

LOVING GOD'S WAY WITH GOD'S POWER

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We hear the word **love** used a lot these days. We say, "I love you" to our spouse, and in the next sentence "I love that football team." Obviously we mean two different things in speaking about our spouse and a football team. At least I hope so. However, this shows how careless we use this important word "love."

God's Word is not careless at all about love. In fact, the Bible has a lot to say about love. We are called to **love** the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Matthew 22:37). We are commanded to **love** our neighbor as much as we **love** ourselves (Matthew 22:39). We are even challenged to **love** our enemies (Matthew 5:44). Most importantly, the God of the universe is said to be a God of **love** (1 John 4:8,16).

"Now abide faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). **The greatest of these is love** – this certainly shows us how important love is. Therefore, knowing what love really is and how to love in a biblical way is essential if we are going to be the kind of people God has called us to be.

In this tract, I will examine the most important chapter on love in the entire Bible. That chapter is 1 Corinthians 13. This "love chapter" gives us sixteen descriptions of Godly love. I will define each description of love, show how God Himself models that attribute of love, and then provide a brief challenge for us today in living this out.

The overall definition of love that I will be working from is this: **Love is doing the highest good for another, regardless of the cost to self.** You will see this definition come out time and time again throughout this tract.

God has done the highest good for us (i.e. forgiveness of sins and salvation), regardless of the cost to Himself (i.e. sending His own Son to die for us on the cross). *"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:13).

Love is a verb more than it is a noun. Love is about **doing** what is the highest good for another. Love is not a feeling. Love may at times involve

feelings, but it is ultimately an action on our part toward another. *"God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8; emphasis mine).

Here are the sixteen descriptions of love found in 1 Corinthians 13:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Since I will be making frequent references to the fruit of the Spirit and its importance in love, here is the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

Galatians 5:22

One of the main points I want to make in this tract is that **we cannot love God's way (i.e. 1 Corinthians 13) unless we are filled with the Holy Spirit and allow the Spirit to produce His fruit through us (i.e. Galatians 5:22).** Loving God's way requires God's power. We must be filled with the Spirit to love God's way. Loving in the way 1 Corinthians 13 speaks of is humanly impossible. It is a supernatural love that requires a supernatural power, and that power is available in the Holy Spirit. We can love God's way, but only by allowing God's power to flow through us.

So, here we go with the sixteen qualities of love found in 1 Corinthians 13:

1. Love is patient

The word translated patient in this passage is the Greek word "makrothumeo," which means to "forebear" or "suffer long." In other words, being patient involves continuing in something unpleasant. The other person is obviously doing something that is not easy for you. You have to suffer in some way, but you bear with it and still love the person despite the hardship.

he Greek word “thumeo,” which makes up part of the word “patience,” is often translated “wrath” or “anger.” It is often used of God’s wrath. Patient love might include actually being very angry with someone, but being able to “be angry and sin not” (Ephesians 4:26) or “slow to anger” (1 Corinthians 13:5). They may do something that makes you very angry, but you continue to love them despite what they are doing. You hang in there. Patience is not patience unless something is happening that is difficult to put up with.

Furthermore, love being patient means that you **not** demand or pressure the other to change. Love accepts someone just as they are. Love may see things that need changing. Another’s sin may even irritate love. But unconditional love waits for that person to change when God brings about the change. Love being patient requires a faith in God to change the other person. Patience means we are willing to bear with another in their weakness.

Aren’t we glad God’s love for us is patient? *“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. **He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance**”* (2 Peter 3:8-9; emphasis mine). If God were not patient with us, none of us would get saved. Furthermore, God’s patient love means that He bears with our weaknesses and works with us to change. *“But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, **longsuffering** and abundant in mercy and truth”* (Psalms 86:15, NKJV; emphasis mine).

In your life right now, whom are you being called to love where patience is required? Who is in your life right now that is really irritating you? This is the person you are to be patient with. This is the person you are to pray for and trust God to change. In the meantime, while they are irritating you, be patient with them. Remember, patience is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), so you cannot do this without God’s help. The patient God who is in you can enable you to be patient with others.

