righteousness, while the earthly look shows our compassion and love for the lost and suffering. Who is in a better position to know the best of both worlds than Christians? We have received both truth and love. — M. R. DeHaan. II

KEEP GOD'S TRUTH IN YOUR HEAD AND HIS LOVE IN YOUR HEART.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4

A YOUNG boy went to the lingerie department of a store to purchase a gift for his mother. Bashfully he whispered to the clerk that he wanted to buy a slip for his mom, but he didn't know her size.

The woman explained that it would help if he could describe her. Was she thin, fat, short, tall, or what?

"Well," replied the youngster, "she's just about perfect."

So the clerk sent him home with a medium size slip.

A few days later the mother came to the store to exchange the gift for a considerably larger size. The little fellow had seen her through the eyes of love, which always see beyond physical appearances.

The kindness of love refuses to focus on faults or shortcomings. This doesn't mean that it is blind to weakness and sin. But it sees beyond them, accepting people as they are, looking at their best qualities, and wanting their good.

We need to examine our response to others in the light of 1 Corinthians 13. If negative attitudes quickly surface, if glaring character defects always loom up before us, we need to work at seeing others through eyes of love.—D J DeHaan

The Other Side Of Thank You- [Love] does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil. —1 Corinthians 13:5

A baby gift came to a young couple who were new parents. They were grateful for the present, so the mom picked up a thank-you card, wrote a nice note, and got it ready to send.

Somehow it got buried in an avalanche of paperwork and was never mailed—and the thank-you was forgotten. The gift-givers waited, but no acknowledgment came.

A rift developed as one family thought the thank-you had been given, while the other thought the lack of a thank-you was a snub.

This inadvertent failure to send a card left the gift-giver feeling slighted, unappreciated, and neglected.

Among the most important words we can speak are the two words, "Thank you." And while it is vital to be grateful, there's another side of thank you. If we bestow a gift on another, we should do so out of a motive that doesn't expect anything, even a thank-you, in return. True love gives with no expectations.

Love, as described in 1 Corinthians 13:4, "suffers long and is kind" and is never self-seeking. Love keeps no record of wrongs—even if someone forgets to thank us for a kindness. The other side of thank you is a pure heart that reflects God's perfect love for us.

I want the love that always sweetly bears
Whate'er my Father's hand may choose to send;
I want the love that patiently endures
The wrongs that come from enemy or friend.
—Anon.

True love has no strings attached.

You Missed the Chance

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:2

I heard the saddest words today. Two believers in Christ were discussing an issue about which they had differing opinions. The older of the two seemed smug as he wielded Scripture like a weapon, chopping away at the things he saw as wrong in the other's life. The younger man just seemed weary of the lecture, weary of the other person, and discouraged.

As the exchange drew to a close, the older man commented on the other's apparent disinterest. "You used to be eager," he started, and then abruptly quit. "I don't know what it is you want."

Don't miss your chance to show the world Jesus' love.

"You missed the chance to love me," the young man said. "In all the time you've known me, what has seemed to matter most to you is pointing out what you think is wrong about me. What do I want? I want to see Jesus—in you and through you."

Had this been said to me, I thought, I would have been devastated. In that moment I knew the Holy Spirit was telling me there had been people I had missed the chance to love. And I knew there were people who couldn't see Jesus in me either.

The apostle Paul tells us that love must be the underlying motive in anything we do; in everything we do (1 Cor. 13:1-4). Let's not miss the next chance to show love. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you today who it is you've missed the chance to love. Then ask Him to give you another opportunity. Start your conversation with these words: "I'm sorry ..."

Love beats lectures every time.

Love Comes First

We love [God] because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19

One evening my friend showed me one of the three decorative plaques that would be part of a wall arrangement in her living room. "See, I've already got Love," she said, holding up the plaque with the word written on it. "Faith and Hope are on order."

So Love comes first, I thought. Faith and Hope soon follow!

Love did come first. In fact, it originated with God. First John 4:19 reminds us that "We love [God] because he first loved us." God's love, described in 1 Corinthians 13 (known as the "love chapter"), explains a characteristic of real love when it says, "Love never fails" (v. 8).

Faith and hope are essential to the believer. It is only because we are justified by faith that "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). And hope is described in Hebrews 6 as "an anchor for the soul, firm and secure" (v. 19).

One day we will have no need of faith and hope. Faith will become sight and our hope will be realized when we see our Savior face to face. But love is eternal, for love is of God and God is love (1 John 4:7-8). "Now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love"—it's first and last (1 Cor. 13:13).

Thank You, Lord, for Your faithful love and for the love of family and friends. Please help me find ways to show Your love to others today.

