

A Perfect Love (1 Cor. 13)

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday March 18th

James 1:17,18 reminds us that *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights ... Of his own will begat he us..., that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.”*

God’s gifts of love include Physical (*Eros: erotic Pr 5:18,19*); Emotional (*Philos: Affection Titus 2:3,4*) and Spiritual (*Agape: Charity 1 Cor 13*).

Each of these types of love are gifts from the God of Love! (James 1:17)

- “Eros” is comparatively easy to recognize and respond to because of it’s sensual nature. It’s generally affected by our physical health.
- “Philos” is an affectionate love that comes from the human soul (*mind, will, emotions*). It’s affected by the health of our “soul” as well as our perception of the health of the relationship with the object of our love.
- Agape comes from the human spirit. As such it’s a biproduct of the health of our relationship with God’s Holy Spirit! (1 John 4:16)

Eros and Philos often leave us feeling vulnerable because they’re “conditional”.

Agape is described as “perfect love” because it’s unconditional (*independent of performance*).

1 Cor 13 provides a description of some of the different dimensions of “perfect” love.

We’ve already discussed that: *“Charity suffereth long* (patient endurance) *and is Kind* (practical benevolence) *...envieth not* (It isn’t jealous) *Vaunteth not itself* (not boastful) *“is not puffed up”* (not prideful) *“Doth not behave itself unseemly”* vs 5 (Not inappropriate: It’s sensitive to others) *“Seeketh not her own”* (unselfish, giving)

In addition, “Perfect Love”:

1. “Is not easily Provoked” Vs 5 (paroxy’nō: exasperated, annoyed, infuriated)
from oxys (oxoos) sharp, swift, acidic! (Quick to sharpness!)

A. This is related to Vs 7 “beareth all things” (Stegō) to cover with silence, endure

- 1) We tend to get frustrated by the “little foxes” (irritations) that threaten our relationships.
- 2) Without agape love, these “aggravations” can become the “acid” of criticism, such that we poison the soil of the whole garden! (Relationship)

B. Instead of being quick to answer (or anger) we should be quick to Listen!

Jms 1:19 *“let every man be swift to hear, (Akouo: understand) slow to speak, slow to wrath:*

- 1) Understanding is air to the soul!
 - a) You can’t listen or learn while speaking!
- 2) The Biggest barrier to Communication is that we don’t listen for understanding, but for ammunition! (to reply) *“Seek first to understand, Then to be understood!”*

2. Is Goal Oriented. Vs 6

A. “Rejoiceth not in iniquity” (adikia: Injustice)

- 1) Our sense of justice is tainted by self- interest! aka: “conflict of interest”
 - a) Iniquity is related to selfishness. Is. 53:6 *“all we like sheep have turned... to his own way. And the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all”* (‘āwōn: perversity, twisting to get my way!)
- 2) Charity is the opposite of iniquity! 1 Cor 13:5 *“Charity seeketh not her own”*
(See also Rev. 2:9 and Mt. 6:20)

B. *"But Rejoiceth in the truth"* (alē'theia)

1) Justice requires truth!

"Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and Nothing but the truth?"

Jn 8:32 *"ye shall know (understand) the truth and the truth shall make you free."*

2) "Truth" (alē'theia) comes from alēthēs', which means to reveal, not conceal.

a) Our passions and prejudices can easily poison our perspectives!

3) What's the Goal of "Truth"?

Eph. 4:15 *"But speaking the truth in love, (we) may grow up into him in all things"*

a) God's "goal" is our Maturity! (1 Cor 13:11)

b) Maturity allows us to bear "fruit". Jn 15:16; James 1:17,18

c) *"Into Him"* Because John 15:4,5 says: *"Without me ye can do nothing!"*

1 Cor. 13:7,8 Charity: *"... Beareth all things,* (Patiently covers "groanings" with Grace)

believeth all things, (Trusts God to work "all things" for His glory and our eventual Good)

hopeth all things, (Lives in expectation of an eventual "justice")

endureth all things... (Stays in God's Will regardless of consequences)

"Charity never faileth" ἐκπίπτω (ekpiptō): never becomes ineffective or inadequate!

Eros and Philos love may "wear out" or be too "weak" (insufficient) for the challenge, but Charity comes from the God who is eternal and all powerful. (Gen. 18:14)

Conclusion:

Remember James 4:17,18? *"Every perfect gift ... cometh from the Father ...*

Of his own will begat he us..., that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

Each "fruit" has the seed of reproduction! We're intended to share His Love!

Application:

1 Jn 4:17,18 *"Perfect love casteth out fear... He that feareth is not made perfect in love."*

1) God wants to develop His "perfect" love in us! 1 Jn 4:17 *"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world."*

2) We're to reflect and Represent Him and His love! (2 Cor. 5:20)

3) Someday the battles will be over and we'll be called "Home". Until that time God is using "all things" to help us better reflect Him, His Will, and His Love. 1 Jn 3:1-3

Will we cooperate with His Purpose and Process? 1 Jn. 3:3

"Everyman that hath this hope in him, (being like Jesus!) purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

hagnos': clean. (see 1 Jn. 1:9) from hagnos: Consecrated, dedicated, Holy.

Joshua 3:5 *"Sanctify (dedicate) yourselves, for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you."*

Genuine Surrender isn't a battle of the Will, But an act of loving Worship!

What's more "wonderful" than allowing God to refine and reflect His Perfect love in and through us?