

Just Love

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

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(1 Corinthians 13:4-8 KJV) "Charity¹ suffereth long², *and* is kind³; Charity¹ envieth not; Charity¹ vaunteth not itself⁴, is not puffed up⁵, {5} Doth not behave itself unseemly⁶, seeketh not her own⁷, is not easily provoked⁸, thinketh no evil⁹; {6} Rejoiceth not in iniquity¹⁰, but rejoiceth in the truth¹¹ {7} Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. {8} Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away."

¹ agape {pronounced ag-ah'-pay}, love, Divine love, God's impartation of love, love like God's

² makrothumeo {pronounced mak-roth-oo-meh'-o}, Present Active Indicative, to be patient or slow to anger, even tempered

³ chresteuomai {pronounced khraste-yoo'-om-ah-ee}, Present Middle Indicative, demonstratively mild in its response

⁴ perpereuomai {pronounced per-per-yoo'-om-ah-ee}, Present Middle Indicative, to boast of oneself, be a braggart + ouk = never boasts about itself

⁵ phusioo {pronounced foo-see-o'-o}, Present Passive Indicative + ouk = not swelled up, big headed

⁶ aschemoneo {pronounced as-kay-mon-eh'-o}, Present Active Indicative + ouk = does not act in an unbecoming manner

⁷ heautou {pronounced heh-ow-too'}, reflexive pronoun, promote or seek for *myself and myself alone*

⁸ paroxuno {pronounced par-ox-oo'-no}, Present Passive Indicative + ouk = not easily provoked to anger or negative emotion

⁹ kakos {pronounced kak-os'} + logizomai {pronounced log-id'-zom-ah-ee}, Present Middle Indicative + ouk = cannot be caused to ponder on wickedness

¹⁰ chairō {pronounced khah'-ee-ro}, Present Active Indicative, + ouk + adikia {pronounced ad-ee-kee'-ah} = does not keep on rejoicing in a violation of the law/ holiness/ God's standard of righteousness

¹¹ sugchairō {pronounced soong-khah'-ee-ro} rejoices together + aletheia {pronounced al-ay'-thi-a} = rejoices in unison or together with the truth

If I were to ask each person within this room today to define the word “love”, I daresay there would be more than one definition given. Our society overuses this word, and we have seen *love* used to describe a person's relationship to another person, to another product, to animals (like pets), to housing, and to services. For some people “Love” means the same as *license*, doing what feels good to you. For others “love” is no more than an intimate physical expression shared between two people. Is love an emotion or an action – or both? What does the Scripture, God's Holy Word, tell us about this thing we call “love”?

1. True Love DEFINES ITSELF By Serving Others, Not Itself

(1 Corinthians 13:4-6 KJV) "Charity¹ suffereth long², and is kind³; Charity¹ envieth not; Charity¹ vaunteth not itself⁴, is not puffed up⁵, {5} Doth not behave itself unseemly⁶, seeketh not her own⁷, is not easily provoked⁸, thinketh no evil⁹; {6} Rejoiceth not in iniquity¹⁰, but rejoiceth in the truth¹¹

(1 Corinthians 13:4-6 HCSV) “Love is patient; love is kind. Love does not envy; is not boastful; is not conceited; {5} does not act improperly; is not selfish; is not provoked; does not keep a record of wrongs; {6} finds no joy in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth;

In our *postmodern society* around 98% of those polled will willingly admit to being a Christian – yet only 38% of those who profess Christ as Savior *attend Church in any capacity whatsoever*. This is interesting because the Scripture clearly states that God our Savior:

1 John 4:16 (KJV) "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Is LOVE, and those who dwell in God dwell in LOVE. Not love as you think love is, but love as God *defines love* in the Scriptures. You see, how you define love determines how you live and interact with both God and man. If you are a Christian, you love because God, Who is Love, is in you. When we look at our focal text, we see

1. How I define the word "love" determines how I _____ my _____.

that love is *not, as modern America believes, inward or selfish*, but it is outward. Notice that in every instance Biblical or Christian love is not *ego driven*, but *expressed outwardly toward others*. I'm going to use the Holman Christian Standard Version here, as it is a little more clear than our King James:

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (HCSV) "Love is patient; love is kind. Love does not envy; is not boastful; is not conceited; {5} does not act improperly; is not selfish; is not provoked; does not keep a record of wrongs; {6} finds no joy in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the

truth;"

Christian love – the love that we are to strive toward and to exercise – is quite different from the world's definition of love. Rather than that old mantra, “Anything you do is fine”, Godly love *absorbs* brutality while *expressing* Christian virtues. Patience, kindness, a lack of bragging about self and high mindedness, and overlooking wrongs done to self are all traits of true love. These are things that are *unnatural* to the flesh. When you are struck, your

2. Agape is never _____ driven. (1 Corinthians 13:4)
3. Love always serves a higher purpose than self, for Christian love imitates _____. (Matthew 8:20; 27:28; 8:4)

immediate desire is to attack back. When someone purposely stalks you, seeking to provoke you into retaliating, *agape* love, God's love, allows the wrong to pass.

The **impossibility of God's standard of love stands out like a sore thumb when you consider your own abilities.** **Who can reach this type of love?** Look at all the things that this text says love is not. Love is not easily driven to anger. Love is kind to others. Love doesn't look at what another person has and *respond in jealousy*. “Boy, I wish I had that!” Love avoids the *big head*, but love is *an ambassador for true Love, for Jesus Christ*.

Can this type of love be reached using *human abilities*?

Absolutely not! **Jesus Christ shocked the Scribes and the Pharisees** – as well as His disciples – when He told them:

Matthew 5:38-41 (KJV) "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: {39} But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. {40} And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. {41} And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

This is not natural, and that's the Scriptural point *exactly*. **Christianity is a supernatural state** that a person enters into following faith in Christ. Once you accept Christ as Savior the Bible tells us that **God the Holy Spirit indwells** the believer:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (KJV) "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? {20} For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

The *agape love* that the Bible tells us about in our focal text is not something you can *attain to* unless you are in the Family of God! You cannot do what Jesus said, and forgive your brother *over and over again unless God has made His dwelling place in you!* But once God the Spirit has made His dwelling place in you why doesn't every believer *naturally move* toward this high standard of

love? You can, and you will – but **only as you surrender your lives to God the Holy Spirit through *study of the Word and prayer***. It is certain that, Scripturally, God's love in us is a *product of God, not of us*. It is a *fruit of the Spirit*. In Galatians we are told:

Galatians 5:16-17 (KJV) "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. {17} For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

This is *written to Christians, not unbelievers!* The Christian by faith in Christ has a *daily choice* – a minute by minute choice to either walk **in the Spirit** controlled by God and His Word, or to **walk in the flesh**. If we walk in the flesh then we begin to output things that are *natural to the flesh*. The Galatians text lists these things as:

Galatians 5:19-21 (NASB) "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, {20} idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, {21} envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

When a person walks away from God's power and does the things that are *unnatural to God the Holy Spirit within you*, then you cannot truly love in the way that

Christ taught us. The ungodly exercise things that are loyal to *self love* – self satisfying and flesh gratifying things – but cannot exercise the love which Christ commanded us to follow. True Christian love is a fruit of the Spirit:

Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, {23} gentleness, self-control"

So **let's end this first point with a *definition of Love***. **Love is a *fruit of the Spirit* that seeks to *imitate God our Savior*. Love is always manifested *outwardly toward others in positive, uplifting ways*. Love is an action that can only be exercised by *God indwelt, born again Christians who are in fellowship with God*. Love is a standard that you cannot hope to reach unless you are in God and God is in you, for *God is love*.**

2. Love's DESIGN Is To Work For God Through The Body of Christ

(1 Corinthians 13:5 KJV) "Charity¹ ... Doth not behave itself unseemly⁶, seeketh not her own⁷, is not easily provoked⁸, thinketh no evil⁹"

Let's focus on the phrase, "seeketh not her own⁷". A good way to say this is to say "Love is not about me, myself, and I". This is one of the main problems that

have afflicted the Church of every era. Christians, born again by faith in Christ, have often departed from the love of God when they began to *focus on their own wants and needs, rather than the wants and needs of our Master Jesus Christ*. The **Apostle Peter** was guilty of failing to love when he ate and fellowshiped with Gentile believers *until other Jews came around*. When other Jews came around Peter withdrew himself from these believers lest he offend the Jews. The Apostle **Paul** had to “**opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned**”. When a believer – even an Apostle – walks away from true Christian love that person is in *condemnation*.