2. Love is kind

The Greek word here is “chrestuomai” which means to “show oneself useful” or “to be benevolent toward”. To be kind is to be useful and helpful to another. It is to treat another with goodness and gentleness. When you are kind, you are not harsh with the other person. I love to see married couples treat each other with kindness. It hurts me to see couples that are not kind with one another. I see a connection between patience and kindness. Part of

being patient with someone is that you treat them in a kind manner. It is one thing to be patient with someone but underneath your patience you are grumpy. This reminds me of the boy who said to his teacher who demanded that he be seated, “I may be sitting down on the outside, but I am still standing on the inside.” This is not love. Love treats people with kindness and goodness, no matter how they treat you. This is especially tested when the other person does not treat you very well. Love responds to mistreatment with kindness. *“Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good”* (Romans 12:21).

God is gracious and kind to us. If He treated us as our sins deserve, we would all be eliminated. *“But let him who boasts, boast about this: that he understands and knows Me, that I am the **Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on the earth**”* (Jeremiah 9:24; emphasis mine). Notice that for kindness to be kindness it has to be exercised! It is doing the highest good for another, regardless of the cost to self. God exercises kindness toward us. *“Or do you show contempt for the riches of His **kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance?**”* (Romans 2:3-4; emphasis mine). We are all so blessed to serve a kind God.

God calls us to be kind to one another. We are to treat others with gentleness and forbearance. When others do things that really get on our nerves, we should still respond with kindness. In doing so, we will be showing the love of God. Once again, kindness is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), so don’t try to be kind without the filling of the Holy Spirit. Don’t try to muster up kindness in the flesh, but rather ask God to produce true kindness in you. The kind God who lives in you can enable you to be kind toward others.

3. Love does not envy

This is a hard one. Jealousy has destroyed many relationships. Usually we are jealous when another has something that we want. This is selfishness. This is not trusting God with our needs. *“You have not because you ask not. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with impure motives, that you may spend it on your own pleasures”* (James 4:2-3). Love does not envy, because when another has something, we are to rejoice in what they have, assuming of course it is **not** something ungodly.

Suppose you are in a relationship with someone of the opposite gender that you feel you really love and

want to marry. Suppose that person believes they are better off with someone else as their life partner. As hard as this would be, true love would not envy that other person, rather, it would want them to be with that person, if that person is better for them. We must remember, love is doing the highest good for another, regardless of the cost to self. You can certainly see how loving in this manner requires great faith and dependence upon God, can't you?

You might quickly object by saying, "But God is jealous at times." Yes He is, but His jealousy is a holy jealousy. There is Godly jealousy and selfish jealousy. True love is not jealous because it wants the highest good for another, regardless of the cost to self. Ungodly jealousy is where you want something that does not belong to you. If I see my neighbor's car and am jealous of it because it is bigger and more beautiful than mine, this is ungodly jealousy. God has not chosen to bless me with that car; therefore, I want something that I am not to have. However, if another man is seeking to steal my wife's affections, then my jealousy may be an appropriate jealousy, because I want to protect our marriage. God is jealous when we give the love and devotion that He deserves to something or someone else. *"Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a **jealous God**"* (Exodus 34:14; emphasis mine).

Are you in a relationship in which you are experiencing ungodly jealousy? Is God using this to expose your selfishness and pride? Do you need to surrender that relationship to Him and ask Him to purify your heart? The God of perfect jealousy is able and willing to purify this area of your life. When you are free of jealousy you have peace, and peace is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

4. Love does not boast

Bragging is incompatible with love because boasting draws attention to self. Love draws attention to the other person. Love focuses on the highest good for the other, regardless of the cost to self. Therefore, instead of boasting about self, love takes interest in the other person.

What about God? Doesn't He boast in talking about the things He has done? Yes, God does boast in this sense, but rather than it being for His own good, it is for **our** good. God tells us of the good He has done so we will know who He is and trust Him. God is loving us when He tells us of how wonderful He wants to be for us. He is doing what is for **our** highest good!

Are you in a relationship where you talk more about yourself? Are you boasting to others? Are you like the country song that says, "I want to talk about me; I want to talk about I; I want to talk about number one..."? Do you think more of yourself than others? This is not love. Ask God to help you *"regard the other as more important than yourself"* (Philippians 2:3). Love does not boast. At times, not boasting requires self-control, and self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), so once again we need the power of God to live this out.

5. Love is not proud

This is very similar to boasting. To be proud means to be puffed up and to think more highly of yourself than you ought to. We boast because we are proud. Perhaps the Apostle Paul says that "love is not proud" in addition to "love does not boast," because God knew that we would need this quality reinforced. Pride is the root of most sin.

