

**1 Corinthians 13 is one of the most famous chapters in the Word of God:**

It is about "ONE" Christian grace, "ONE" Fruit of the Spirit, "ONE" Beautiful, Excellent and God-Like Christian virtue that should be PROMINENT in your life if you are a Christian.

*This love is God-Like, God-Given, and not of this world. It is the love that we see so beautifully demonstrated in the life, sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ!*

It was time for the Apostle Paul to answer the question that the Corinthian Church had not asked. 1 Corinthians 13 was Paul reproving the church and telling them, you've missed the mark! Let me show you an extraordinarily better way!

This "more excellent way" was, no doubt, what they lacked; you see, they were full of knowledge, they could speak and preach the truths of Christ, the Spirit of God had gifted many in the church; but in all of what THEY possessed, what they lacked (AS A CHURCH) was charity ~ love.

What am I if I am full of knowledge about God, and yet, I do not possess the love of Christ within? If my knowledge about Christ puffs me up in my Christianity, I am not motivated by agape love. YES, I can speak the gospel in other languages, but without agape love, I will also speak with in tongues of slander about others. YES, I do wonderful things for the church and for my community, but without agape love, I will do them "selfishly" for my honor and glory and not God's.

*Christianity without love is of no value, it is orthodox religion that loves itself rather than Christ! And it is powerless to save and sanctify!*

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul teaches us the virtues and characteristics of "agape love"; this special, disinterested, and sacrificial love.

THIS LOVE is foreign to this world; it is not natural, inherent or innate to ANY natural born son/daughter of Adam; only those that are "2<sup>nd</sup> BORN" and born from above have it. If you would have an "incorruptible and unfailing love" you MUST be born from the "incorruptible seed" of the Word of God! Other worldly loves will corrupt and fail, but NOT THIS LOVE!

**Last time, Charity is Longsuffering and Kind: Gracious and Powerful Yokefellows which beautifully complement each other in the Christian's life.**

The 1<sup>st</sup> characteristic of "agape" love in you is that you will be patient, longsuffering or long spirited; you won't be short fused, easily provoked or angered. The 2<sup>nd</sup> characteristic, you

will be kind, or gentle and courteous. Don't forget that these attributes of charity are the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> fruit of the Holy Spirit.

In describing the next (8) characteristics, Paul teaches us BY TEACHING US what Charity or Agape Love is NOT. The 3<sup>rd</sup> characteristic, Charity or Love envieth not, meaning it is NOT jealous, and it does not boil or burn angrily towards other for good providences which God bestows upon them.

Envy/jealousy will cause you to hate others for what they have, or for who and what they are in the world. Agape love IN YOU will cause you to NOT behave like this. Christ-Pharisees envied Him!

### **1 Corinthians 13:4: "Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up"**

Here, as with envy, we learn about what Charity or Agape Love is, by what it is NOT. We know what it looks like in someone's life, by what it does not look like! To VAUNT yourself is to be vain glorious, ostentatious (or boastful about yourself) or to be one who brags about yourself. To be PUFFED UP is to have an "INFLATED" view of yourself.

Matthew 23:5-7, John 7:18, 1 Corinthians 8:1, Colossians 2:18

Agape Love IN YOU will cause you to CEASE from being a braggart or puffed up; agape love IN YOU will cause you to NOT be showy or call attention to yourself; you won't parade or exalt yourself in pride because you are gifted or talented, or because you have great abilities.

Agape love IN YOU, which is given to every believer in the new birth must be cultivated in your life. As you grow and mature in the faith of Christ, agape love should and must also abound in increase in your life.

For agape love to increase and abound IN YOU, you must continue to pull the weeds of sin and the world out of your heart and mind, and you must continue to gather up the good seed of the Word and CULTIVATE IT into your heart and mind. You are to be BEING TRANSFORMED!

Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:22-24

The more that "agape love" is formed in you, (the more you are spiritually transformed), the more it will cause you to be humble and to NOT vaunt or boast in yourself. And listen, you can say or think that you have agape love in you, but do your attitudes and behavior match what you say or think about yourself? Look at this characteristic of agape love in action:

Philippians 2:3-4, Romans 12:9-16, 13:7-10

Consider our Lord Jesus Christ, who was worthy of highness, and of glory and honor when He trafficked in the midst of fallen humanity in the world; and yet, He did not once, "Vaunt

or Boast in Himself", but He deflected all the glory of what was visibly seen in His Person to His Father in heaven!

Christ is the picture of what humble love looks like in a Person!

### **1 Corinthians 13:5: "Charity or Agape Love doth not behave itself unseemly"**

Once again, we learn about agape love IS by what IT IS NOT. Agape love in you will cause you to not "behave in a manner that is unseemly" toward others, which means that you will not be ill mannered, ugly, or rude. To behave "unseemly" is to "behave indecently", "inappropriately", "disgracefully, and in ways that are "unbecoming" to the Name and Person of Christ. If agape love is longsuffering and kind, if agape love is not envious, (but full of gladness when good things happen for the benefit of others), if agape love is not boastful or proud, (but modest, lowly, humble, and not showy), then (as Paul wrote here), agape love is ALSO behavior that is beautifully befitting to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a Christlikeness!

Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for behaving unseemly and disgracefully, when they partook of the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 11:20-22.

Their worship service had descended into rudeness, ugliness, and a demonstration of confusion and pride and one-upmanship.

1 Corinthians 14:23-33

Let me give you a few "unseemly ways" that you might have that MUST BE mortified from your Christian life: When you say something sinful and then you justify your behavior by explaining...THAT'S just the way I am, I speak my mind! Agape love doesn't behave like this.

Or what you see is what you get! Well, did Christ teach is this philosophy? He did not!

Or, when you butt into a conversation because your opinion needs to be heard, because your opinion is most certainly RIGHT! Agape love doesn't behave like this either.

This leads us beautifully to the next negative identifying characteristic of agape love!

### **1 Corinthians 13:5: "Charity or Agape Love seeketh not her own"**

Agape love does not insist on its own way; agape love is not selfish, self-willed, or self-centered; if agape love is in you, everything doesn't have to be your way! Remember that agape love comes from God, and it was beautifully illustrated in the Person of Christ in the days of His humanity, and the Lord was ALWAYS expending and spending Himself and His time for others!

Don't miss the words "seeketh not"; the Greek word is "zeteo"; which means the process of careful searching after something to learn.

Agape love does not seek or search for ways to please itself, but if agape love is in you, you will selflessly seek and search for ways to please others. You might think, that's not the way I am wired; well, you need to be "spiritually rewired", and the only One that can do that is the Spirit of God!

To seek you own or to be selfish is diametrically opposed to sacrificial, selfless, agape love. Selfishness is unseemly for any and every child of God.

Matthew 20:28, Ephesians 5:25, Philippians 2:3-4, 1 Corinthians 10:24, 33, Romans 12:10.

Close:

Agape love is NOT boastful, proud, or puffed up. Agape love is not rude and disgraceful, nor is agape selfish or self-centered.

**Next Time : 1 Corinthians 13:5: "Charity or Agape Love" is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil"**