

Studies in Christianity Christian Love #11

S#1.

Characteristics of Christian Love

S#2.

Text : **I Cor. 12: 27 - 13: 13**

- A. I Cor. 13 .. is the most specific and most complete definition of Christian love found anywhere in the scriptures.**
- B. This chapter was written as part of Apostolic teaching about the proper attitude toward and use of miraculous spiritual gifts.**
1. **I Cor. 1: 2** – To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: S#3.
 2. In this verse the church at Corinth was referred to as:

a. The church of God	c. Saints by calling (holy ones)
b. Sanctified	d. Part of the universal church
 3. Even so, of all the churches referenced in scripture, Corinth had the most issues.

a. Doubt Paul's authority	h. Legalism / idolatry
b. Spiritually immature	i. Women Praying Uncovered
c. Tolerating immorality	j. Improper Lord's Supper
d. Divisions / Law suits	k. Wrong use of miraculous gifts
e. Forbidding Marriage	l. Not acting lovingly
f. Forbidding liberty / meat, days	m. Not edifying in assemblies
g. Against paying preachers	n. Denying the resurrection
- * C. Comparing this list to the characteristics of love demonstrates the conduct of the Corinthians to be just the opposite of love.** S#4.
1. They were very impatient.
 2. They were quick to sue each other. (Chp. 6)
 3. Love feast – quick to take food (Chp. 11b)
 4. They acted like children, (Chp. 3)
- D. This chapter on love is between two chapters about using miraculous gifts.**
1. Chapter divisions were added in 1227 by Stephen Langton, an Archbishop of Cante..
 2. The chapter divisions follow NO logical or doctrinal pattern. (*Wycliff Bible 1382*)

E. The Apostle's overarching statement is .. you are not using your miraculous gifts in a loving way.

1. You are using the Spiritual gifts in an attempt to glorify yourselves.
2. You should be using them in a way that benefits others.
3. This is what Christian love is and you need to apply it.
4. These spiritual gifts are temporary, but love will always be the core of Christianity.

F. This lesson will cover only four points from our text about Christian love. S#5.

1. The context – Love is most important.
2. What is meant by Patience and Kindness ?
3. God models patience and love.
4. How to develop patience and kindness

I. Love is the most important concept in Christianity. S#6.

A. Jesus said love is the summation of all of God's will for mankind.

Matt. 22: 37 – And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **S#7.**
38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. **39** "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** " On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

B. Jesus instructed us that the love we live by must be so different it distinguishes us

John 13: 34 – "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, **S#8.**
 even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **35** By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

C. This love is an outstanding debt you owe to everyone, especially your brethren.

Rom. 13: 8 – Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who **S#9.**
 loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

D. In one's relationship with God, nothing else is of any value unless he has love.

1. The gift of tongues has no value without love.

a. **I Cor. 13: 1** – If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not **S#10.**
 have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

b. Noisy gong is more rightly translated as "sounding brass."

- 1) Noisy or sounding is from *echo* = a noise that reverberates

- 2) Gong or Brass is from *chalkos* = *metal, bronze or copper with a little tin alloyed*
- 3) Together these words portrayed *the endless beating of metal that produces a hollow, annoying, irritating echo that seems to eternally reverberate.*
- c. Did you ever play a song with cymbals ? Children use them to irritate parents.
- * d. **THUS** : without love their speaking in tongues was a source of irritation.
- 2. Even the best gift, the gift of prophesy, is of no value without Christian love.
 - a. **I Cor. 13: 2** – If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; , but do not have love, I am nothing. **S#11.**
 - b. The Apostle said that “prophesy” was the very most desirable gift one could have.
 - 1) **I Cor. 14: 1** – Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.
 - 2) This gift was to teach by inspiration, not to foretell future events.
 - 3) Even inspired knowledge is of no value without love.
- 3. Even the ultimate faith is of no value without Christian love.
 - a. **I Cor. 13: 2** – if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
 - b. Compare ... **Matt. 17: 20** ... Faith as a mustard seed
- 4. There is no act of benevolence great enough to substitute for love.
 - a. **I Cor. 13: 3** – If I give all my possessions to feed the poor, , but do not have love, it profits me nothing. **S#12.**
 - b. Remember Barnabas ... **Acts 3: 36-37** / **Acts 5** ... Ananias and Sapphira
- 5. There is no sacrifice great enough to be of value without love.
 - a. **I Cor. 13: 3** – If I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.
 - b. The meaning of this is not totally clear, but it was written during the reign of Nero.
- E. **This section (vss – 1-3) communicates that true Christianity is not :** **S#13.**
 - 1. Not doing things
 - 2. Not knowing things
 - 3. Not believing things
 - 4. Not opposing things (abortion, homosexuality)
 - 5. **Love** is the life and soul of true Christian faith.
- E. **Aristotle advocated that retaliation was a high virtue,**
 - 1. He wrote that revenge was necessary to restore justice when one is wronged.
 - 2. He also wrote when one takes revenge it acts as a deterrent to future wrongs.