Be careful not to go to an extreme with some of this. For example, love doesn't mean we **never** talk about ourselves. Healthy relationships involve both parties sharing about themselves. Love involves talking about ourselves, but we don't do it excessively and we don't do it in a bragging manner. To refrain from excessively talking about ourselves requires self-control, and self-control is another fruit of the Spirit needed to love God's way (Galatians 5:22).

6. Love is not rude

We all know what rude looks like. We all know what it feels like to be treated rudely. I bet you can remember the last time you were treated rudely. Perhaps it was at a restaurant or at a party of some kind. Rude is the opposite of kindness. One translation says, "love does not act unbecomingly" (NASB). Rudeness is often loud and boisterous. Do you know someone like that? They are loud and boisterous because they want the attention to be on them. They are usually insecure and thus need the attention to be on them to make them feel good about themselves.

The opposite of rude is kindness and gentleness, and both of these qualities are a fruit of the Holy Spirit working in your life (Galatians 5:22). God's Spirit working in you can give you the ability to be kind and gentle with others. All of these qualities of love should cause us to depend more and more on God. **It is impossible to love God's way without God's Spirit.**

7. Love is not self-seeking

Once again we go back to our definition of love. Love seeks the highest good for the other rather than seeking what benefits self. What a slam on modern day “love.” What you hear in songs and see in movies about “love” today is all about what the relationship gives me. I am “in love” if the other person makes me feel good and meets my needs. Is this biblical love? Not at all. This does not mean that God does not want us to marry someone that gives us good feelings. However, the feeling is not what love is all about. Love is a decision of the will. Love is a verb. Love is not about what benefits me. The New Living Translation renders this, “Love does not demand its own way.”

God is not self-seeking. He is constantly about what is best for us. He is a giving God (John 3:16). Jesus modeled this for us in how He constantly gave of Himself to others. He forgave sin and healed sicknesses and ministered to the various needs of others. And ultimately He loved by suffering and dying for our sins. Love is not self-seeking.

This concept that love “is not self-seeking” brings up an interesting question, and that is, “What about loving ourselves?” Jesus said to love our neighbor **as we love ourselves** (Matthew 22:39; emphasis mine). Most scholars believe that Jesus was in a sense saying, “Love others as you are already loving yourself.” In other words, Jesus was not endorsing some self-love like we hear about today. Instead, Jesus was saying that we already love ourselves, and we should love others like we already love ourselves.

At the same time, there is a proper self-care that we should all practice. This means that we should “love” ourselves by doing for ourselves what is for our own highest good. Our own highest good is the will of God. Therefore, we should do for ourselves what will cause us to become the most Godly.

Therefore, taking time to seek God is a loving thing to do for yourself because it is for your highest good, and that is to know God. Taking time for holy recreation can be another way to love yourself because you need recreation. To say “no” to a demand on your time in order to spend time with your family can be love, because you are called to properly provide for your family. We do not necessarily need to feel guilty when we do these things for ourselves. If we are walking with the Lord, He will show us when we cross the line into

selfishness. With so many things in life, balance is in order here.

8. Love is not easily angered

Here is another difficult one. Close relationships will inevitably bring about anger at times. The word translated “not easily angered” is the Greek word “paroxuno” which means to “sharpen alongside” or “to irritate.” One translation says “love is not irritable” (RSV), while another says “love is not provoked” (NASB). In other words, a loving person is not hard to get along with. Why? Because a loving person is most interested in the other’s wellbeing and not his own. Love does not insist on its own way.

Remember, we learned that patience might involve bearing long with another who makes you angry. But, love is not **easily** angered; it is not so easily upset such that it **often** gets angry.

Anger is usually the result of having selfish goals blocked. When we don’t get what **we** want, we get angry. The Bible says to “*be angry and sin not*” (Ephesians 4:26). This means that anger in and of itself is not sinful, but it is what we do with our anger that determines whether or not we sin. Most of our anger is designed to reveal to us ungodly goals that we have. Realizing this should cause us to yield those goals to God and trust Him to meet our needs. Jesus said we are to “*deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow Him*” (Luke 9:23).

Ungodly anger is contrary to love because love wants the highest good for the other. If our goals are not met, but the other person has what is best for him, then love will rejoice in what the other has, regardless of the cost to self. Love is not easily angered because love is focused on what is best for the other person.

Usually our anger is because we are not focusing on the other person but rather on ourselves. I recently read in a book, “The Complete Husband,” that anger is God’s alarm system to reveal to us that we want something too much. We must yield what we want to God. We must trust Him to meet our deepest needs and not expect others to meet our needs.