We love because God first loved us.

Love Never Fails

Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

Poet Archibald MacLeish says that “love, like light, grows dearer towards the dark.” This is what he calls the “late, last wisdom of the afternoon.” The same is true of our love for one another; it can indeed grow dearer as we age. I have seen it myself in two elderly friends.

Married for over 50 years, they are still very much in love. One is dying of pancreatic cancer; the other is dying of Parkinson’s disease. Last week I saw Barbara lean over Claude’s bed, kiss him, and whisper, “I love you.” Claude replied, “You’re beautiful.”

I thought of couples who have given up on their marriages, who are unwilling to endure through better or worse, sickness or health, poverty or wealth, and I am saddened for them. They will miss the kind of love my friends enjoy in their latter years.

I have watched Claude and Barbara over the years, and I know that deep faith in God, lifelong commitment, loyalty, and self-denying love are the dominant themes of their marriage. They have taught me that true love never gives up, it “never fails.” Theirs is the “late, last wisdom of the afternoon,” and it will continue to the end. May we express that same unflinching love to those who love us.

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.

Don’t put off until tomorrow the loving words you can say today.

Loving Our Grown-Up Children

Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

Comedian Henny Youngman used to say, “I’ve got two wonderful children—and two out of five isn’t bad.”

When children reach adulthood, most parents have an opinion about how their offspring have “turned out.” Some are proud of everything their kids have done, while other parents express misgivings or disappointment about the choices their children have made. How can we continue a positive parenting role after the birds have left our nest?

In 1 Corinthians 13, often called “the love chapter” of the Bible, Paul writes that the greatest gifts of speaking, understanding, and sacrificial service are worthless without love (vv.1-3). Love itself is the foundation of winsome behavior, and its influence never ends. “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; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails” (vv.4-8).

When our children no longer seek our advice, they still value our love. In every stage of parenting, it’s not only what we say but what we do that counts.

May God in mercy grant to us
A home where Christ holds sway,
Where peace and joy from heaven above
Abide from day to day. —Crane

A parent’s love never ends.

The Greatest Race

Love never fails. —1 Corinthians 13:8

As the Olympic Games open in Beijing, my thoughts go back to Eric Liddell, a former champion immortalized for his surprising gold medal victory in the 400 meters during the 1924 Games in Paris. A year after his triumph, Liddell went to China, where he spent the last 20 years of his life as a missionary teacher and rural pastor. There he ran the greatest race of his life against opponents we all know—difficult circumstances, war, uncertainty, and disease.

Crowded into a Japanese internment camp with 1,500 other people, Eric lived out the words he had paraphrased from 1 Corinthians 13:6-8— “Love is never glad when others go wrong. Love finds no pleasure in injustice, but rejoices in the truth. Love is always slow to expose, it knows how to be silent. Love is always eager to believe the best about a person. Love is full of hope, full of patient endurance; love never fails.”

Eric served the others in camp, whether carrying water for the elderly or refereeing games for the teens. When he died of a brain tumor in February 1945, one internee described him as a man “who lived better than he preached.”

In life’s most difficult race, Eric Liddell crossed the finish line victorious through love.

O for a love that knows no end,
A love that is strong and pure,

Reaching afar to both foe and friend,
So deep it will always endure. —R. De Haan

Love enables us to walk fearlessly, to run confidently, and to live victoriously.

How To Help Those Who Hurt

Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

When I have asked suffering people, “Who helped you?” not one person has mentioned a PhD from a prestigious seminary or a famous philosopher. All of us have the same capacity to help those who hurt.

No one can package or bottle the “appropriate” response to suffering. If you go to the sufferers themselves, some will recall a friend who cheerily helped distract them from their illness. Others think such an approach insulting. Some want honest, straightforward talk; others find such discussion unbearably depressing.

There is no magic cure for a person in pain. Mainly, such a person needs love, for love instinctively detects what is needed. Jean Vanier, who founded the L’Arche movement for the developmentally disabled, says: “Wounded people who have been broken by suffering and sickness ask for only one thing: a heart that loves and commits itself to them, a heart full of hope for them.”

Such a love may be painful for us. But real love, the apostle Paul reminds us, “Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:7).

As is so often His pattern, God uses very ordinary people to bring about His healing. Those who suffer don’t need our knowledge and wisdom, they need our love.

O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother!
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer. —Whittier

They do not truly love who do not show their love. —Shakespeare

There Is Love

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

The greatest of these is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

Last Valentine’s Day, I traded e-mail with a friend who is approaching 30 and has no serious love relationship in sight. He’s talented, fun, handsome, and a committed Christian. But so far, everything on his romantic horizon has turned out to be a mirage.

