

Love Is

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Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
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Well, we come now to looking together into the word of God, and I trust that your heart is prepared and that your heart is ready and eager to take in God's word. I invite you to turn to the book of 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians, we find ourselves in chapter 13, and we've come now to beginning in verse 4, some of the most beautiful verses that are found anywhere in the entire Bible. I want to begin by reading verses 4 through 7, and it will take us several Lord's days to unpick the beauties and unfold the richness of all that is here, but I want to begin by reading this text, and today we will begin looking at this together. 1 Corinthians 13, beginning in verse 4. The apostle Paul writes,

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

This chapter is considered to be the greatest literary passage ever penned by the Apostle Paul, and that is saying a lot as we consider the great truths that he has recorded in the Bible. These verses are read at weddings. They are calligraphied and framed and hung on walls. They are quoted in speeches and set to music and songs and sung by choirs. These verses are virtually unsurpassed in its literary beauty. Its poetic cadence and structure is immediately obvious and is nothing short of a masterpiece as it includes numerous figures of speech and rhetorical devices. Contained in this chapter are the literary devices of personification, hyperbole, repetition, chiasm, juxtaposition, imagery, metaphor, metonymy, and others. The richness with which these verses are written is virtually unsurpassed. There is far more here than what initially meets the eye, but of far greater importance than the beauty of the style with which these verses are written is the substance of which it addresses and the absolute need for love to be present in our lives and what is the specific nature this love. What Paul states in this 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians is the absolute necessity in each and every one of our lives to exercise love in our Christian lives. What Paul is telling us is that love is not incidental, it is fundamental, that love is not secondary, it is primary in our Christian lives, and if we do not have love, then we are nothing. It is the loveless person who produces nothing, accomplishes nothing, gains nothing, and is nothing in the Christian life. It is that important.

Now, last time together, we looked at verses 1 through 3, and we put a heading over the first three verses, "The Preeminence of Love," and Paul could not speak in any stronger words regarding the absolute priority and preeminence of love. Now today, we want to begin to look at verses 4 through 7 and the heading here is "The Properties of Love," the different distinctives of love, if you will. And then just to round out this chapter to let you know where we're headed, in verses 8 through 13 is "The Permanence of Love," and Paul will tell us that certain spiritual gifts will pass off of the scene, he will tell us that even faith and hope will fade away, but that there is only one virtue that will remain throughout time and eternity and that virtue is love, love for God and love for our fellow believers.

Now, as we begin looking at this middle section, verses 4 through 7, I want to give an overview. I want to give an introduction to these verses and as I have been studying this week and digging into these verses, I've discovered that there's more here than what initially meets the eye, and I feel like a deep-sea diver who has found pearls at the bottom of the ocean, and I want to come up to the boat and I want to display these for you and show you the mastery with which Paul has written these verses. So, what I want to do is give you ten observations about verses 4 through 7, and this will be a little bit of a Bible study, more so than in other messages, but nevertheless there will still be application and exhortation for us. But so that we might fully appreciate and understand what Paul has written here, I want you to note these ten things.

1. I want you to notice literary beauty. There are 15 descriptions of love that we have listed here, and they are done so with an extraordinary economy of words. There is not one wasted word. If an editor were to come to these verses and not know the Scripture, but put his pen to this, there is nothing that he could remove. Of these 15 descriptions of love, seven are positive, eight are negative. In other words, eight of them start with the word "not"; the other seven are positive. So there is a perfect balance and symmetry here. This is much like the Ten Commandments, some of which are stated in the positive, others of which are stated in the negative, and part of that is to keep our mind alert. These verses are like kaleidoscopes that reveals the multifaceted dimensions of love with much precision in beauty. John MacArthur has stated it in a wonderful way when he writes, "Paul shines love through a prism and we see 15 of its colors and hues, the spectrum of love. Each ray gives a facet, a property of agape love." Or to put it another way, these 15 distinctives of love are like 15 cuts in a perfect diamond, and we hold up that diamond to the sun and as the sun shines through that diamond, there is refracted light that comes bursting forth through that diamond and each aspect of what Paul describes as love here is a very important element of this love. Or we could think of these verses as a tapestry, a tightly woven tapestry with each thread carefully chosen by Paul to weave into his thoughts and each thread perfectly fits into the overall big picture. Nowhere in the Bible will we find a more beautiful description of this chief Christian virtue of love than what we find here. This is the most comprehensive description of love found anywhere in the Bible.

