

1 Corinthians 13 – This is How to Find True Love

True Love is *Essential*

Vs.1 – more than what you say, love is not with words alone (speech), we can have sound without sensitivity, no rhythm (clang the cymbal loudly with no purpose)

Vs.2 – more than what you know or can do, love is not with skill alone, we can have smarts without substance

Vs.3 – more than what you give, love is not with sacrifice alone (you can sacrifice for status, self serving sacrifice), and we can have service that does not stimulate (without stimulus)

We can have the right words, the right gifts, and the right deeds, but still not have the right way. You should develop your speech, your skills, your service, but the more excellent way (12:31) means that the essential condition for anything we do or say is love. Engaging in “ministry” out of a need to feel “self worth” will bear little eternal fruit.

True Love is *Edifying*

Vs.4a – What it is – selfless – patient (love takes time) / kind (useful)

Vs.4b-5 – What it is not – selfish – proud, pushy, profiteering, provoked, profiling

Vs.6 – what it takes joy in (true love loves truth)

Vs.7 – it is a cover (keeps bad out), it can do, it has courage as it carries on under crushing

Love goes through danger, it is vulnerable. Love is a principle of thoughtful action rather than overwhelming emotion.

True Love is *Everlasting*

Vs.8a – it lasts, survives, doesn't fail, everything else we have will

Vs.8b – your skills, your speech, and your smarts will pass away, what you do, what you say, what you think will all pass away

Vs.9-10 – any blessings, power we have is limited and is only a temporary thing. We may see the failure of everything we hold dear right before our eyes, but if we have true love it will swallow up all that fleeting failure and replace it with perfection

Vs.11 – love grows up, it develops (old married couple)

Vs.12 – we cannot fully love God but at our glorification we will be able to (1 John 3:2).

True Love is *Exalted*

Vs.13 – Love is more than faith or hope – All that we have, do, and experience, will finally collapse. But all of that is not where Christians find our identity, our true love. We find it in the one thing that will never collapse, never fail, never end, and that is the love of God as personified in Jesus Christ. Jesus all that we see in vs.4-7 personified, and He gives this all to us, and the Holy Spirit, the down payment of our inheritance of essential, edifying, everlasting, exalted love.

If you want to change someone you first have to love them, and we love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). God loves the ungodly (Romans 5:6-8 / 1 John 4:7-11), now we should love fervently (John 13:34-35 / 1 Peter 1:22-25). We can send God a valentine by letting our light shine (Matthew 5:16 / Philippians 2:15), that love that God has poured out upon you.

There is nothing you can do to make God love you more, or to make God love you less! His love is something you can't merit, earn, deserve, or pay for. It is something money can't buy, poverty can't lose, and no one can steal. Jesus is more beautiful than anything else you could hope for or that you are holding on to. God has invested everything in you. Knowing His love for you will help you face any temptation, loneliness, or bondage with courage, because Jesus has already won the ultimate battle over sin and death and hell. No matter what happens to you, remember, God has sent you a valentine, and when you find that you have found true love.