

## Christ's Love Puts Off Envy and Pride

### 1 Corinthians 13:4c

Pastor/Elder Phil Layton, GCBC October 17, 2021

Please turn if you would to 1 Cor 13. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade I remember memorizing it in the KJV: *'Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly ...'*

English has changed, but I still like the NKJV: <sup>4</sup> *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;* <sup>5</sup> *does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;* <sup>6</sup> *does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;* <sup>7</sup> *bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...*

Today we'll focus on the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of v. 4: love isn't envious or proud. Or in ESV love doesn't 'boast; it is not arrogant' (NIV 'it is not proud'). 2 weeks ago I put up a fill-in-the-blank exercise for 1 Cor 13 for your name. How you doing? Can any of us say 'I'm not proud' without being proud about it? Can I raise my hand to say I don't boast, without boasting! Can you say you're never envious aka discontent in life? If you truly can, I envy you! If someone described you, would the first 2 character traits that come to mind be patient and kind? That's what comes to Paul's mind as he describes *love*.

**Not one of us has arrived in this, but we all need to strive in this**

That's just v. 4. In v. 5 can you say you don't seek your own and you don't get provoked or think evil? Would we be defined as "kind" by others? Am I patiently long suffering with what annoys me? Do any of us always protect, always trust, always hope, always endure, and does our love never fail? It's important we don't look at 1 Cor 13 just on man's level or a moralistic level

**We need to look at Christ and His love in this chapter**

If you look at v. 1 only Jesus can speak all the languages of men and angels!  
In v. 2 only Jesus understands all mysteries and all knowledge and is able to move mountains into the sea (and the book of Revelation says Jesus will)!

In v. 3 Jesus did give all He had and gave up His body, and all for love! We gain nothing and are nothing without love, but Jesus does nothing without love! Jesus is everything and everything else is loss that we may gain Him!

If we can say to live is Christ, then even to die is gain! But apart from Him we can do nothing, that includes loving in the way He calls us to in this text.

**We don't have perfect love, but we have to 'pursue love' (14:1)**

Jesus Christ is the pattern and the power for us to love the way He loves us. You could argue Paul wants us to view v. 4-7 in a Christ-centered way from how he changes from first person pronouns (“I” 8x in v. 1-3) to 3<sup>rd</sup> person nouns and verbs in v. 4-7 (15x, like talking about another person who loves, but not talking about himself). The person of Christ is God’s love incarnate.

So as we come into v. 4 Christ’s love is patient, Christ’s love is kind, Christ lovingly does not envy or boast, Christ alone is never arrogant or proud. But He calls us by name to become more like Him in His love for His namesake

**MENTION RYKEN BOOK AT TABLE IN BACK**

### **MESSAGE TITLE: CHRIST’S LOVE PUTS OFF ENVY AND PRIDE**

**Outline:** 1. Put Off the Sins of Envy and Pride  
2. Put On the Savior’s Love

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE – positive book ends in 13:4a and v. 6b-7. The middle phrases are what love is NOT, actually what love DOES not do. There are 15 verbs – 7 positive verbs and 8 negative verbs to describe love. These aren’t adjectives, these are all actions, present tense continual habits. There’s 7 things love CHOOSES to do and 8 things love REFUSES to do. Today we’ll see 3 things love refuses to do: envy, boast, be arrogant (ESV). Think of love as clothing, where each thread contributes to the overall, and in the end of v. 4 there’s 3 threads that color a picture of what love is not.

**Our scripture reading in 1 Pet 2 said put off envy**

ENVY – Greek root word *zelos*, we get zealous from. It can mean jealous or covetous of either good or bad things, depending on context (negative here). God is jealous and there can be a godly jealousy, but v. 4 is ungodly envy. In ch 3, v. 3, Paul said ‘*there are **envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal...***’ This is carnal fleshly envy, same words for the deeds of flesh in Gal 5 to put off: ‘*strife, jealousy...envy...But the fruit of the Spirit is **love...** Let us not become **conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.***’ Notice envying is related to being conceited (or NASB *boastful*).

Envy is with strife, it’s a “striving...hostile emotion based on resentment.”<sup>1</sup>

**GREEK IMAGE OF BOILING OVER – DAMAGE – TURN IT OFF**

Jealous envy boils over into strife. If you see provoking, envying is nearby. Paul wrote to this same church with this same word in 2 Cor 12:20 to put off ‘*quarreling, **jealousy...conceit, and disorder.***’ James 3 is a similar list that calls it bitter

envy and connects with selfish ambition and says there will be disorder where that sin exists. How many psychological 'disorders' may have bitter envy behind them? James 3:16 says that leads to disorder.