Now, most correctly, this is not a definition of love. This is a description of love and what is being described here is the God-kind of love. This is agape love, taken from the Greek

word agapeo, that speaks of supernatural love, that speaks of sacrificial love, that speaks of unconditional love, a love that does not come from this world, but a love that must come down from God above. So this is what we first see and must recognize, the literary beauty of these verses but second, I want you to notice perfect structure. These verses are laid out in perfect poetic form. There is a literary device that is known as chiasm, c-h-i-a-s-m, and it is taken from the Greek letter chi, c-h-i. Some of you were in a fraternity or sorority and in college and you would see the word chi on people's sweatshirts, for example. And the chi is an X, and the X pictures the literary device that is found in these verses. With the X, there is an ascent up, and then when you reach the intersection of the two lines, there is then a descent down. So it's the bottom half of the X, which is like a pyramid, and in literary terms, it would go like this, A, B, C, B, A, or 1, 2, 3, 2, 1. And it is an intentional technique that shows form and structure, but it also allows the author to emphasize what is the high point; everything builds up and everything builds away from what is in the high point. Now, this entire chapter is a chiastic structure. Verses 1 through 3 is the A, verses 4 through 7 is the B, and verses 8 through 13 is the A. It is obvious there is a difference even in writing style as verses 1 through 3 are long flowing sentences, when we come to 4 through 7, it's short, punchy, staccato sentences, and then beginning in verse 8 through the end of the chapter, he goes back to the long flowing sentences. So these divisions are very clear and what this does is emphasize what is in the middle, verses 4 through 7. This is what is most important in this chapter. So it's like bookends on both sides that affirm these central verses but verses 4 through 7 are also written in a chiastic structure. So there is a chiasm within a chiasm. And in verses 4 through 7, it starts with the positive, it moves to the negative, it ends up with the positive.

Let me show you this and for those of you who are careful Bible students, you know that observation is necessary before there can be any interpretation, before there can be then application. So just making these observations, I want you to see what no doubt was in the mind of the Apostle Paul as he laid out these verses. Verse 4 begins with two positives, love is patient, love is kind. That is the A. Now it turns to the negative and there will be eight unbroken consecutive negatives of what love is not, and so note that he says love is not jealous, does not brag, is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly, does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong-suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness. But, and now he shifts back to the positive. That's how he began. with the positive. He now concludes with the positive and the five positives are rejoices with the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. And you'll even notice in verse 7, there is there is an intentional repetition in the style with which it is said. So Paul has given much thought to not only what he wants to say, but how he wants to say it.

Now, within this chiasm, the highest rung of the ladder is found in verse 5, the third descriptive where it says "is not provoked." That's the apex of the pyramid. That is the pinnacle of the triangle and that is the point of emphasis, that is the epicenter, that is the highest rung, and Paul does this to underscore what the Corinthians most need to hear because they are a people with a short fuse and they are very easily provoked and they fly off the handle at the smallest offense. And having now studied this book and as we have worked our way through this book, we are well aware from earlier chapters that they are

way too quick to sue one another. They are way too quick to withhold themselves physically from their spouses. They are way too quick to divorce one another, way too quick to enter into quarrels and divisions one another. They have a hair-trigger temper and they are carnal and they are fleshly and they lack the self-control of love. So even as Paul is laying out what love is, he is able to emphasize certain features even in the way in which he does this. For those of you who love to read the Psalms, for example, it comes out more so in poetic literature but we will see very often A, B, C, B, A as the psalmist will express himself in a beautiful way.

