

1 ☐ “Truth to Transform a Worldly Church”

Studies in I Corinthians

“The Most Excellent Way”

- I Cor. 12:31-13:8a -

2 ☐ **Paul’s discussion of love in this chapter: the most important aspect of his entire letter to the Corinthians**

- In **the larger context**, love is also the proper motivation in the use of the Christian’s liberty in Christ
- God wants those who have been spiritually adopted and made His children to be like Him in this regard

3 ☐

- **The greatest secret of truly successful living in this world and making our lives have eternal significance for the life to come** lies in our successful effort to **demonstrate** this particular kind of love.

- **The very essence of the New Covenant itself is this divine love!**

4 ☐

- ***“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*** - John 13:34-35

5 ☐ ***“A new command I give you ...”***

- I Cor. 9:21 - ***“Christ’s law.”***
- James 1:25 - ***“the perfect law.”***
- James 2:8 - ***“the royal law.”***

6 ☐ **Other N.T. Scriptures which indicate the centrality and preeminent importance of this love:**

- Romans 13:8 & 9
- II John vv. 5-6
- I John 2:8-11
- Colossians 3:12-14

7 ☐ **The Uniqueness of this love**

- **A special Greek word** is used to describe it
- It is unique to **“Spirit-filled,”** or **“Spirit-controlled”** Christians
- It is utterly **distinct from the world’s definition of love**
- **Stewart Briscoe:**
 - **“A decision to be primarily concerned with the well being of the beloved, regardless of their condition; irrespective of their reaction.”**

8 ☐ **The Uniqueness of this love**

- **The best illustration is God’s love for us is John 3:16!!!**

9 ☐ **The N.T. gives the Christian all sorts of commands to love:**

- I Thess. 4:9 - We “are taught to love one another.”
- I Cor. 14:1 - We are taught to “pursue” or “follow after” love.
- Col. 3:14 - We are told to “put on” love, over all the other virtues, which are empty without love!
- I Thess. 3:12 & Phil. 1:9 - We are told to “increase and abound in love.”

10  **The N.T. gives the Christian all sorts of commands to love:**

- II Cor. 8:8 - We are told to be sincere in love.
- Phil. 2:2 - We are told to be united in love.
- I Pet. 4:8 - We are told to be “fervent” in love.
- Heb. 10:24 - We are told to “stimulate one another to love.”

11  **The Description of this Love**

1

- Vv. 1-4 The absence of it results in a profound emptiness which characterizes all attempts to serve and to please God without it

- v. 4 - “love is patient” - [Grk. = makrothumeo]

2

- v. 4b - “love is kind.”
- v. 4c - “It does not envy” - [“Is not jealous.”]
- v. 4d - “it does not boast”
- v. 4e - “is not proud”

12  **The Description of this Love**

1

- v. 5a - “It is not rude”

- v. 5b - “it is not self-seeking”

2

- v. 5c - “it is not easily angered” [“provoked”]
- v. 5d - “it keeps no record of wrongs”
- v. 6 - “love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth”

13  **The Description of this Love**

1

- v. 7a - “It always protects”
- v. 7b. - “always trusts”
- v. 7c - “always hopes”

2

- v. 7d - “always perseveres” [“endures all things”]
- v. 8a - “Love never fails”

14  **The Application & Practice of this Love:**

- **Regarding the charge that this teaching about love is unrealistic, unattainable and impractical:**

- **Stewart Briscoe:**

✓ “God commands things beyond normal human potential because He provides supernatural resources!”

✓ “Christianity is the living out of something that is only explicable in terms of what God is doing in us and through us! And it is all based upon what He already has done for us in Christ! ... all because we are incapable of doing it ourselves!”

- 15 ☐ **Guidelines toward learning to love others with “agape” love:**
- If I am struggling with the absence of “agape” love in my life, I need to check my relationship with the Holy Spirit [**Gal. 5:22 & Romans 5:5**]
 - ✓ The need for a changed heart
 - ✓ The need for the indwelling presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the work of sanctification
- 16 ☐ **Guidelines toward learning to love others with “agape” love:**
- **Rom. 8:13** says: “... *if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live ...*”
 - **A word of encouragement - from C.H. Dodd [Actually, three words!]**
 - ✓ **Quality**
 - ✓ **Direction**
 - ✓ **Degree**
 - A two-railed tract for successful Christian living to run on [**Dependence and Obedience - or - “Trust and obey”**].