Several months earlier, he had been very enthusiastic about a young woman with whom he was corresponding. Two weeks before they were to meet for the first time, she was killed by a drunk driver. My friend made the trip to meet her family, experience their pain, and deal with his own sense of loss.

Today, many people will feel the absence of love as keenly as others celebrate its presence. In a world where love means so much, is there a word from the Lord for everyone, with or without a sweetheart?

First Corinthians 13 focuses not on being loved by another person, but on having love. This love “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (v.7). How is this possible? It’s God’s love that “has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5).

Today and tomorrow, far beyond the cards and flowers, from God’s heart to ours, there is love!

On this the day when we express
Undying love and faithfulness,
Let’s not forget that God above
Gave us His Son in perfect love. —Hess

The more we understand God’s love for us, the more love we’ll show to others.

Concrete Love

Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. —1 Cor. 13:3

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" (vv.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.

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.

How Can We Love?

Love never fails. —1 Corinthians 13:8

First Corinthians 13 is often read at weddings. Yet even optimistic newlyweds will eventually fail to love. The only individual who perfectly fulfills this "love chapter" is Jesus Christ.

Pastor F. B. Meyer (1847-1929) wrote, "Jesus sits for His portrait in these glowing sentences, and every clause is true of Him. Substitute His name for 'love' throughout the chapter, and see whether it is not an exact likeness."

Let's try that. "[Jesus] suffers long and is kind; [Jesus] does not envy; [Jesus] ... does not behave rudely, does not seek [His] own, ... does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. [Jesus] never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

Yes, Jesus is the perfect example of love. Yet Paul wrote to describe how we are meant to love others. He knew, though, that we need more than to read about Christ's example of love; we need to experience His love by receiving Him into our lives as Lord and Savior. If we have done that, Paul declared, "the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5). Only then will we be able to love others as Jesus does, by allowing Him to love them through us. —J E Yoder

More like the Master
I would live and grow,
More of His love
To others I would show. —Gabriel

To know love, open your heart to Jesus. To show love, open your heart to others.

Love Is For Losers?

Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

You can learn a lot about a person by what his or her T-shirt says. Recently, one of these messages caught my attention as I walked through a local shopping mall. A young woman wore a bright red T-shirt that said, "Love Is for Losers." Maybe she thought it was clever or provocative, even funny. Or perhaps she had been hurt by a relationship and had pulled away from others rather than risk being hurt again. Either way, the T-shirt got me thinking.

Is love for losers? The fact is, when we love, we take risks. People could very well hurt us, disappoint us, or even leave us. Love can lead to loss.

The Bible, though, challenges us to higher ground in loving others. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul describes what it means to live out God's kind of love. The person who exercises godly love doesn't do so for personal benefit or gain but rather "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (13:7). Why? Because godly love endures beyond life's hurts by pulling us relentlessly toward the never-diminishing care of the Father.

So, perhaps love is for losers—for it is in times of loss and disappointment that we need God the most. Even in our struggles, we know that "love never fails."

Unfailing is God's matchless love,
So kind, so pure, so true;
And those who draw upon that love
Show love in what they do. —D. De Haan

God's love never fails.

Helping Love Grow

[Love] does not seek its own. —1 Corinthians 13

A young man told his father, “Dad, I’m going to get married.”

“How do you know you’re ready to get married, Ron?” asked the father. “Are you in love?”

“I sure am!” he replied.

The father then asked, “Ron, how do you know you’re in love?”

“Last night as I was kissing my girlfriend goodnight, her dog bit me and I didn’t feel the pain until I got home!”

Ron has got that loving feeling, but he has a lot of growing to do. Vernon Grounds, a former writer for Our Daily Bread, who has been married for more than 70 years, shares these points about how to grow in love:

Ponder God’s love in Christ. Take time to reflect on how He gave His life for you. Read about Him in the Gospels, and thank Him.

Pray for the love of God. Ask Him to give you an understanding of His love and to teach you how to live that out in your relationships with your spouse and others (1 Cor. 13).

Practice the love of God. Give of yourself. A newlywed told me he thinks love is practical. He said, “My responsibility is to make life easier for my spouse.” The other, tougher side of love is to challenge each other to act in godly ways.

Love will grow when we ponder love, pray for love, and practice love.

This is my prayer, kind Father,

So direct me from above

That I may live a life for You

And reflect my Savior’s love.

—Messenger

As Christ’s love grows in us, His love flows from us.