II. What does the Apostle mean by “Love is patient and kindness?”**S#14.**

- A. I Corinthians 13: 4 – Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,**

S#15.

- B. Vs. 4-7 contain 15 verbs which are most of often translated as adjectives, S#16.**

1. As an adjective it reads : “**Love IS or IS NOT this or that.**”
2. As a verb it reads : “**Love DOES or DOES NOT DO this or that**”
3. Thus, a more accurate reading might be :
 - a. Love waits patiently
 - b. Love does acts of kindness

- C. This word translated patience has to do with dealing with other people. S#17.**

1. We tend to think of patience in regard to circumstanced and events,
2. Illustration : You are waiting on a van to pick you up, but it is late, They call you and ask you to meet them at an intersection a couple blocks away to save time, but they **are** delayed in arriving and it start pouring rain, You are soaking wet when they arrive.

Patience is required to cope with circumstances.

You get in the van and all 5 other people have coffee they just Stopped to buy causing you to be soaking wet. There are jokes about your being wet and a couple guys are having a load debate about some nonsense, the driver won't turn the heater on to help dry you off and you are regretting ever having gotten in the van.

The patience required to deal with these people is characteristic of love.

- D. The patience of love is to suffer long with people who are hard to love.**

1. Literally, a long way from anger.
2. A Hebrew idiom, to be “long-nosed.” (similar to American - *has a short fuse*)
3. Slow to anger when wronged or irritated by others.
4. Endure irritating people without becoming angry or upset

- E. Kindness is a counterpart to patience.**

1. Kindness will give anything to anyone, even to enemies.
2. To be kind is to do acts of grace and mercy.
3. Acts of kindness are useful, serving, and gracious. (*Doing them gives doer joy.*)
4. Kindness works for the welfare of others.
5. This attitude is the key to being able to love one's enemies.

III. God provides the perfect model/example for patience and kindness. S#18.

A. Patience and kindness is part of fruit of the Spirit in a Christian's life. S#19.

Gal. 5: 22 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

B. God the Father is rich in patience and kindness.

1. **Rom. 2: 4** – Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance **S#20.** and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

2. **I Pet. 3: 20** – who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

C. Jesus displayed the ultimate in patience and kindness.

1. **I Pet. 2: 23** – While being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, **S#21.** He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; **24** and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

2. Jesus had a heart of compassion.

a. **Mark 8: 2** – I feel compassion for the people because they have remained **S#22.** with Me now three days and have nothing to eat.

b. **Luke 7: 13** – When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, " Do not weep." **14** And He came up and touched the coffin;

IV. How can we grow in patience and kindness ? S#23.

A. We can't just wait for it to come to us with age, these are **not** part of the old man,

1. We must consciously add patience and kindness. We put it on.

Col. 3: 12 – So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **S#24.** put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; **13** bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

2. When we become a Christian we must change from the inside out.

a. **Rom. 12: 2** ... Our transformation starts with a change of heart.

ILL – One sister said "I'm married to the most even-tempered man on the planet. He's always upset about something."

b. **I Sam. 16: 7** ... God evaluates hearts not outward appearance.

B. We must develop a heart that sincerely desires to be pleasing to God.

1. That desire must cause our lives to be conformed to His will.

Col. 1:10 – ... to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in **S#25.**
all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10 so that you will walk in a**
manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing
fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11**
strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the
attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously **12** giving thanks to th

2. We must accept our lives as being the results of our decisions.

- a. Problems are never God's fault.
- b. We cannot blame other people for our decisions. *“Well, what could I do, he ...”*
- c. We cannot blame our circumstances .. past or present.

C. We must commit ourselves to walk (i.e. live) by the Spirit.

1. **Gal. 5: 16** – But I say, **walk by the Spirit,** and you will not carry out the desire **S#26.**
of the flesh. **17** For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the
Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another,
so that you may not do the things that you please.

2. It takes more discipline than an athlete to consistently “walk by the Spirit.”

D. No matter how proficient one becomes at walking by the Spirit, he will fall short.

Isa. 64: 6 – For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our **S#27.**
righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

**** *Righteousness is imputed by Christ, not a product of our own efforts.***

CONCLUSION :

- A. The only way we can become what we want to become is by surrendering to Jesus **S#28.**

- B. The only way we will stay what Jesus makes us and grow, **S#29.**
is through constant communication; read, learn and pray with trust.

INVITATION : Are you walking in His light ? Why not start now ? **S#30.**

S#31. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**I Corinthians 12: 27 – 13: 13**

27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. **28** And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. **29** All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? **30** All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? **31** But earnestly desire the greater gifts.

And I show you a still more excellent way.

13: 1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

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.

8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. **9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part; **10** but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. **11** When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. **12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. **13** But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.