

# What's Love Got to Do With It?

## The Pre-Eminent Christian Virtue

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## Introduction

- According to the once popular song, love is only a “second hand emotion”
- But is love for the Christian primarily an emotion?
- Dictionary: (1) an intense feeling of deep affection, (2) a great interest and pleasure in something, (3) a person or thing that one loves, (4) a score of zero (tennis)
- Are these accurate descriptions for what the Bible means when it refers to love?

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## The Theological Basis for Love

- Inner-Trinitarian Love - John 17:23-26
- The Spirit as the means of love - Romans 5:5
- God is love - 1 John 4:8, 16
- A God of love and peace - 2 Corinthians 13:11
- God's primary motivation for redemption - John 3:16
- Shouldn't we think of God's primary motive to be His glory?
- Glorifying of what about God?

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## The Pre-Eminence of Love in the NT

- The Fruit of the Spirit - Galatians 5:22-23
- The New Commandment - John 13:34
- The Mark of True Discipleship - John 13:35
- Love's relation to obedience - John 14:21
  - To obey, to not sin, is ultimately for human flourishing as an anti of love, not mere legal obligation
- Love one another (Rom12:10, Gal5:13, Eph4:2, 1Thes3:12, 4:9, 2Thes1:3, Heb10:24, 1Pet1:22, 4:8, 1Jn3:11, 23, 4:7, 11, 12, 2Jn5)
- The greatest virtue compared to Faith and Hope is Love - 1Corinthians 13:13
- What about Truth? - Ephesians 4:15

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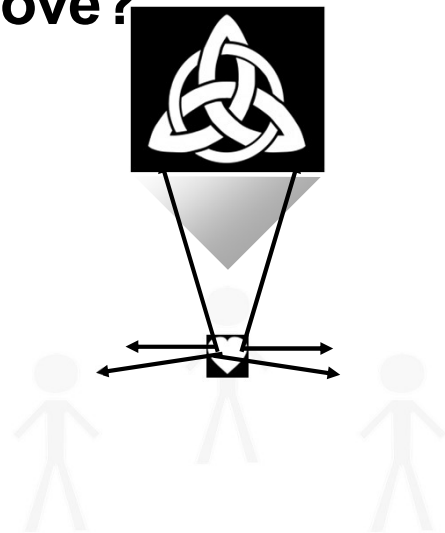
## Love in 1 Corinthians 13

- To flesh it out, what more precisely is love?
- A composite picture: someone who speaks with tongues of men and angels, prophetic powers, understanding all mysteries and knowledge, complete faith, give away all one has, deliver up body to be burned - all without love is **useless**
- Love is...patient, kind, without envy, boasting, arrogance, or rudeness, not insisting on one's own way, not irritable or keeping score, rejoicing not in wrong but in the truth...all without an "end"
- This kind of love is the premier display of spiritual maturity over all the previous markers

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## What is Needed for Such Love?

- Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19
- Love of **Complacency** (evoked from qualities in the thing or person loved)
- Love of **Benevolence** (evoked from the need in the thing or person loved, a commitment of sacrifice to do good)



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## Application/Participation

- God's love for us makes room in our hearts to generate a love towards other sinful, broken, unlovable, disappointing, and treacherous people (like us) that could not otherwise happen
- Our hearts are like hoppers to be filled, not primarily by other people's love for us, but God's love in Christ for us
- When we lack what we need to love others, it is only our personally meditating on and celebrating God's Gospel-love that can empower us to love by the Holy Spirit
- Conclusion: it does us well to spend much time glorying in God's love, not merely for self-comfort and encouragement, but to enable us to fulfill the commandment to love God and others