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Remembering To Forget

[Love] thinks no evil. —1 Corinthians 13:5

When people hurt us and then apologize, we may say that we forgive them. But like a dog that won’t give up its bone, we may let our mind continue to chew on past insults.

In 1 Corinthians 13:5, Paul declared that love “thinks no evil.” He was using an accountant’s term that described the recording of figures in a book. Love does the opposite—it does not keep a record of wrongs. Instead, love forgives and refuses to keep it on the books.

If you want to remember something, you go over it again and again. The child reviews his spelling words; the actress rehearses her lines; you review people’s names that you want to remember. But love deliberately and consciously lets go of past hurts and gives them to God.

It was said of one religious leader, “He never forgot slights done to him, which was his fundamental weakness. He might bury the hatchet for a time, but he gave the impression of always marking the spot.”

In contrast, when Methodist minister William Sangster was addressing Christmas cards, a friend noticed one name and remarked, “Don’t you remember how he slighted you?” Sangster responded, “Oh yes, I remember, but I have remembered to forget.” Let’s follow his example. [\(Used by permission\)](#)

Lord, help me be kind and forgiving—

Your loving forgiveness You’ve shown

To me for the sins I’ve committed;

Lord, grant me a love like Your own.

—Anon.

Remember to forgive—then remember to forget.

The Cry for Love February 14, 1994

Read: 1 Corinthians 13 | Bible in a Year: Leviticus 15-16; Matthew 27:1-26

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God. —1 John 4:7

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.

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

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. —John 13:34

Tracy 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, we need to look at Calvary's cross. "By this we know love, because [Jesus] laid down His life for us" (1 John 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. [\(Used by permission\)](#)

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.
—DJD

We know how to love when we know how Christ loved us.

No Record Of Wrongs

[Love] does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil. —1 Corinthians 13:5

A couple living in rural Kiowa, Colorado, has called the noise hotline for the new Denver International Airport more than 1,400 times to complain about jets passing over their home. They have informed airport officials that they won't quit calling until the flight path is changed.

If we estimate 1 minute for each conversation, 1,400 phone calls add up to more than 23 hours of complaints! I won't second-guess the validity of their gripe against the airport, but their tactic made me wonder about the way I handle conflict. Do I repeatedly point out every mistake people make without thinking what it does to them and to me? Or is it my practice to overlook the offenses of others?

First Corinthians 13:5 gives us a guide for dealing with problems in our relationships. It all hinges on love. Love is not easily provoked to anger. It “thinks no evil” by refusing to keep a record of wrongs. Anger puts every offense on an endless playback loop, but love turns off the switch.

At work, at home, at church, we need to ask the Lord to give us the courage to abandon the playback button and make frequent use of erase. Let’s show His love by keeping no record of wrongs. ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Love is an attitude, love is a prayer,
For someone in sorrow, a heart in despair;
Love is goodwill for the gain of another,
Love suffers long with the fault of a brother.
—Anon.

When someone mistreats you, do what comes supernaturally—love him.

The Essential Ingredient

Though I have all faith ... but have not love, I am nothing. —1 Corinthians 13:2

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. ([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

As Christ’s love grows in us, His love flows through us.

Love’s Check List

Love suffers long and is kind. —1 Corinthians 13:4

A woman named Nancy uses verses from 1 Corinthians 13 to help her cope with the frustrations of a busy family life. She calls verses 4 to 7 “Love’s Check List” and refers to it when anger wells up within her.

Nancy gave an example of how she uses her check list. She was running errands one morning before she and her family were to leave on vacation. Her husband Bill was at home caring for the children and getting things ready for an early afternoon departure. When she arrived home after stopping at the grocery store, her mother’s house, the post office, the bank, and the hospital to visit a friend, she found that all he had accomplished the entire morning was to wash and polish his car—which they weren’t even taking on the trip!

Nancy was angry and said some harsh things to Bill. Within a few minutes the words of Love’s Check List came to mind: “Love suffers long and is kind.” She prayed, then she apologized to her husband for her angry outburst. He said he was sorry too, and they left that afternoon for their vacation—just a little late.

Next time you say angry, bitter things, remember Love's Check List in 1 Corinthians 13. Better yet, consider it before you say them.

Lord, fill our hearts with Christlike love,
With goodness, kindness, care,
Lest bitter thoughts and hurtful words
Will find a welcome there.
—D. De Haan

Bitter feelings can be sweetened when we take them to the Lord in prayer.

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Love Believes All Things

[Love] believes all things, hopes all things. —1 Corinthians 13:7

It was 40 years ago or more that I observed a friend of mine showing great affection for someone I considered unworthy of love. I thought my friend was being taken in, and I was afraid he would be disillusioned and saddened in the end.

