

# How Do We Love?

## *1 Corinthians 13*

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most misused words of the English language is the word “*love*”. I’ve said this at the beginning of every talk on love I have probably ever given. One of the great deceptions of the deceiver is to create muddy waters out of human communication. It creates barriers in our concepts and also impacts our human relationships. You can change the label of cyanide to Tylenol, but it will still kill you if you take it.

We often see the definitions of words change within a language over time. This is why the Bible claims Jesus is the clear Word of God that never changes (*Hebrews 13:8*) because God has made Himself known in Christ, and that will not change over time. But let’s look at a few examples where the word meanings have changed:

- **Nice** – giving pleasure or satisfaction; agreeable.

A few centuries ago if a gentleman called a lady “nice,” she might not know whether to flutter her fan or slap his face. Nice entered English via Anglo-Norman from classical Latin *nescius*, meaning ignorant. Then it wandered off every which way. From the 1300s through 1600s it meant silly, foolish, or ignorant.

- **Queer** – strange/odd

The word **queer** was first used to mean ‘homosexual’ in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: it was originally, and usually still is, a deliberately derogatory term when used by heterosexual people. In recent years, however, gay people have taken the word **queer** and deliberately used it in place of **gay** or **homosexual**, in an attempt, by using the word positively, to deprive it of its negative power.

- **Gay** – happy, light-hearted and carefree

**Gay** meaning ‘homosexual’ is the term preferred by homosexual men to describe themselves, and is now the standard accepted term in English. As a result, the centuries-old other senses of **gay** meaning either ‘carefree’ or ‘showy’ have largely dropped out of natural use.

- **Apology** – a regretful acknowledgement of an offence or failure

Nowadays, when we use the word apology, we are most likely referring to a situation where we ask another person for forgiveness for a misdeed of some sort. Originally, though, an apology was a simple explanation of one’s position or beliefs. The Catholic Church and students of philosophy are the only ones who keep the archaic meaning of this term alive. Books and classes on the study of apologetics can still be found in specialty book stores and libraries which focus on the logical defense of one’s chosen belief structure, religion, etc.

Sadly, “**Love**” is a word that has evolved in meaning, and we are seeing this before our very eyes. We have reduced love to a mere emotion or feeling, and this has come from Hollywood. Look at what the Concise Oxford English Dictionary says of **Love**:

1. an intense feeling of deep affection.
  - ◆ a deep romantic or sexual attachment to someone.
  - ◆ Affectionate greetings.
2. a great interest and pleasure in something.
3. a person or thing that one loves.
  - ◆ Brit. informal a friendly form of address.
4. (in tennis, squash, etc.) a score of zero. [apparently from the phrase *play for love* (i.e. the love of the game, not for money).]

■ **verb** feel a deep romantic or sexual attachment to.

- ◆ like or enjoy very much.

1. have sexual intercourse.

2. (**make love to**) dated pay amorous attention to.

**not for love or money** informal not in any circumstances.

**there's no love lost between** there is mutual dislike between.

— DERIVATIVES **loveless** adjective **lovelessly** adverb **lovelessness** noun

— ORIGIN Old English *lufu*, of Germanic origin; related to **LEAVE** and **LIEF**.<sup>1</sup>

Logically, the only one who can give clear definition of a concept is the One who created such concept, but the concept of love was never created because the Bible teaches love is not a concept but rather a Person, the Person of God.

### ***1 John 4:8***

The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

### **Basilea Schlink**

Everything God does is love -- even when we do not understand Him.

Now let's look at what the Scripture says love to be.

<sup>1</sup>Soanes, C., & Stevenson, A. (Eds.). (2004). [\*Concise Oxford English dictionary\*](#) (11th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## *1 Corinthians 13*

If I speak human or angelic languages but do not have love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body in order to boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not conceited, does not act improperly, is not selfish, is not provoked, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for languages, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things. For now we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known. Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

### **I. Love is the Supreme ethic of our lives**

#### ***1 John 4:19***

We love, because He first loved us.

#### **R.C. Sproul**

In the New Testament, love is more of a verb than a noun. It has more to do with acting than with feeling. The call to love is not so much a call to a certain state of feeling as it is to a quality of action.

#### **Henry Drummond**

Where Love is, God is.

## II. Love is the key element that should Shape our lives

### *1 John 2:6*

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

### **Ravi Zacharias**

Someone ask me one time which would you rather have love or truth, and I responded truth. The person then heckled me a bit wondering how I could choose truth over love. They said love is the highest ethic to which I responded, “So you think that is true?” You see you cannot have love without truth.

### *Ephesians 4:15*

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

### **Dwight L. Moody**

If we have got the true love of God shed abroad in our hearts, we will show it in our lives. We will not have to go up and down the earth proclaiming it. We will show it in everything we say or do.

## III. Love forces us to Sacrifice our lives

### **Jack Hyles**

You will never really love until you love someone who hates you.

### *John 15:13*

Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

## IV. Love is revealed through the Service of our lives

### **Rick Warren**

Learning to love unselfishly is not an easy task. It runs counter to our self-centered nature.

**Jack Hyles**

Love is the doorway through which the human soul passes from selfishness to service.

**Daniel Fuller**

In biblical thinking, genuine love exists only when good works are done in a context where God rather than the doer gets the credit.

***1 John 3:16-18***

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

**CONCLUSION**

**The Contagion of Love**

The early Latin writer, Tertullian of Carthage, declared that the one thing that converted him to Christianity was not the arguments they gave him, because he could find a counterpoint for every argument they would present. “But they demonstrated something I didn’t have. The thing that converted me to Christianity was the way they loved each other.”

***John 13:34-35***

“I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

**Henry Drummond**

The world is not a play-ground; it is a school-room. Life is not a holiday, but an education. And the one eternal lesson for us all is how better we can love.

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