

True Love in Everything

by Wayne Goff

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 is the well-known description of true love. In the context of the book, Paul applies it to the proper use of spiritual gifts. But the principles of agape love are applicable to every relationship in life. Let us note these qualities and consider ourselves in light of them:

1. **Love suffers long & is kind, v. 4.** Love is able to endure the slights and wrongs dished out to it in a patient way. Jesus was patient when mistreated (1 Pet. 2:23).
2. **Love does not envy, v. 4.** Envy is a feeling of ill-will toward others, a spirit of jealousy which begrudges any good experienced by another. It is thankful for the success of others.
3. **Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up, v. 4.** Love is not a braggart for others to notice. Love helps us use our talents, abilities, and opportunities in a way that is of service to others without boasting of self. Love is not conceited, and does not push its way over others.
4. **Love does not behave rudely, v. 5.** Rudeness is disrespect to another. Love never disrespects another person, but seeks to please others. Love is modest, humble and courteous.
5. **Love does not seek its own, v. 5.** It does not need to have its own way in everything. Its “rights” will not be exercised at the expense of others.
6. **Love is not easily provoked, v. 5.** Love learns and practices self-control. Love accepts being placed in a disadvantage, and handles it well.
7. **Love thinks no evil, v. 5.** Love provides a delightful state of mind and outlook on life. It does not put evil or bad constructions on the words or actions of others.
8. **Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth, v. 6.** Sin always saddens love. It is not happy in the downfall of others, or in the received consequences of sinful actions. True love grieves over wrong, and rejoices greatly in that which is true in nature, and in reality.
9. **Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things, v. 7.** Naturally, the “all things” is limited to what love can do towards them *intrinsically*. Love patiently, quietly endures life’s burdens. Love is not distrustful and suspicious, but thinks the best of others. Thus, love hopes for the best, and bears up under hardship when things do not turn out the best. Love looks for the best positive outcome in all circumstances.
10. **Love never fails, v. 8.** The superiority of love over everything else is supremely demonstrated in God’s love for the sinful world. Despite all of man’s hatred and contempt for God, God *still* “so loved the world” even while we were enemies. Love never “fails” -- that is, is never driven off its course. If love doesn’t get the job done in regards to the person or the situation, it is not the fault of the one who loved.

In a very practical way, Paul explains how love expresses itself in relationship to others. Romans 13:8-10 says:

“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

Every violation of God’s commandments concerning others is an expression of selfish hatred and disregard for others. Every observance of God’s commands benefits the other with honor and respect.

Now, make a list in all of your relationships of **how** love would act in that situation: God, country, family, society and self -- using the ten points of 1 Corinthians 13. Then consciously begin to **practice** them, and see how wonderful, rich and fulfilling your life will become.