As with jealousy, we have to separate Godly anger from ungodly anger. God is an angry God. “*The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love*” (Psalms 145:8). He is slow to anger, but He still gets angry. Anger is due to a blocked goal. Therefore, to analyze whether or not

anger is sinful, we have to look at the goal being blocked. Is the goal Godly or not? When Jesus was angry in the Temple (Mark 11:15), the goal being blocked was people using the Temple for worship. Was this goal Godly? It sure was. So His anger was not sinful. It was righteous anger. Had His anger resulted in Jesus hitting people, then I think He would have sinned in His anger. However, He took out His anger on the physical objects that the sinful people were using in the Temple (i.e. He overturned the tables). For us to be angry and sin not, we may need, at times, to direct our frustrations on things and not people. When I get angry, sometimes it is helpful for me to go on a jog and release that energy in a physical way.

Furthermore, anger can be a good thing. It can give us energy to right wrongs in society or to take needed action. For example, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was angry about injustices in the South in the 1950's. His anger led him to initiate non-violent actions to seek to have those injustices changed. Had he resorted to violence, he would have sinned in his anger.

Who are you angry with right now? Rather than focusing on the faults of that person, seek the Lord. Allow your anger to reveal what needs to change in **your** heart. Allow God to search your heart so that you can yield those selfish goals to Him. Love is not easily angered.

9. Love keeps no record of wrongs

We will eventually be sinned against in relationships. In fact, the closer the relationship (i.e. marriage, close friend, etc.) the more likely we are to be sinned against. If you never want to be hurt by others, stay away from others. The problem with staying away from others is that you will slowly weave a web of isolation and loneliness. In the end, you will be **more** hurt by this loneliness than by the hurt that inevitably comes with close relationships. Be willing to risk the pain by going deep with others.

Therefore, as we go deeper in relationships, the question is not "Will we be hurt" but rather, "How will we respond when we are hurt?" What we do with those hurts determine whether we love God's way. Jesus said to love your enemies and to do good to those who persecute you (Luke 6:27).

Does "keeping no record of wrongs" mean that we just let others walk all over us? Not at all. This would not be the loving thing to do, because to

just let others abuse us is not the best for them. If someone breaks the law and we just "overlook" it, that does not benefit the lawbreaker. What is truly best for the lawbreaker is to be brought to justice, and we might be the person to help bring about that justice by turning them in.

What love does involve is forgiving those who sin against us. To forgive is what is at the heart of "keeping no record of wrongs." When we forgive we are doing one of the most divine things in all of life.

Forgiveness is possible because God is a forgiving God. God does not keep a record of our wrongs when we are in Christ. When we confess our sins to Him, "*He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9). "*I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more*" (Isaiah 43:25; emphasis mine). He removes our sins as far as the east is from the west (Psalms 103:12).

When we are sinned against, we need to bring that sin to the cross. We can forgive that sin only if we know how much God has forgiven us through the blood of Jesus. "*Forgive as you have been forgiven*" (Ephesians 4:32; emphasis mine). "*He who has been forgiven much loves much*" (Luke 7:47). When you realize how much God has forgiven you, then you are able to extend that same forgiveness to those who sin against you. Therefore, love keeps no record of wrongs because it truly forgives those wrongs.

Who do you need to forgive? Who are you bitter toward because you haven't forgiven? Who do you have a list against? Sometimes emotions like anger, bitterness and depression are God's way of getting our attention that we need to forgive someone for something they have done to us. I know of many people who have been emotionally and relationally set free by choosing to forgive all those who have sinned against them. Make a list right now of those who have sinned against you that you haven't forgiven. Bring those sins to the One who died for all sin. Here is a suggested prayer to pray in forgiving someone: "*Lord Jesus, based on Your forgiveness for all of my sins, I choose to forgive _____ for _____ which results in my feeling _____.* I release _____ to You. I release the pain of my heart to You. I take back the ground I gave to Satan through my bitterness. Heal the pain of my heart and help me to love again. Amen."

“Love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

10. Love does not delight in evil

A sure sign that we do not love someone is if we rejoice when they experience something bad. If we delight in evil and the harm that evil brings to someone, then we do not really love them. Love seeks the most beneficial good for another, not the greatest harm.

God does not delight in evil. He hates sin and evil because of how sin separates us from Him. He does not even delight in bringing consequences upon sin, even though His holiness requires that He do so.

“Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Sovereign Lord? Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?” (Ezekiel 18:22-23).

Is there someone in your life right now that you desire to see hurt? If so, you need to ask God right now to change your heart toward that person. God can give you the ability to supernaturally love that person. The opposite of evil is goodness, and goodness is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

11. Love rejoices with the truth

Love rejoices with the truth, because love wants purity and truth. Love does not like lies and deceptions. Love wants the truth even if the truth hurts, because love seeks the highest good for the other, and “the truth will set us free” (John 8:32). Therefore, love wants the truth so that the other person can be set free.

Loving truth is in contrast to not delighting in evil (“does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth”). Love hates sin but loves righteousness. Love wants that which is pure and good and benefits others.

Genuine truth only comes from God, because God is a God of ultimate truth. Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life”* (John 14:6; emphasis mine). Truth is also found in God’s Word. *“The sum of Thy Word is truth”* (Psalms 119:160). Therefore, loving God’s way involves pointing people to God and His Word.

Are you being truthful in all of your relationships? Where are you hiding something? Are you deceiving someone by pretending to be someone you aren’t? Is there sin you are covering up and not being truthful about? *“He who hides his sin does not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes it shall find mercy”* (Proverbs 28:13).

Furthermore, “love rejoices with the truth” can involve rejoicing in the truth about ourselves. We love ourselves by believing the truth about ourselves. There is nothing more true about us than what God says about us. Love yourself by accepting who you are in Christ. The book “Victory Over the Darkness” by Neil Anderson is a great resource in learning who you are in Christ.

Additionally, love may involve facing the unpleasant truth about ourselves. Often people say things to us that we don’t want to hear, but true love means that we love ourselves enough to receive the truth about ourselves, even when the truth hurts. We can benefit from this painful truth about ourselves if we allow the truth to show us where we need to change, and then surrender that area to the God of truth!

12. Love always protects (i.e. “bears all things”)

I am not sure that “always protects” is the best translation of the Greek word here. The New International Version is the only one that renders this “protect.” All other major translations (KJV, NKJV, NASB, RSV, etc.) render this “bears all things.” Even the New Living Bible says “love never gives up.” None of these refer to protecting.

The Greek word is “stego” which means “to cover over with silence, endure patiently.” The noun form of this verb is used of a roof, which of course is for protection, but the verb is always used in the New Testament for bearing or enduring something difficult.

Again we see that true love (i.e. loving God’s way) involves putting up with some kind of hardship or difficulty. I want to recommend that you read my tract “Life is Tough But God is Good”. Loving like God means that that we will need to hang in there and continue to love even when something makes it difficult to do so. You might be wondering by now, “Why can’t love just be a good feeling and mutual satisfaction?” No one said loving would be easy, and this is why we need God’s Holy Spirit to help us to do this. Love bears all things.

God loves us in this manner. He bears with all of our shortcomings, sin and selfishness. He hangs in there with us and patiently waits for us to respond to His love. He puts up with so much garbage on our part.

Is there someone in your life right now that you are being called upon to “bear with”? Is God calling you to “cover over their faults with silence”? It displays trust in God to be silent when another

mistreats you. However, in your silence toward the person, you will need to talk a lot to God. Pour out your heart to Him. Tell Him of your pain. And then surrender yourself to Him and ask Him to fill you with His supernatural love, because another fruit of the Spirit is called on here, and that is self-control (Galatians 5:22). With God's help, we can control our self from responding in an unpleasant manner when mistreated.

13. Love always trusts

Love believes the best in the other person, until proven otherwise. This does not mean that we are gullible or that we blindly trust others. It does mean, however, that we give people the benefit of the doubt and trust God to reveal to them their faults, if need be. It means that we believe in others, that we believe in the great potential that everyone has because they are created in the image of God.

I think one of the most damaging things a parent can do to a child is to say, "You will never amount to anything," or "Can't you do anything right?" These kinds of statements are so shaming. They tear the other down. They are the opposite of "love always trusts".

God believes in us. God is confident that with His help we can obey His Word and follow Him. God entrusts to us the Great Commission. We are His hands and feet. In calling us to accomplish His will on earth, God is in a sense "always trusting us".

Who comes to mind that you need to do a better job of "always trusting"? Who have you lost faith in? To love in this manner requires faithfulness, and faithfulness is another fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) that we need in order to love God's way.

14. Love always hopes

Love has great faith in others. Love believes the other can change, because love knows that God is able to change anyone. Love does not lose hope and give up on people. Love is optimistic. Love can always hope because love believes that God is always able to work.