Then James 4:2 tells us the source of our conflicts: '*You are envious and you cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel* (NAS, NIV want and don't get)

Behind quarreling is coveting what you want but don't have and don't get. Envy leads to enmity. Problem isn't having things, it's things having you. In the original context of Corinth Paul's writing to, their culture "valued success through wealth, personal status seeking, competitive individualism, wisdom, and knowledge. This value system not only permeated the culture but also ... the church ... [Envy in a church] covets others' gifts, possessions, or positions of influence. It is suspicious and critical of another's popularity."<sup>2</sup> One writer says "The problem was not that the church was in Corinth but that too much of Corinth was in the church."<sup>3</sup>

What about us? We're called to love our neighbor and not covet anything belonging to our neighbor. But we can covet when they get ahead and we can't, or we struggle in finances, or physically, or in family, and it seems they don't. Why do they get the fun and freedoms? I'm stuck doing this but I see others doing that [you fill in the blank]. A mom with littles at home or an older saint not able to do as much – many stages of life tempt to envy.

### Envy is discontent as it sees what others enjoy

We can envy others with better health, or more healthy family relationships, or more happy memories or vacations on FB or IG. Social media can fuel envy. TV advertising is designed to stir envy. Even in church you can envy those who by outward appearance seem to have it all together – while you don't – but truth is they don't either and you don't know the half. As your pastors we know a bit more the other half and struggles good families have.

Don't envy what you see in a neighbor's driveway; you can't see his debt. Don't covet the life you think another has; be content with what you have. You can measure whether you're content or coveting by your complaining. Remember envy boils over and words will come out. Turn down the water. Don't be jealous of time you don't get with someone or talents others have. Do you envy you're if not invited or included in something? Anytime we feel others have it better than us can tempt any of us to be bitter and envious

Proverbs 14:30 "*envy makes the bones rot.*" Jonathan Edwards wrote envy "is like a powerful eating cancer, preying on the vitals, offensive and full of corruption. And it is the most foolish kind of self-injury; for the envious make themselves trouble most needlessly, being uncomfortable only because of others... blessings. But they are not

willing to enjoy what they have because others are enjoying... envious persons [are like] caterpillars which delight most in devouring the most flourishing trees and plants...<sup>4</sup>

### What's eating you? What are you feeding on?

The cure in 1 Cor 13:4 is Christ's love that does not envy. There's another word in v. 4: *love doesn't...boast*. The envious aren't content if they **don't** get a blessing; the boastful aren't content if they **do** get blessed, they have to boast about it. Don't just think verbal boasting, think posting online, too. What's your heart behind stickers you put on the back of your car? Who or what are you proud about and make sure others know about you? See, we may not brag like some, but there's ways we can toot our own horns. The Pharisees literally blew a trumpet when they gave money in the temple but there's ways we can draw attention to ourselves, boasting can be non-verbal

### Boasting can be what you do to make it about you, focus on you

Jn 12:43 says of Jewish religious leaders '*they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*' (NKJV). This word 'boast' implies seeking praise from others in a self-centered way.<sup>5</sup> Do you seek praise? Do you love man's praise? How often do you talk about yourself as opposed to others? Do you have the 'I' disease when you talk (say I...I...I)? That's a type of boasting. Love doesn't parade self (NKJV) or it can translate 'makes no self-display'<sup>6</sup>

### James 4:16 says even not saying/thinking 'if the Lord wills' is boasting

The last word in v. 4 is the other side of pride (*arrogance* in ESV). It's like 2 sides of the same coin: boasting is when pride comes out, but arrogance is pride inside. These 2 verbs cover what we speak and what we think. NKJV "puffed up" gives a good image of the big head, or I think of a puffer fish.

Greek scholars define it as "exaggerated self-conception"<sup>7</sup> that is "inflated" by those "full of themselves,"<sup>8</sup> or "inflated ideas of its own importance."<sup>9</sup>

Love is not puffed up. 1 Cor 8:1 'knowledge *puffs up*, but love *builds up*.'

