

Love - Part 1

I Corinthians 13

Welcome back and here we go. Today we begin a journey through two doctrines lasting 8 - 10 weeks. Then we will move on to the book of James for four months.

Ephesians 5:2

And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.

(from Grace Notes)

Love is to be the characteristic of the believer's life.

God commands believers to love everyone, even our enemies, even the most obnoxious, impossible-to-love people in our lives. The ability to love everyone in the world, even enemies, comes only as a result of Christian growth, the development of a structure in the soul which includes the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22 ff), and the development of a Relaxed Mental Attitude as a result of having no mental attitude sins toward other people.

Any Christian who is consistently growing in Christ will have a steady advance in the Christian Way of Life, along with the ability to love other people genuinely and have an honest concern for their spiritual well-being.

- 1) What does it mean "love is to be the characteristic of the believer's life"?

Loving everyone truly is the goal. That might seem a bit farfetched, even impossible, but the truth is --- that is the example Jesus left us.

- 2) What prevents you from loving the unlovable in your life?

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(from Grace Notes)

Love is slow to lose patience. It doesn't demonstrate irritations or reflect anger or have a quick temper. It has fully accepted the character of the one loved.

Loss of patience, demonstrating irritations, reflecting anger.....

3) How does this demonstrate you have not accepted a person's character?

People truly are bankrupt in many cases. They cannot be who we need them to be. Their life experience, the way they were raised, their lack of maturity --- all make them unable to give us what we need.

You, on the other hand, are rich in *grace*!

4) Explain what it looks like to fully accept another's character:

Acceptance is the key here. When we accept the idea that others have character defects, we can begin to find personal emotional resolution.

Anger --- Selfishness ----- Dishonesty ---- Defensiveness --- Playing the Victim --- Blaming Self & Blaming others --- Close-minded --- Antagonistic --- Judgmental --- Gossipy --- Overly Critical --- Overly Apologetic --- Perfectionism --- Arrogance --- Impatience.

Do you have someone or multiple people that drive you crazy?

5) Would anyone put you on that list? Y / N

If you want to have peace, accept that others may never change. Find your own shortcomings, pray for those who trouble you.

If you cannot accept it --- you need to distance yourself when possible. Remember, you cannot change people. You can only change yourself or protect yourself. Staying in a situation and expecting a different outcome will only drive you crazy!

Ideally, you will learn to be at peace and accept the character of others.

Next week, Love - Part 2.