Now third, I want you to note its dynamic action. Its dynamic action, and as you look at verses 4 through 7, one observation that should be obvious to us is that these descriptions are action verbs. Some of them are translated as adjectives into the English version, but you need to know, and I looked this up this week just to verify this, that all 15 of these are verbs. They are action verbs. That is to communicate to us that love is not a mere feeling. Love runs much deeper than that and love is an action, it is a choice of the will, whether you feel like it or not, and that is what we see here, that love is a dynamic action. It is not something that is stagnant. It is not something that is fluctuating and fickle. Notice what it says, love is patient. Notice it does not say love feels patient. It says love is kind. It does not say love feels kind today. No. Love is never passive. Love is always active. Love always rises up and reaches out and takes action. Love that is not in action is not love at all, it is mere feelings. And so bottom line, what we need to see in these verses before we even look at each of these individual specifics is that love is not an abstract idea. Love is not an emotional feeling, although feelings may be involved or they may not be involved. Love is not a tender spot. Love is a decisive choice of the will. Love is an act of volition and the dynamic action, this dynamic action is precisely what we see in the love of God the Father towards us. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Romans 5:8, "God demonstrated His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And this is the mark of Christ's own love for us. In John 15, verse 13, "Greater love has no one than this." He doesn't then say that one has just wonderful feelings about other people. "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." In 1 John 3:16, John writes, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us." So understand this, true love gives, true love sacrifices, true love takes action, true love steps up, reaches out, and does whatever is necessary to demonstrate love towards other people. And please also note, love is not mere words. Love is not saying, "I love you." How easy that is to say it. How challenging, but how real it is to live it and to carry that out and to demonstrate this and to show this.

4. Love, I want you to note its constant pursuit. I want you to note these verbs again, and this is worth drawing to your attention, that every one of these 15 verbs, I want to say that again, every one of these 15 verbs is in the present tense. Notice what this says, love is patient, it does not say love will one day become patient. It does not say love once was patient, it says love is patient. Love is always patient. Love is like this in every situation, in every circumstance, with every person with whom we come in contact, in every difficulty, and in every stress, whether we feel like it or not, whether I am energetic or not, love is always constantly, continually pursuing these demonstrations of love. Love

never takes a day off. Love never goes on a sabbatical. Love never lets its guard down. Love is always like this. So, note verse 4 and following, love is patient, love is kind, love is not jealous, love does not brag, is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly, does not seek its own, is not provoked, etc., etc. Down to verse 7, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Therefore, love is to be a constant lifestyle every moment of every day in our lives. There is never to be a moment when we are not what this calls for. Further, there is a sense of urgency in every one of our lives about this matter of demonstrating love, because it is in the present tense. Love can never be put off till tomorrow. Love can never be postponed. Love can never be put on hold. Love must always act now, today, decisively as the opportunity is before me and as I see needs in people's lives and as I interface with people right now, love must always act in the present. Love never procrastinates. Love always feels a sense of emergency and urgency about this moment in time as I am with other people and as I find myself in situations.

5. I want you to note its challenging rebuke. Each description here is not intended to be a warm fuzzy that gives us a melodious feeling. Every single one of these descriptives is what the Corinthians were not. And this is a long list. Every one of these is a sharp correction of the Corinthians. It is intended to be both a challenge as well as a conviction that they fall short in every one of these areas. And God is not pleased. This list is tailored to the Corinthian situation. This is specifically what this church needed to hear and where they needed to make immediate improvement in their Christian lives, and beginning in verse 4, these descriptions can be reversed and we would be left with what the Corinthians are. In other words, as your eye flows from verses 4 and following, the Corinthians are impatient. They are unkind. Look at them as they come to the Lord's Supper. Look at them at their agape feast. Look at them stuffing food in their mouths and trying to beat other people to the table. Look at how ungracious the Corinthians were. The Corinthians were filled with jealousy. They were braggarts. They were arrogant. They were unbecoming. They were self-seeking. They were easily provoked. They were mindful of wrong sufferings. They never forgot an offense. The Corinthians rejoiced in unrighteousness. They rejoiced in false reports that brought harm to others. They did not bear all things. They did not believe all things. They did not hope all things. They did not endure on all things. They gave up on one another. As one commentator, David Garland states, "Rather than being a hymn glorifying how wonderful love is, this text becomes a subtle commentary on what is rotten in Corinth."

