

## Daily Devotional, January 8, 2021 What Love Is

***Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1Corinthians 13:4-7***

The assortment of thoughts and doctrines on love contained in the thirteenth chapter of Paul's letter to the church at Corinth are amazing in terms of their overwhelming selflessness. Love is depicted by Paul as a source of action rather than a basis of emotion. It is a matter of doing things for people out of compassion for them, whether or not we feel personal affection for them. It is by our active love for one another that we can be known as followers of Jesus Christ.

These particular verses, as well as the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter in its entirety, is often spoken at weddings, it is in fact a passage that I have often used at wedding ceremonies. It has also been used at engagement announcements and many other occasions where emotional love is emphasized. It is perfectly appropriate that it is used for this purpose. In fact, it was the passage that I requested be used at our wedding. That is what strikes me about what the the power of the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to say.

Paul in the sixth verse says that love “does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth” and later says that love “always protects.” When soon to be newly married or engaged people read or hear these verses, they don't know how true they will be. My wife Laura has been a great example of exhibiting Christ's love to so many others she doesn't have loving affection for but that she has Christ-like loving compassion for(although at times I witness a sharing of both). She gives of her time and treasure. She does things constantly for others when she may not feel the best, but she is to me the epitome of what Paul speaks about in this chapter. Not to mention how she loves me despite all of my glaring faults—especially those that have been revealed while being cooped up at home due to Covid-19 restrictions). She also has two young adult children who have copped strains of my sense of humor, so she is truly outnumbered and can use your prayers!

But we all have examples in our lives of people we know—or in my case fortunate enough to be married to—who reveal this patience and love despite what we throw their way. Paul stresses this point, and the fact that it is not necessarily tied to affection, frees us to love others outside of our immediate families. Our responsibility as Christians is to go out and make disciples throughout the entire world. We can't do that if we only love those in our immediate vicinity. The type of Christianity portrayed for us in the New Testament is the human response we have to the revelation of our Creator that He is the God of love.

Out of this great love for those who did not love back, who did not love at all, the Father gave His Son, the Son gave His life, and the Father and Son together have sent the Spirit to save sinners from misery and lead them into glory. “*It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*” *What amazing love!*

***Prayer: Dear God, we pray that our lives would be filled and overflowing with the power of your love so we can make a difference in this world and bring honor to you. We ask for your help in reminding us that the most important things are not what we do outwardly, based on any talent or gift, but the most significant thing we can do in this life is simply to love you and to choose to love others. Lord thank you that your love is patient. Help us show patience with those around us. Lord thank you that your love is kind. Help us to extend kindness to others. Lord thank you that true love is not jealous. Help us cast aside feelings of jealousy or hatred towards others. Help us to love as you love. Fill us with your Spirit so that we can choose what is best. Thank you, that you equip us to face each day with the power of your love, your forgiveness, and your grace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.***