

“What Kind of Love is this?” 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

INTRO:

The Apostle Paul’s subject in these three chapters in 1 Corinthians is the charismata. In **1 Corinthians 12**, Paul wrote at length about how the gifts are given to believers. We discovered that they were distributed as God the Holy Spirit chose. He illustrated the use of the gifts by describing how different members of the body operate in different ways but are required for the body to function. Those with lesser appearing gifts could not exchange gifts for showier gifts or say they were not a part of the body. Those with showier gifts could not say the lesser gifts were not important and not needful. In fact, every gift is important and vital to the body.

The Corinthians thought they were spiritual and important to God because of their gift. Paul answers by showing a better way. The various gifts do not make a person valuable to God. In fact, using these gifts without God –given love makes the person a zero. God-given love is the measure that shows we are saved and spiritual. What is this kind of love? Paul describes it.

I. God –given Love Described (v. 4-6)

II. Love Summarized (v. 7)

I. God –given Love Described (v. 4-6)

A. (1 Corinthians 13:4–6)

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.”

If love is the standard which shows we have the Spirit of God in our lives, what does this love look like? Not anything that parades under the name love is the love Paul describes here.

B. This love is not short tempered or impatient. Love produced by the Holy Spirit and makes us valuable to the ministry is long-suffering. It stays in the battle and endures even when it is painful to stay. Love’s long suffering is evidenced in its kindness. Do you remember how Paul had to rebuke the “spiritually elite” in **1 Corinthians 8** for saying they did not care if exercising their “rights” damaged other believers?

C. Having said what this love is, Paul now turns to describing what love is not. It is not envious. Love does not brag nor is it “puffed up.” We know the Corinthians bragged about their tolerance of sin in their midst. Paul exhorted them about their “puffed up” attitude about the grey area things.

D. Paul continues to show us what love from God really is. (vs.5-6)

“[love] does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.”

In short, love cares about others even at the expense of ourselves. While it wants to think well of others, it will not ignore sin. It loves truth.

E. While we can find many examples in the Corinthian church of those who did not love. This list was not included in the letter to the Corinthians as just a historical curiosity. How does our experience of love measure up? Do we love like this?

II. Love Summarized (v. 7)

A. (1 Corinthians 13:7)

“[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Many translations consider the word “*all*” as referring to “all things.” The word can mean love does these things at all times, or always. The NIV translates the alls in this way.

B. The point is God produced love in us continues to endure, to be positive although not gullible, always has hope, and never gives up on those loved. The last statement makes me think of Monica, Augustine’s mom who prayed continually for her son who was converted shortly before her death.

C. If we slap this “spiritual yard stick” of love up and measure our love against it, we most likely will find our love coming up short. This is because God must produce love like this in us.

D. D. A. Carson observes that God’s love comes from who He is and not from any loveliness in the people He loves. The Bible says, ***“While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)*** Our Lord loved us when we were unlovely and unlovable in ourselves. He did not love us because we deserved love, but because in His nature He decided to love us.

E. Then the only way we can love like this is through the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit working in us and making us like the Lord who saved us. He loved us, and saved us, therefore we can love Him and others. Because this love is produced in us by the Holy Spirit of God who lives in us, it is the standard that shows we are His.

How much control does the Word of God and the Spirit of God have in your life? How spiritual are you? How much do you love?