There's a reason why Paul says this, and it's not that in the middle of this letter, which we have said is a spiritual spanking, that Paul suddenly wants to begin to sing a love song in the middle of the book. No, this is a continuation and a part of the correction that they so desperately need. And before we move on, at this point, I think it would be spiritually healthy for every one of us in this room today, as we look at these verses to ask ourselves which ones of these distinctives of love is lacking most in my life? Which description of what love is, is especially lacking in my life? Which one area is the greatest need that I have of which I must work on? If you have any doubt what that might be, just ask your wife and she will be very happy to tell you what that is. As you look at this list, verses 4 through 7, which one most convicts you? Which one most challenges you? Which one

requires the greatest prayer in your life? These verses are intentionally a rebuke to the carnality of the Corinthians who were so lacking in this area.

6. Its perfect embodiment. As we look at these 15 descriptives of what love is, each of these 15 verbs find their greatest fulfillment in the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. As we look at these verses, we could very easily say Jesus is patient. Jesus is kind. Jesus is not jealous. Jesus does not brag. Jesus is not arrogant. Jesus does not act unbecomingly. He does not seek his own. He is not provoked. He does not take into account a wrong suffered. If there has ever been anyone who did not rejoice in unrighteousness or laugh at sin, it was the Lord Jesus Christ, but who instead rejoiced in the truth. If anyone has ever been able to bear all things, it was him. He believed all things. He hoped all things. He endured all things. Look at his relationship with the disciples alone. Look at his dealings with Peter alone. Talk about forbearing. Talk about patience. Talk about hoping all things and believing all things. Consider his relationship with Judas, how even in the Upper Room, Jesus to the end is handing a morsel of bread to Judas, which is an expression of special friendship, insider friendship. Our Lord was the most loving man who ever lived on this earth. He was God in human flesh, and he is the perfect embodiment of each and every one of these virtues. See him as he's hanging upon that cross. Listen to him as he does not hurl out vindictives against his enemies. Listen to him as he says, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Listen to him care for his mother as he is nailed to the cross and say, "Woman, behold your son," and then look to John and say, "Behold your mother." What perfect love was demonstrated in the Lord Jesus Christ. This list is in reality what Jesus looks like, what he sounds like, how he lived. This is an extraordinary picture of Christ that finds its ultimate perfect fulfillment in him alone. Do you want to be like Christ? Do you want to live like the Lord Jesus? Then these 15 descriptives become that personification.

7. Its necessary reality. If this is what Christ looks like, then if we are to be like Christ there is a necessary reality of each and every one of these in our lives. 1 John 2:6 says, we ought to walk in the same manner as he walked. Again, the idea is action. It doesn't say we ought to sit in the same manner as he sat, but we need to walk and move out in life and take steps of faith and walk as he walked. So how did he walk? Well, there are so many different passages that we can turn to to frame that picture of what Christ-likeness looks like in my life. We could turn, for example, to the fruit of the Spirit and each evidence of the fruit of the Spirit is an aspect of Christ-likeness, but here in this text in verses 4 through 7, this is what it looks like in my life to live like the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul said, "Be imitators of Me just as I also am of Christ." Paul was imitating Christ and he says we are to imitate him to the extent that he imitates Christ. In reality, that means we are to imitate Christ and for us to imitate Christ, every one of these must be present in our life.