When I expressed my concern, he replied, "When I stand before my Lord, I hope He'll say of me that I've loved too many, rather than too few." I've never forgotten his words.

Paul insists that "[love] believes all things" (1 Cor. 13:7). Love "believes" in people. It can see the potential in them. It believes that God can take the most unattractive and unworthy individual and turn that person into a masterpiece of beauty and grace. If love errs, it must err in the way of trustfulness and hopefulness.

Certainly, we must be aware of danger when we see it coming, and become "as wise as serpents" (Matt. 10:16). Tough love may be the best response to irresponsible and foolish people, but we can be too guarded, too wary and distrustful.

It doesn't do us any real harm to be hoodwinked and defrauded (Matt. 5:38-48). It's better to believe in someone and have your heart broken than to have no heart at all. British poet Alfred Tennyson wrote, "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." I agree.

Lord, help us to believe in people
And all that in them You can do,
So we can say we've loved too many,
Rather than too few.
—Sper

Love looks beyond what people are to what they can become.

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How To Help Those Who Hurt

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No one can package or bottle the "appropriate" response to suffering. If you go to the sufferers themselves, some will recall a friend who cheerily helped distract them from their illness. Others think such an approach insulting. Some want honest, straightforward talk; others find such discussion unbearably depressing.

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Such a love may be painful for us. But real love, the apostle Paul reminds us, "Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:7).

As is so often His pattern, God uses very ordinary people to bring about His healing. Those who suffer don't need our knowledge and wisdom, they need our love.

O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother!
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.
—Whittier

They do not truly love who do not show their love. —Shakespeare

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Real Love

[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. —1 Corinthians 13:7-8

A few years ago, my friend's mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Since then, Beth has been forced to make tough decisions about her mom's care, and her heart has often been broken as she watched her vibrant and fun-loving mom slowly slipping away. In the process, my friend has learned that real love is not always easy or convenient.

After her mom was hospitalized for a couple of days last year, Beth wrote these words to some of her friends: "As backwards as it may seem, I'm very thankful for the journey I am on with my mom. Behind the memory loss, confusion, and utter helplessness is a beautiful person who loves life and is at complete peace. I am learning so much about what real love is, and even though I probably wouldn't have asked for this journey and the tears and heartache that go with it, I wouldn't trade it for anything."

The Bible reminds us that love is patient and kind. It is not self-seeking or easily angered. It "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

Real love originated with our Father, who gave us the gift of His Son. As we seek to show His love to others, we can follow the example of Christ, who laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16-18).

Real love is helping others for Jesus' sake even if they can never return the favor.

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Enduring Love

[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. —1 Corinthians 13:7

Like many people, I enjoy the Google homepage artwork that appears on special days and holidays. Last Valentine's Day, the artistic logo showed an older couple—a man with a cane and a white-haired woman—walking hand in hand as the woman held two heart-shaped balloons. It was a beautiful reminder that while our culture glorifies youthful romance, true love has many stages during our journey through life.

Paul's great essay in 1 Corinthians 13 celebrates the depth and tenacity of the love that carries us beyond self-interest and mere affection. "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; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (vv.4-8).

Brian Wren has captured this reality in his moving hymn, "When Love Is Found":

When love is tried as loved ones change,
Hold still to hope though all seems strange,
Till ease returns, and love grows wise
Through listening ears and opened eyes.
© Hope Publishing Co.

When our commitments are tested in the fires of life, no matter what difficulties we face, may God grant us a greater experience of

His enduring love and the grace to demonstrate it each day.

God's love is a fabric that never fades, no matter how often it is washed in the waters of adversity.

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The Greatest Thing In The World

Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

Well-known scientist and writer Henry Drummond (1857–1897) conducted a geological survey of South Africa and wrote what was then the definitive work on tropical Africa. But he is best remembered for his book about love, *The Greatest Thing In The World*.

Drummond wrote, “As memory scans the past, above and beyond all the transitory pleasures of life, there leap forward those supreme hours when you have been enabled to do unnoticed kindnesses to those round about you, things too trifling to speak about ... And these seem to be the things which alone of all one's life abide.”

Paul warned that impressive gifts and spectacular deeds may be little more than empty noise (1 Corinthians 13:1). Our best efforts—if bereft of love—ring hollow. “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, ... but have not love, it profits me nothing” (v.3). The smallest loving act can hold eternal significance.

No matter our age or status in life, we all can strive to love others as God loves them. We may accomplish great things in our life—gain fame and fortune—but the greatest thing is to love. For of all that we have done, or ever will do, only love endures.

