

Biblical Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-8

1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (NASB)

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.”

In today’s passage, Paul talks about love and its preeminence over speech, knowledge, generosity, and self-sacrifice (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). The apostle then describes the nature of biblical love, which is patient, kind, humble, and slow to anger (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

However, we often struggle as we try to practice this model of unselfish affection. One reason is that the godly expression of caring doesn’t come naturally to us. Pure Christian love puts the other person ahead of our own interests, even when our human inclinations clamor to place self-first (1 Corinthians 13:5).

1 Corinthians 13:5 (NASB)

⁵“Does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*.”

A second challenge is the temptation to withhold affection until others apologize or change their behavior. We remember their offense long after it has occurred. That’s not what our Lord did—He loved us while we were still sinners, and He forgave us for every transgression (Romans 5:8; Luke 23:34).

Romans 5:8 (NASB)

⁸“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Luke 23:34 (NASB)

³⁴“But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.”

What’s more, it’s easier to point out someone else’s unkindness toward us than to see where we have fallen short. Perhaps a friend has spoken impatiently, and we responded with angry words. How easily we can use Scripture to point out the other person’s mistake, but how hard to admit our own.

We're called to love God, as well as those around us ([Mark 12:30-31](#)). We've received the Holy Spirit, who will help us learn how to care deeply for others.

Mark 12:30-31 (NASB)

³⁰“AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.”

³¹“The second is this, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Experiencing the Father's affection and demonstrating it to others are to be two of the greatest joys in the life of a believer. Take time to memorize the attributes of biblical love and look for ways to practice them in your relationships. In times of stress, think about the list, and let the power of love transform your response.