Now let me say this is not a multiple choice. It's not that we get to pick and choose which of these we want to be. And this is like a chain of many links, and one link to break breaks the entire chain. It's like a pane of glass and one rock to go through the pane of glass shatters the whole. And so any departure at any point at any one of these is a serious breach of Christ-likeness. Here is godliness or what it is to be like God. Here is holiness

or what it is to be holy in our personal lives. Romans 8, verse 29, Paul says that the whole of our salvation, from eternity past to eternity future, from being foreknown to being glorified, is this, being conformed to the image of his Son, and that is why our future place in heaven is referred to as glorification because we will be perfectly like Christ in that day. Every true believer is being spiritually advanced and matured toward what we see in these verses, in verses 4 through 7. This is the designated target. This is the standard. This is the pattern towards which God is advancing us in godliness and please see how practical this is. This is not an ivory tower type of religion. This is not just a philosophical bent, and this is certainly not just sitting back and saying, "Oh, I love Jesus." No, this is the reality of what it is to love Jesus. This is the reality of Christ shining through my life and me being like Christ. Let me put it to you this way, the more we are like Jesus, the more we will be like what we see in these verses.

8. Its supernatural production. Of these 15 elements, which are all descriptions of Christ and of Christ-likeness, we must understand that they can only be produced in us by the working of the Holy Spirit as we are being filled by the Spirit. Galatians 5 verse 22 lists the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is, what's number 1 on the list? Love. That is to say, we do not produce love, we simply bear love. It is the Spirit who produces supernatural, Christ-like love in us. He says the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace – listen to the next two, see if this matches up with 1 Corinthians 13:4, the next two – patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control and self-control takes in many of these elements. All this is to say it is God at work within us, both willing and working for his good pleasure, that must bring this about. This is supernatural fruit that can only be produced by a supernatural God who indwells us. The Holy Spirit is the Author of our sanctification, capital A. He is the sole and one and only Author of our sanctification. There is not a dual authorship in our sanctification. It is God the Holy Spirit. He is the producer of love. He is the giver of every grace in our lives and so as a branch, we can only bear this fruit, but it is the Spirit who must produce it, it is the Spirit who must grow it, it is the Spirit who must mature it in our lives. How this should revolutionize our prayer life as we would ask of God to produce this in me, "Give me more patience. Give me greater kindness. O God, remove from my life all that which is unkind and ungracious and enable me to be and to bear this fruit."

9. I want you to note its necessary responsibility. The Spirit alone produces it, but every Christian is directly responsible to God to choose to love others like this. There are some Christians today who are hyper-grace people and they falsely assume that sanctification in their Christian lives works out by simply sitting back, being passive, waiting on God to so do this in my life that I remove myself of all responsibility and all duty before God. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, historically we call such a false position, we call it antinomianism. Anti means against; nomos is a Greek word for law. It means against the law, meaning there are no commandments given by God to us in sanctification. Sometimes it's referred to as "let go and let God," which is nowhere taught in the Bible. No, we bear 100% responsibility before God and the Holy Spirit gives 100% of the fruit, but he never does it, he never does it independent from our choices in our Christian lives.