4. A Christian is _____ to love,
_____ to love, and _____ to love.
(1 Corinthians 13:5)

5. What is the first and *most basic work* of the Christian – the first expression of our love for God?
(Mark 16:16)

The Christian is *compelled* to love, *ordered* to love, *designed* to love. Each **individual member of the Body loves** both **during assembly** (this thing we call “Church”) and **after assembly**. The Body itself *loves as a unit* and this love is what *demonstrates to love of God* to a lost and dying world. The first expression of your love for God is *water baptism*:

(Mark 16:16 KJV) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Saved people work for God. Saved people do what God asks them to do. If you have believed, that is, if you have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior then love compels you to work for God - and the first work you do for Him after salvation is immersion in water - BAPTISM! Water baptism brings with it a certain type of humility. You must surrender to God's man in the water and allow him to immerse you - just as Jesus was immersed - under the water. This is the *first thing Jesus did before beginning His earthly ministry*, and it is the *first work of the Christian*.

True love **never seeks its own**, but like a salmon always swims against the tide of life to get back to *Love's Source - God our Savior*. Christians are designed to love, compelled to love, ordered to love *as a Church unit*.

(1 John 4:8 KJV) "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

When you were a little child your momma would come in the room and put a thermometer in your mouth. You'd want to talk but momma would say, “Now hush! Keep this under your tongue until I tell you.” You'd sit for what seemed an eternity until momma came back and, pulling the thermometer out, she'd hold it up to the light

6. If I do not exercise Biblical Christlike love, should I be concerned? (1 John 4:8)

and look. Momma was looking to see if the mercury - the colored stuff in that glass tube - was lined up with 98.6

degrees. If it was you were fine. Your temperature was *normal*, and you could resume your life as a kid. You could go back to school (yuk) or go outside and play. That thermometer governed what you did with your life.

So it is with love. If you're where you need to be with God, if your *temperature is fine*, then love will show in your life. You will be willing to work for God through His Church, just as He has commanded you to do. You will *follow your design*, not your own whims, knowing that your cooperation with with God and others will be instrumental in *winning others to Christ*.

3. Love's DESTINY Is Eternal

(1 Corinthians 13:7-8 KJV) "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. {8} Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away."

There is a song by *Casting Crowns* that puts everything you've heard today in perspective:

.... if we are the body
Why aren't His arms reaching?
Why aren't His hands healing?
Why aren't His words teaching?

And if we are the body
Why aren't His feet going?
Why is His love not showing them there is a way?
There is a way

You as a Christian and YOU the CHURCH are **defined by Love, Designed TO love** because love is eternal. What you do for love's sake will last forever.

7. Love's destiny is _____. (1 Corinthians 13:7-8)

We are coming up on a new Church year where you will be asked to fill positions in the Body. I pray, when you are asked, you will consider what you heard here today. Tonight a young girl will be baptized to profess her faith in Christ. She does this because Love called her to salvation, and now she follows her design in love to God and to you. Listen Beloved: *Love is never lazy, apathetic, or warring*. An ancient Christian wrote "The

church of Christ has been founded by shedding its own blood, not that of others; by enduring outrage, not by inflicting it. (Jerome)." Are you where you should be in your love for God?



Rock Hill Baptist Church is located between Parsons and Lexington, Tennessee, on Highway 412. Look for our sign! We have services on Wednesdays (Adult, Youth, and children's Bible studies) at 7:00 PM, Sundays at 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Rock Hill is a family oriented Bible believing Church - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Our Pastor, Brother David Buffaloe, will answer any questions you have about our Church if you contact him at 731-845-6104, or through his website at bibleteacher.org [page12]