Love's hope is rooted deeply in love's faith in God. God is the eternal optimist, because He knows that all evil will be removed and all good will last forever (Romans 21-22). This is an especially hopeful promise, given the many challenges we have seen with love.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

15. Love always perseveres

This quality of perseverance is similar again to patience, because to persevere means you patiently put up with something or someone who is unpleasant. The New American Standard translates this phrase, *"love endures all things"* (1 Corinthians 13:7). Perseverance requires enduring something difficult. The Greek word here is "hupameno" which literally means "to remain under something difficult."

The reason love can persevere is because God perseveres with us. I am so glad He does. I am so thankful He never gives up on us. God's love for us is everlasting. No matter how far we stray, God still loves us and hangs in there, cheering us on to come back to Him.

Persevering love means that love never gives up. It keeps on keeping on. Love is one of a few things that is eternal, because God is eternal and God is love. *"Now abide faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love"* (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Is there someone in your life that you are on the verge of giving up on? Who is God calling you to persevere with? Persevering love requires faithfulness, and faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Therefore, you **can** love in this manner, with God's supernatural help.

16. Love never fails

This phrase is in contrast to gifts like prophecy, tongues and knowledge that will end when Jesus returns (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). Even though these wonderful gifts will come to an end, love is something that will never end. Love will not end because love is one of the few things we experience on earth that will last forever. Love is eternal because God is eternal, and God is love (1 John 4:8).

Since love will never end, it will never fail. Love never stops loving. This is why the phrase "I don't love you anymore" is an oxymoron. True love would never say that. This phrase simply reveals that we do not really understand Godly love. Love is doing the highest good for another, regardless of the cost to self. Even when someone doesn't "feel love" for another anymore (i.e. saying "I don't love you anymore"), they must still keep choosing to do

what is for the other's highest good because "love never fails".

God's love never fails. It is not as if God loves us one day but quits loving us the next day. Even when we disappoint Him with our behavior, He still continues to love us. *"I have loved you with an everlasting love"* (Jeremiah 31:3; emphasis mine). Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39). We can rest in His never-failing love. We can be secure in this never-ending love. We can change because of this never-ending love.

Is God calling you to continue loving someone whom you no longer have feelings for? The fruit of the Spirit of faithfulness comes in here again (Galatians 5:22). Ask God to empower you to never fail in your love for this person.

Conclusion

I realize this tract is very convicting. It certainly is for me as I write it. However, my prayer is that, after reading this tract, you are more in awe of God's perfect love than you are convicted of your lack of this perfect love.

We can never love others as we should unless we first understand God's love for us. Receive His love for you right now. I know you don't feel worthy of it. You are not worthy of it. Our unworthiness is what makes God's love so special. However, God wants us to receive and enjoy His love.

Will we ever be able to love in the way God does? This side of heaven we will **not** be able to perfectly love. "Now we know in part" and love in part (1 Corinthians 13:9). However, we can continually grow in our ability to love in this manner. We can progress in showing God's love as we mature in Him.

Love will not be complete until we get to heaven.
This is one thing that will make heaven truly

heaven, that is, perfect love will be experienced and expressed by all those in heaven. God's perfect love will be in heaven in a perfect way. Wow! Now that is something to truly look forward to, isn't it? Imagine being in a Place for all eternity where love is perfectly experienced each and every day. There will be no more pain or sorrow (Revelation 21:4) because no one will hurt you. There won't be any sin to forgive. There won't be any anger to control. There won't be any unpleasantness in any relationship. There won't be any jealousy. There won't even be misunderstandings! I can't wait! How about you? I hope to see you there.

If you wish to repent of your sins and receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord, you can do so right now by praying this prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. Amen."

One final reminder: You and I cannot love others in our own strength and ability. We can only love as we yield to His Holy Spirit which enables us to love, for *"the fruit of the Spirit is love"* (Galatians 5:22).

Consider praying this prayer:

"Lord God, I confess that I haven't loved in the 1 Corinthians 13 way, please forgive me. Thank You for loving me in this way. I admit I cannot do this on my own. Therefore, please fill me with Your Holy Spirit right now. Use Your power to love others through me. Amen."

If this tract has been helpful, I would love to hear from you. You may email me at: davidholt@firstfree.org.

***"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love
But the greatest of these is love."
(1 Corinthians 13:13)***

All biblical quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the New International Version.

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