Some Christians become very uncomfortable today when preachers talk about, "You have a choice to make." They go, "Well, that doesn't sound much like grace to me." Well, your problem is you have no concept of how the Christian life truly works. I want you to listen to some verses and then I want to ask you some questions. Matthew 22, verse 36 and following, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Bible." Now you understand what a commandment is, that does not need much definition, one of superior authority over your life has the right to make demands upon your life and gives orders to your life where you are left with a yes or no answer. There's no essay answer. Either you obey or you disobey, and you must, as an act of your will, choose to obey this commandment. "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Now, Jesus did not respond by saying, "Oh, you don't understand grace. There are no commandments with grace. There is no responsibility. There is no duty. There is no moral obligation. It's all under grace. We can just live however we want to live and do whatever we want to do whenever we get around to doing it." That, my friend, is classic antinomianism on steroids. Jesus said, "Do you want to know what the greatest commandment is? I'm going to tell you what the greatest commandment is," and this is the moral obligation that is laid at your feet, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind." If love for God is the fulfillment of the greatest commandment, therefore, it is a choice of the will. It is an act of obedience. Jesus said, "This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it." The second what? The second commandment is like it. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." What Jesus was saying is love is a choice. It is not a feeling. It is not a passive sitting back. It is an intentional, decisive, purposeful, volitional choice of the will. Either we choose to love or we live in disobedience. Either we choose to love or we disobey God and invite the consequences.

John 13, verse 34, Jesus in the Upper Room with his disciples said, "A new commandment I give to you," note the word commandment, "that you love one another even as I have loved you." Now, the commandment is the same, the standard is new. The commandment to love others goes back to the beginning of time. The standard in the Old Testament was that you love others as you love yourself. Now that is not a call for self-love, but there are certain things that we naturally, instinctively do for ourselves of self-care and self-preservation that in the Old Testament it says now we are to do the same for others, to care for others as we care for ourselves. That's not a bad thing. That's a good thing. But Jesus elevates it now in his coming and he says a new commandment, by that, he means it is the same old commandment but to a new and higher standard. You are to love others now no longer just as you love yourself, because we don't always care for ourselves properly. He says that you love one another as I have loved you and Jesus loves me far more than I love myself, in the right sense. He cares for me and provides for me far more than I care and provide for myself. He sacrifices for me and has given himself to me far more than any sacrifice that I have ever made, even for my own self-preservation. And Jesus says to them, "This is a commandment." Just because you're under grace does not mean you are not under commandment. There's grace in the Old Testament. There is law in the New Testament.

John 15, verse 12, just to help drive this home; let me support this with a few more verses. John 15, verse 12, Jesus again in the Upper Room. I want you to hear now this key word. Jesus said, "This is My commandment," not my suggestion, not my option, not my preference. "This is My commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you." Again, there's only one of two options for us, either we obey, we disobey. Either we love, or we live in disobedience to the Lord. If that were not enough, he repeats it again a few verses later in John 15 verse 17. This is the third time in the Upper Room Discourse he is driving this home to his disciples. Why? Because he knows how petty they can be with one another, how impatient they can be with one another, how jealous they can be of one another. He must enforce this. John 15:17, "This I command you, that you love one another." If you're taking notes, you could also jot down Colossians 3, verses 12 and following where Paul instructs the church at Colosseum in the imperative mood, meaning it is an apostolic command that you put on love.

So let me ask you, do you see today your personal accountability and responsibility to God to choose to obey to love others? We cannot sit back passively and expect that God will do this automatically against our will. We cannot sit back and wait for the right feelings or the right mood or the right timing or the right circumstances to love others. To the contrary, if we really love Jesus, we will be motivated to step forward as an act of our will and choose to obey him in loving others. As we will be looking at these verses in future weeks, there will be a great accountability that will be placed upon us to grow in our love in these ways.