We depart, but love abides.

We love because He first loved us,

He gave so we can give;

We love because He first touched us,

He died so we can live.

—Sper

Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

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When To Speak Up

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up. —1 Corinthians 13:4

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 (Prov. 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.

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

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

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The Other Side Of Thank You

[Love] does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil. —1 Corinthians 13:5

A baby gift came to a young couple who were new parents. They were grateful for the present, so the mom picked up a thank-you card, wrote a nice note, and got it ready to send.

Somehow it got buried in an avalanche of paperwork and was never mailed—and the thank-you was forgotten. The gift-givers waited, but no acknowledgment came.

A rift developed as one family thought the thank-you had been given, while the other thought the lack of a thank-you was a snub. This inadvertent failure to send a card left the gift-giver feeling slighted, unappreciated, and neglected.

Among the most important words we can speak are the two words, “Thank you.” And while it is vital to be grateful, there’s another side of thank you. If we bestow a gift on another, we should do so out of a motive that doesn’t expect anything, even a thank-you, in return. True love gives with no expectations.

Love, as described in 1 Corinthians 13:4, “suffers long and is kind” and is never self-seeking. Love keeps no record of wrongs—even if someone forgets to thank us for a kindness. The other side of thank you is a pure heart that reflects God’s perfect love for us.

I want the love that always sweetly bears
Whate’er my Father’s hand may choose to send;
I want the love that patiently endures
The wrongs that come from enemy or friend.
—Anon.

True love has no strings attached.

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Bellyaching And Its Cure

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up. —1 Corinthians 13:4

A mentally impaired man always shook hands with his pastor after each service. But he often made critical comments like these: “You preach too long.” “Your sermons are boring.” “You talk about yourself too much.” Distressed, the pastor mentioned this to a deacon, who replied, “Oh, don’t worry about him. All he does is parrot what he hears others say.”

Grumbling is an all-too-common sin among Christians, and some are chronic complainers. They are skilled at finding something wrong with anyone who is actively trying to serve the Lord. And undoubtedly all of us have done some bellyaching.

The best cure for this sinful habit is Christian love—something easy to talk about but difficult to practice. First, we must consciously desire God’s best for everyone. This love “suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; ... love does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil” (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). Then, as we depend on the Lord, we must put these attitudes into practice.

The next time you feel like finding fault with someone, resist that impulse and look for a way to do good to that person (Galatians 6:10). Do this diligently, and in time you will be cured of your bellyaching.

I would not criticize the one who works,

The one who listens to God's Word and heeds;
But I would criticize myself, dear Lord,
Confess to You my faithless words and deeds.
-Hess

Don't find a fault—find a remedy.

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Selfless Love

Love suffers long and is kind; love ... does not seek its own. —1 Corinthians 13:4-5

I don't like to fish. So I was less than enthusiastic when my son Dan, about 12 at the time, asked me to take him fishing. We woke up early and got out on the lake just before dawn. Dan was excited, but when 10 long minutes passed without a bite I was already bored. So I rearranged a few life preservers, got comfortable, and promptly fell asleep. A little while later we returned home, even though the morning was still young. Needless to say, Dan was disappointed—and I felt guilty!

Peter, James, and John disappointed Jesus when they fell asleep instead of exerting themselves to pray with Him in His hour of great soul agony. Although He showed that He understood their weariness after a long, emotionally draining day, His grief is clearly evident in His words, "Are you still sleeping and resting?" (Mk. 14:41).

By our thoughtlessness and selfishness we often wound family members and close friends. I know a man who hurt his wife deeply when he went hunting with some buddies instead of staying home to comfort her after a miscarriage.

Let's avoid wounding those we love. Always keep in mind Paul's words, "Love suffers long and is kind; love ... does not seek its own" (1 Cor. 13:4-5).

Our selfish ways can make us blind
So we won't see another's needs;
But when God's love is in our hearts,
We'll act with kind and selfless deeds. —Sper

A selfish heart loves for what it can get; a Christlike heart loves for what it can give.

Rudeness On The Rise

Love ... does not behave rudely. —1 Corinthians 13:4-5

The director of the national Commission on Civic Renewal has said, "There is an overwhelming consensus among the American people that basic norms of good conduct have deteriorated in this country." Some observers have concluded that disrespect has become an epidemic.

Have you noticed it where you live? On the highway? At sporting events? During public performances? Have we forgotten how to walk in the shoes of others, considering their rights and needs? Have we become brazenly "in your face" at the expense of being compassionately "in your place"?