This puffed up pride or arrogance is part of both envy or boasting. Just like '*love is patient and kind*' gives inward and outward actions, '*love does not envy or boast*' gives inward and outward actions. What do these 2 sins have in common? The 3<sup>rd</sup> sin, *arrogant*, or *puffed up* thinking. How do those 3 relate? Arrogance thinks 'I'm better, I deserve better.' That thinking leads to envy if others have it better than you. Why? Because you think you're better and you deserve better than what you have. And others don't deserve to have what you don't because they're not better than you. If you **do** have something better than others, arrogance boasts as if you're better than others

Envious discontent people talk much about what they don't have, boastful people talk much about what they **do** have. What both have in common is the end of v. 4, arrogant pride that assumes they're better or deserve better.

We need to see what's going on inside, not just put on new clothes over it. God didn't inspire this passage so we would just try harder to not complain or brag as much – God has help for our pride inside that tempts us to both.

Think of envy as an outer shirt, boasting as an undershirt, over a proud heart – don't just take off what's sin-stained, put on God's love for a heart change

1. PUT OFF THE SINS OF ENVY AND PRIDE
2. **PUT ON THE SAVIOR'S LOVE**

Christ's love not only redeems us from sin, it can replace our sins with love. Envy resents when others are honored in ways you're not, but love rejoices in others being honored because you care for them. Look back at 12:25: *that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same **care for one another**.*<sup>26</sup> *If one member suffers, all suffer together; if **one member is honored, all rejoice together**.* So if one member is honored in a way better than you, you rejoice with them because you care for them. Love doesn't resent her better blessings or ask why she's got better than you

To put off boasting self-praise, put on praising God and others instead

In v. 21 the eye can't say to the hand or the head to the foot 'I don't need you.' Some parts of the body in Corinth were apparently arrogantly thinking they didn't need others, and some were boasting of their gifts or envying the gifts of others. So Paul writes 13:4, love isn't envious, boastful or arrogant. To love like that PUT ON contentment in Christ and a humble others-focus.

Paul says in another place "*clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus...*"<sup>10</sup>

1 Cor 13:4-7 is printed in big letters next to our mirror in our bedroom and the wall going into our closet. Just like I look in the mirror before I go out to see what I need to change (or I should, my family reminds me I need to), I need to look in the mirror of the Word to see what needs to change in me. And just like I took off my pajama pants and shirt as I walked in my closet and put on church pants and shirt, these words on my closet are a reminder that I need to put off envy and pride and put on love that's patient and kind.

TALK A BIT ABOUT JAMES 1:22-25

PUT OFF – in Col 3 part of putting on Christ, love, patience, and kindness is putting off covetousness (a type of envy). Rom 13 says cast off deeds of darkness, put on God's armor, and not walk *'in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ...'* (v. 12-14 NKJV). 1 Pet 2 says *'put away ... envy ...'* and calls us to taste and see that the Lord is good, or is kind. We need to come hungry and humbly to Christ for satisfaction like a baby craves milk.

PUT ON – opposite of envy and pride would be contentment and humility. Peter later says *'clothe yourselves with humility, for God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble'* (1 Pet 5:5 NAS). Col 3 says *'put on ... humility, meekness'* (v. 12). And to put it on right, we need the mirror to show us what needs to change as we look to Jesus. Paul tells the Corinthian church when we're *'beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, [we] are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory'* (2 Cor 3:18).<sup>11</sup>

Seeing Christ's glory is key to transform us into that image from one degree of glory to the next. Beholding Christ is how we're becoming like Christ in His love. Think of 1 Cor 13 as a mirror that changes us to it for His glory.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus and His wonderful face, the things on earth (you envy or boast about) grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

**Seeing the wondrous cross where He died pours contempt on all pride  
We sing 'forbid it Lord I should boast, save in the death of Christ my Lord'**

Gal 6:14 *'Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus.'*

If you're prone to boast or talk much about yourself, don't just try to resist that, replace that by boasting in Jesus. Making much of #1 may be a natural tendency, but you can redirect that to make much of Jesus, make Him #1. You can't just put off boasting, but by grace you can put on boasting in Him

The Savior says *'let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices **steadfast love**...'* (Jer 9:24).

Do you know Him? Do you show His love? If not come to the Savior's love and lordship and turn from your sin to Him who alone can satisfy your soul. Turn from seeking praise to praising Him. Draw attention to others, not self.

**Strauch defines boasting as self-preoccupation.<sup>12</sup> Cure is Christ, others**

**Go to ch 3.** Ch 1 says our identity is in Christ, no human being is to boast in God's sight and *'let him who boasts, boast in the Lord'* (v. 12, 18, 29-31).

