



## Message Series Guide

### Imperfect Church – I Corinthians

#### Part 21 – Love

#### I Corinthians 13:1-13

The word “love” has been used in many forms and meanings all throughout human history. The way people express love varies between culture and circumstances. Love can be expressed as being kind to one person or cruel to another. It is important to understand what God is trying to teach us about love and how it is defined in His Word, even if we cannot fully comprehend His love for us. Jesus was the ultimate example of love by showing us patience, kindness, righteousness, truth, endurance, and much more described in I Corinthians 13. Love is the greatest because God showed us, through His Son Jesus Christ, how great His love is for us.

### READ:

I **Corinthians 13:1-13** • I **John 4:19** • I **John 3:1** • **Galatians 5:22-23** • **Romans 5:8**

- Why do you think that, according to Paul in I Corinthians 12:31, love is the most excellent way to deal with misunderstanding of spiritual gifts, divisions and factions, blatant immorality, marriage problems, lawsuits, and the other issues in the Corinthian church?
- According to verses 1-3, why do good spiritual acts gain “nothing” for us if we do them without love?
- According to verses 4-6, how is agape love different from the love the Corinthians had shown one another in chapters 1-12?
- Discuss your understanding of each characteristic of love: 1.) Patient 2.) Kind; 3.) Does not envy; 4.) Does not boast; 5.) Not arrogant; 6.) Not rude; 7.) Does not insist on its own way; 8.) Not irritable; 9.) Not resentful; 10.) Does not rejoice with wrongdoing; 11.) Rejoices with the truth.
- How did/does Christ show us each of the characteristic of love listed in the question above?
- What do you think the Apostle Paul meant when he said, “love endures all things?” Is that statement true? Why or why not?
- Why will prophecy, tongues, and knowledge pass away? Why do we only see “in a mirror dimly” now? When will we see “face to face?”
- What are the marks of being a spiritual child? Why do you think some believers remain immature in their faith for years while others grow spiritually?

### DISCUSS:

- What does the word *agape* mean to you? Agape love seems so beautiful and pure. Why is loving like this so difficult? Why do you think agape love is the greatest of all? Why is it greater than faith and hope?
- Which of the characteristics of love described in I Corinthians 13 is most difficult for you? What have you found that has helped? If you were able to practice agape love in all areas of your life consistently, how would it change your life?
- How does the gospel give us hope in our failure to love people with an agape kind of love?
- Share an example of where you saw agape love help or encourage someone in need.

### PRAY:

Pray for one person this week who needs to experience God’s love in a deep and personal way?

### RESPOND:

In what practical way(s) can you show love that never fails this week to the person you prayed for above?



# Sermon Notes

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#### I Corinthians 13:1-13

Love is the work of the Spirit of God through us reproducing the character of Christ in us.

#### **Greek Words for Love:**

*Eros* – an erotic kind of love; sensual love; what we feel when we "fall in love."

*Philia* – brotherly love; a feeling of friendship toward someone.

*Agape* – a love concerned with the greatest good of another.

Without agape love, faith, works and life are worthless.

#### **3 Positives of Agape Love:**

- Patience refers to being patient with people (not just circumstances).
- Kindness means to be courteous, gracious and pleasant to people.
  - *Be the living expression of God's kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.* – Mother Theresa
- Agape love rejoices in what is right and godly.

#### **8 Negatives of Agape Love:**

- Does not envy – is not jealous
- Does not boast – does not promote self
- Is not arrogant – is not puffed up.
- Is not rude – acts inappropriately
- Does not insist on its own way - is not stubborn.
- Is not Irritable – not easily angered.
- Is not resentful – keeps no records of wrongs.
- Does not delight in wrongdoing – does not delight in sin.

To bear all things means to "covers all things."

Love is always ready to start over – to be made new.

Love trusts God always

Love never quits

God's love for you is not based on your condition. It's based upon your position as His child