First Corinthians 13 includes a quality of biblical love that is often overlooked. It "does not behave rudely" (v.5). This verse expands on the idea and says that love "does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil." As one paraphrase puts it, "Love doesn't force itself on others, isn't always 'me first,' doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others."

We often think of love's lofty, eternal, spiritual qualities and forget that the love God puts deep within us shows courtesy and consideration toward everyone we meet.

At a time when rudeness is on the rise, we need to begin an epidemic of love.

Christ's love is not puffed up, unkind;
It gladly will the broken bind;
It envies not, is patient still,
Delights to do the Father's will.
—Stahl

The oil of courtesy takes the friction out of life.

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God's Love Through Me

Love never fails. —1 Corinthians 13:8

During a devotional session at a conference, our leader asked us to read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, and substitute the word "Jesus" for "love." It seemed so natural to say, "Jesus suffers long and is kind; Jesus does not envy; Jesus does not parade Himself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek His own ... Jesus never fails."

Then our leader said, "Read the passage aloud and say your name instead of Jesus." We laughed nervously at the suggestion. "I want you to begin now," the leader said. Quietly, haltingly I said the words that felt so untrue: "David does not seek his own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. David never fails."

The exercise caused me to ask, "How am I hindering God from expressing His love through me?" Do I think that other expressions of faith are more important? Paul declared that from God's perspective, eloquent speech, deep spiritual understanding, lavish generosity, and self-sacrifice are worthless when not accompanied by love (vv.1-3).

God longs to express His great heart of love for others through us. Will we allow Him to do it?

To love our neighbors as ourselves
Is not an easy thing to do;
So Lord, please show us how to love
As we attempt to follow You.
—Sper

Living like Christ is loving like God.

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Love Goes Beyond Liking

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. —Deuteronomy 6:5

From childhood on, we are urged to show love, whether it's for parents or pets or friends, and especially for Jesus. But what is love?

We think of love as an emotion, a tender feeling, a positive reaction. So when Scripture commands us to love God and our neighbor, we may be confused about the meaning of love (Matthew 22:37-40).

Feelings simply cannot be commanded. A mother can order her child to love spinach, but she can't compel him to react positively when faced with a helping of that green vegetable.

So love must be more than an emotion. An old translation of our Lord's command may help us to understand love as an action that we choose: "Thou shalt love ..." It's choosing to be patient, kind, selfless, and humble (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). We can love others even though we may not like them, because it's a matter of making a choice.

Yes, we can respond obediently to what our Savior directs us to do. He knows, though, that we are not capable of doing this on our own. That's why He's given us the Holy Spirit to empower us to a life of loving obedience. With His help, we can learn to love those we don't like. Who knows? We may even begin to like them.

O Lord, how often selfishness
Will raise its ugly head,
So help us, Lord, to conquer it
And show Your love instead.
—D. De Haan

Loving others requires a heart of obedience to God.

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Learning To Love

Love suffers long and is kind. —1 Corinthians 13:4

When Hans Egede went to Greenland as a missionary in 1721, he didn't know the Inuit language. His temperament was often overbearing, and he struggled to be kind to the people.

In 1733, a smallpox epidemic swept through Greenland, wiping out almost two-thirds of the Inuit people—and claiming Egede's wife as well. This shared suffering melted Egede's harsh demeanor, and he began to tirelessly labor to care for the people physically and spiritually. Because his life now better represented the stories he told them of God's love, the Inuits could at last grasp His desire to love them too. Even in suffering, their hearts turned to God.

Perhaps you are like the Inuits in this story, and you are unable to see God in the people around you. Or perhaps you are like Hans Egede, who struggled to express love in a way that taught people about God. Knowing we are weak and needy people, God showed us what love is like. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins (John 3:16). That's how much God loves you and me.

Jesus is the perfect example of the love that is described in 1 Corinthians 13. As we look to Him, we learn that we are loved and we learn how to love in turn.

Jesus, let me find in You a sense that I am
loved. And may my heart not grow cold and
cluttered by anger and wounds from the past so
that others can see Your reflection in me.

May I never be the barrier that blocks one's view of God.

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There Is Love

Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. —1 Corinthians 13:13

Some time ago, I traded e-mail with a friend who was approaching 30 and had no serious love relationship in sight. He's talented, fun, handsome, and a committed Christian. But so far, everything on his romantic horizon has turned out to be a mirage.

Several months earlier, he had been very enthusiastic about a young woman with whom he was corresponding. Two weeks before they were to meet for the first time, she was killed by a drunk driver. My friend made the trip to meet her family, experience their pain, and deal with his own sense of loss.

Today, many people will feel the absence of love as keenly as others celebrate its presence. In a world where love means so much, is there a word from the Lord for everyone, with or without a sweetheart?