**3:3** *for you are still of the flesh. For while there is **jealousy** [same word in 13:4] and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? <sup>4</sup> For*

when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” [what they were boasting] are you not being merely human? ...

[v. 21] So **let no one boast in men. For all things are yours,** <sup>22</sup> whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—**all are yours,** <sup>23</sup> **and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.**

Don’t boast in men, and don’t envy things, all you need is yours in Christ. Don’t just turn from jealousy, turn to Jesus. Turn from envy to sufficiency to Him. If you talk too much about you, start working on be slow to speak

**Next conversation: draw others out, ask questions**

**4:6** *I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be **puffed up** in favor of one against another.* <sup>7</sup> *For who sees anything different in you? [NAS ‘who regards you as superior?'] What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, **why do you boast** as if you did not receive it? This is how Paul deflates the puffed up: who thinks you’re better, why boast, when everything you have is a gift!*

Jerry Bridges applies this to envy, too: “we must mentally bring God into the picture. We must remind ourselves that He determines not only what abilities we have but also the degree of those abilities and the blessing He will bestow on their use ... to be envious or jealous of someone is either eliminating God from the picture or else accusing Him of being unfair.”<sup>13</sup>

**TRUST HIS SOVEREIGNTY, GOODNESS, AND WISDOM**

Look at ch 9. Paul started this letter saying the word of the cross of Christ is the power of God (1:18). **9:16** *For if I preach the gospel, **I have nothing to boast of**, for I am under compulsion; for **woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.** The gospel is for people ‘full of envy ... arrogant and boastful ... unloving’ (Rom 1:29-31 NAS). The gospel says we’re spiritually dead, but can be saved by grace through faith, not of works – so no one may boast.<sup>14</sup>*

The gospel suffocates boasting. Milton Vincent says it this way in his excellent Gospel Primer: The gracious love of God, lavished on me because of Christ’s death, is always humbling to remember, especially when viewed against the backdrop of the Hell I deserve. Pride wilts in the atmosphere of the gospel; and the more pride is mortified within me, the less frequent are my moments of sinful contention with God and with others. Conversely, humility grows lushly in the atmosphere of the gospel<sup>15</sup>

Jesus says in the gospel ‘Come to me...learn from Me, for I am...humble of heart’ (Mt 11:28-29 NAS). It’s been said ‘He never needed to overplay his ministry or to blow his own trumpet ... Jesus never seemed at all interested in gaining recognition ... In the

love of God there is no place for ... treating [others] insensitively ... love propels us through the grace of the Lord.<sup>16</sup>

Paul will later write how the love of Christ compels us and we need to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ.<sup>17</sup> Think of the envious disciples in the upper room, debating who was the greatest and jealously striving for greater position. Ryken in that book I mentioned, said “in our envy we only think about what we can get, not about what we can give” but Jesus gave and served to deliver his followers from that, so “go to the cross, confess our sins, and then ask Jesus to help us love the way he loves.”<sup>18</sup>

Love so amazing, so divine, demands our life, our soul, or all.

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 185.

<sup>2</sup> Strauch, *Leading with Love*, 47-48.

<sup>3</sup> David Garland, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT, 1 Corinthians, 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Yale Edition, 8:230-31.

<sup>5</sup> Ronald Trail, *Exegetical Summary of 1 Corinthians 10-16*, 177.

<sup>6</sup> W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, volume 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 899.

<sup>7</sup> Ciampa and Rosner, *Pillar NT Commentary*, 1 Corinthians, 644.

<sup>8</sup> Schreiner, 1 Corinthians, 276.

<sup>9</sup> Thiselton, NIGTC, 1049.

<sup>10</sup> Romans 13:14 NIV.

<sup>11</sup> NASB.

<sup>12</sup> Strauch, *Leading with Love*, 51.

<sup>13</sup> Bridges, “Envy, Jealousy, and Related Sins,” in *Respectable Sins*, 152–154. See also Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1964 reprint).

<sup>14</sup> Ephesians 2:1-9.

<sup>15</sup> Milton Vincent, *A Gospel Primer for Christians: Learning to See the Glories of God’s Love* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2008), 28.

<sup>16</sup> David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 230-31.

<sup>17</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:14, 10:5 NASB.

<sup>18</sup> Ryken, 102.