Tenth and finally, I want you to see its practical presence. A way to make this very personal and practical is to read it this way. I graduated from seminary in 1980 and I went to be the college pastor at a church in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Anne and I were only dating at the time and I remember that there was a guest speaker who came to town named Oswald Sanders, J. Oswald Sanders, very famous Bible teacher and instructor who has written the classic book on spiritual leadership. In fact, that's the title of it. There was a sign up sheet to take Dr. Sanders to dinner and no one in the church knew who he was, which was remarkable. I knew exactly who he was, so I got to have every meal with him because no one wanted to sign up to take this New Zealander to dinner. And I remember in the course of that dinner with Anne and him in our discussion, his insight into this chapter as a result of our fellowship, and with that thick New Zealand-British brogue, I remember him telling me that I could read these verses this way. Steve Lawson, acting by his own flesh, is impatient, unkind, jealous, bragging, takes into account a wrong suffered. He went through the whole list. It was painful to hear my own name. I said, "Couldn't we use Ann Kroll? What about Ann Kroll? Thou art the woman." So after we went through that list, he said, all right, I want us to go through it one more time, and he said, we could read this list this way. Jesus Christ is patient, kind, not jealous, not a braggart, not arrogant, and he went through the whole list. The contrast, the polarization, the stark opposite could not have been any more glaring. He said, now I want us to read it a third time. Jesus Christ, living in Steve Lawson, is patient. Jesus Christ, living in Steve Lawson, is very kind. Jesus Christ, by his resurrection power and by the fullness of his grace, living in Steve Lawson, is not jealous, does not brag, does not take into account a wrong suffered. The entire key for us to live this out is not simply our determination to do

so, although we must as an act of our will intentionally, purposely choose to live this way because it is a command from God and when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for our lives, while we will not answer for our sin, we will be servants who will give an account to our Masters and there will be effects for which we will answer for in failure to serve him. So that accountability is tight that we have with God, and we will answer one day. But Christ in you, the hope of glory. "What, know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit of God? For it is God who is at work within you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. He who began a good work in you, shall perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. I have been crucified with Christ, yet it is not I who live, but Christ lives in me. In the life that I live, I live by faith in the Son of God who gave Himself for me." It is Christ enabling grace and power that supernaturally enables us to love unlovely people, to care for those at times and in places when it is more than a challenge to show love to them, and at times when we love our own leisure more than their benefit and good, but it is Christ in me who is super-abundant and more than able to empower me to live this way.

Starting next week, I want to begin to walk us through what does this mean, love is patient? What does this mean, love is kind? And there is so much for us to dig into in each of these 15 descriptive, action, present tense verbs that require very much of me in my Christian life. I want to conclude by saying, if you have never believed upon Jesus Christ in true saving faith is love for Christ and love for God. No one ever believes upon Christ begrudgingly. No one ever surrenders and gives their life to the Lord Jesus Christ being dragged, kicking and screaming into the kingdom. Everyone who enters into the kingdom of God does so by running into the kingdom and running into the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ in total humility, and the reason is because God in a moment suddenly opens your eyes and opens your heart and makes you aware of the glories of Jesus Christ and what he has done upon the cross bearing our sins, suffering in our place, purchasing our eternal salvation, and in a moment, I see it. I see him dying for me upon the cross. "Blessed Savior, I now take You as my Savior," and you love Christ with all of your heart. That is at the core of what true saving faith is. It is the surrender of my life. It is the commitment, the entrustment of my life to him, but I do so with a heart that has love now for him whom beforehand I was indifferent, I was rejecting, I was opposing, in reality I was hating, but now I'm a lover of Jesus Christ. Before you can love like this, you must first love Jesus Christ. If you will love Jesus Christ, there will be such a union and communion that will exist between you and Christ there will come flowing and gushing out of this oceans of love that you will have not only for him, for his word, for his church, for his kingdom, but for his people, and if you're a true Christian, you will love the people of God. No matter where they are, no matter where they go to church, no matter what their social level, you will love God's people.

Let us pray.

Father, we stand very challenged as we see what is incumbent upon us. We stand very encouraged as we consider the perfections of Christ and His indwelling presence in our lives. We are very encouraged at the partnership that we now have with Christ and the fellowship that we enjoy with Him and the fullness of His grace in our lives to enable us

to be a totally different kind of person. Father, we thank You for Your patience with us. We thank You for Your kindness towards us. We thank You that You have not taken into account a wrong suffered by us. Father, we thank You that toward us You have believed all things and hoped all things and endured all things. Your love toward us has never failed so we praise You for this. In Jesus' name. Amen.