First John 4 focuses not on being loved by another person, but on God's love for us and our love for one another (vv.7-11). According to 1 Corinthians 13:7, this love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." How is this possible? Because God's love "has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5).

Long after the cards and flowers are forgotten, there is love from God's heart to ours!

On this the day when we express
Undying love and faithfulness,
Let's not forget that God above
Gave us His Son in perfect love.
—Hess

The more we understand God's love for us, the more love we'll show to others.

The Benefit Of The Doubt

[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. —1 Corinthians 13:7

In 1860, Thomas Inman recommended that his fellow doctors not prescribe a medicine for a cure if they weren't sure it would work. They were to give the patient "the benefit of our doubts." This phrase is also a legal term meaning that if a jury has conflicting evidence that makes the jurors doubtful, they are to give the verdict of "not guilty."

Perhaps as Christians, we can learn from and apply this medical and legal phrase to our relationships. Better yet, we can learn from the Bible about giving the benefit of the doubt to others. First Corinthians 13:7 says that love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Leon Morris, in the Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, says this about the phrase "believes all things": "To see the best in others ... This does not mean that love is gullible, but that it does not think the worst (as is the way of the world). It retains its faith. Love is not deceived ... but it is always ready to give the benefit of the doubt."

When we hear something negative about others or we're suspicious about the motive for their actions, let's stop before we judge their intentions as wrong or bad. Let's give them the benefit of the doubt.

Thinking It Over

To learn more about the love described in 1 Corinthians 13, read [What Is Real Love?](http://www.discoveryseries.org/q0714) at www.discoveryseries.org/q0714

Love gives others the benefit of the doubt.

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ALL NT USES OF AGAPE

- **Agape - 116x in 106v** - translated (NAS) - beloved(1), love(1), love(112), love feasts(1), love's(1).

Matthew 24:12 "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.

Luke 11:42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

John 5:42 but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.

John 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 15:9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

John 17:26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Romans 5:5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 8:35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

Romans 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 14:15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

Romans 15:30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

1 Corinthians 4:21 What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?

1 Corinthians 8:1 Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

1 Corinthians 13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

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

1 Corinthians 16:14 Let all that you do be done in love.

24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

2 Corinthians 2:4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;

2 Corinthians 6:6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,

2 Corinthians 8:7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also.

8 I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.

24 Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Ephesians 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints,

Ephesians 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,

15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 5:2 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.

Ephesians 6:23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,

16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;

Philippians 2:1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,

2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Colossians 1:4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints;

8 and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

Colossians 2:2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

Colossians 3:14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

1 Thessalonians 1:3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 3:6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you,

12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you;

1 Thessalonians 5:8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;

2 Thessalonians 2:10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

2 Thessalonians 3:5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.

1 Timothy 1:5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

14 and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 2:15 But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

1 Timothy 6:11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

2 Timothy 3:10 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,

Titus 2:2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.

Philemon 1:5 because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints;

7 For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you-- since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus--

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

Hebrews 10:24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

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

1 Peter 5:14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

2 Peter 1:7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

1 John 2:5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 3:1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in

God, and God abides in him.

17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

2 John 1:3 Grace, mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

6 And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.

3 John 1:6 and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

Jude 1:2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

12 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;

21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

Revelation 2:4 'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

19 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

ALL THE USE OF AGAPE IN THE SEPTUAGINT

■ Agape - 13v in the Septuagint

2 Samuel 13:15 Then Amnon hated her with a very great hatred; for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Get up, go away!"

Ecclesiastes 9:1 For I have taken all this to my heart and explain it that righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God. Man does not know whether it will be love or hatred; anything awaits him.

6 Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.

Song of Solomon 2:4 "He has brought me to his banquet hall, And his banner over me is love.

5 "Sustain me with raisin cakes, Refresh me with apples, Because I am lovesick.

7 "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, That you do not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases."

Song of Solomon 3:5 "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, That you will not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases."

10 "He made its posts of silver, Its back of gold And its seat of purple fabric, With its interior lovingly fitted out By the daughters of Jerusalem.

Song of Solomon 5:8 "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, If you find my beloved, As to what you will tell him: For I am lovesick."

Song of Solomon 7:6 "How beautiful and how delightful you are, My love, with all your charms!

Song of Solomon 8:4 "I want you to swear, O daughters of Jerusalem, Do not arouse or awaken my love Until she pleases."

6 "Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the LORD.

7 "Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised."

Jeremiah 2:2 "Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth, The love of your betrothals, Your following after Me in the wilderness, Through a land not sown.