

**LOVE LESSONS**  
**The Greatest of These**  
**1 Corinthians 13:8-13**

**READ 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 NLT**

This description of love is so PERFECT. Love is better than great SKILLS, or great SPIRITUAL accomplishments, or even great SACRIFICES. Love never fails. Love is the GREATEST thing that has ever existed on this planet. In this passage, Paul describes something that ALL of us LONG FOR in our everyday lives. But each week as we have unpacked the meaning of these words, I have faced a constant, troubling question from many of you (and from within my OWN HEART as well!):

**If love is so PERFECT, then why does it seem so INADEQUATE for many of the situations that I happen to face in life?**

- \*Why do LOVING PEOPLE often seem to suffer the greatest loss and abuse?
- \*Why do I struggle so much to show love to people; even to those I really like?
- \*Why don't my best attempts at love CHANGE my friend's harmful behavior?
- \*What if I love others as much as I can, but they choose to LEAVE or WOUND me?

\*Some of you FEEL like you FAILED when it came to love.

-Divorce, Teenage rebellion, Lost friendship, etc.

Did you fail to love them enough? **Or, DID LOVE FAIL?**

\*If so, then what does scripture mean when it says, "Love never fails?"

**FAILS=To lose authority or force, to cease, to descend from a higher place to a lower**

**Maybe my IDEA OF LOVE is what is INADEQUATE!** [We have so much to learn!]

\*I am a POOR TEACHER, and this series is TOO SHORT!

Today, I want to CHALLENGE all of us to SIGN UP for a lifetime of lessons:

**The LIFETIME lesson of love: Love how Jesus loves you.**

\*All of us love how Jesus LOVES US! [Acceptance, Forgiveness, Grace, etc.]

\*But do we LOVE HOW (AS, In the way that) Jesus loves us!

**John 15:12 NLT**

**12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.**

-How Jesus loves you has nothing to do with you at all at first!

**The KEY: Jesus remained in his Father's love. John 15:8-12 NIV**

**8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. 9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."**

\*Jesus always tied love to the glory of God! **[John 13, 15, 17]**

-The SOURCE of my love for you is God's love for me! **[Remain!]**

“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him!” John Piper

-Love lives in the confident TRUST that GOD HAS OUR BACK!

“In this world you WILL have tribulation, but be of good cheer . . .!”

-Your love can bring others into the presence of God in every type of situation!

\*This deposits them in HIS presence to face HIS REALITY.

-Your love HONORS God no matter how the other person may be acting!

\*Love is all about WHAT I DO, not about how others RESPOND to what I do!

\*We are imperfect people learning this in a broken world. It will take time!

-Some have said that if they had LOVED better, love would not have died.

\*Maybe so, but maybe not!

\*WHO is the GREATEST MODEL OF LOVE that the world has ever known? Jesus.

-Have all chosen him or remained with him? Has HE failed?

**Someone’s FAILURE to respond TO love WITH love is NOT a failure OF love!**

\*Guard yourself against unrealistic expectations of other’s responses to love.

-Jesus said that we would be HATED . . . just like HIM! [Even JUDAS]

\*The possible **failure** of others to **love him back** did not alter Jesus’s lifestyle!

**Jesus consistently did what was best for OTHERS! [Philippians 2:3-8 NLT](#)**  
**3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death-- even death on a cross!**

**Common misconception about love: Love is a MEANS to MY OWN ends.**

-Lyrics to songs about love: How love affects ME!

-Love CANNOT be a subtle form of manipulation or control! [**“If you love me. . .”**]

\*Love is not about getting others to do what I want or even need them to do for me.

**In fact, love is NOT about ME at all!** Love is about the OTHER. Therefore . . . ,

**Love is KIND when ANGER or REJECTION is expected!**

\*Woman caught in adultery; Zaccheus, etc.

**Love is FIRM when dealing with SIN or REBELLION. [[How Jesus loved Peter](#)]**

-Love can see unhealthy PATTERNS and deal with them in a loving manner!

-This involves the COURAGE to do that which is difficult or seems unloving!

\*How a PARENT deals with a CHILD. [[Loving authority for direction](#)]

\*How a FRIEND deals with a PEER. [[Loving confrontation for restoration](#)]

-Love actually GRIEVES over the sin of others and its certain consequences!

[How Jesus grieved over Judas and over Peter]

**His lessons lead us to our ETERNAL EXPERIENCE in heaven.**

**1 Corinthians 13:10 - 13 NKJV**

10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

- Think of your BEST experience of love on this earth (even in an imperfect world)
- Take all of the sin and brokenness out of it, and you have a glimpse of heaven!

**John 17:22-23 NLT**

22 "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. 23 I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me, and that you love them as much as you love me.

You will NEVER experience the perfect level of love that you desperately want to on this earth. (It can be GOOD or even GREAT; but it will not be PERFECT!). However, you can live with the CERTAINTY that LOVE will be your everlasting experience once you come face to face with Christ forever. "Behold, I make ALL THINGS NEW."

Until then, keep seeking to SHOW LOVE even as you are being SHOWN love by Christ.

Let's pray.