

Learning to Love 1 Cor. 13

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, March 4th

God's given us love that involves the physical (eros: erotic), emotional (philos: Affection) and Spiritual (Agape:Charity). *"The greatest of these is charity"*. Charity is a like a multifaceted Jewel, where each facet reflects a specific quality of God's Love.

Heb. 1:3 reminds us that Jesus is the "Express image" of God's qualities.

Ro. 8:28,29 tells us that God is at work using *"all things...to conform us into the image of His son."*

God repeatedly compares this process to purifying precious metals (Job 23:10; 2 Peter 1:6-8) and Precious Jewels. (Mal 3:17) The first facet "reflected" in 1 Cor 13 is "Longsuffering." {patient} 2 Pt 3:9 *"The Lord is ... longsuffering,..."* Longsuffering is first because, just as Jewels are formed under intense pressure, so each facet of agape love is formed under the pressure of difficult circumstances. (Isaiah 48:10,11)

Most of the 16 "facets" listed in 1 Cor 13 describe what agape love "looks like."

The only direct description is found in vs 4: *"Charity ... is Kind!"*

Chrēsteu'omai: benevolent, useful!

1. "Kindness" is Practical.

(Gives what is needed, not necessarily what is wanted or deserved!)

A. Kind: (Chrēsteu'omai) means to be useful and benevolent.

1) It comes from the word "chrestos" which literally means "Usefully Employed"

Eph 4:1-2 *"I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called... with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love"*

"Chrestos" comes from chrao'mai: Meaning: to furnish what is needed!

B. In order to be "usefully employed" and "furnish what is needed" we must:

1) Recognize what is needed.

a) *When we're hurt or irritated, we tend to withdraw from the people and problems and "nurse" our wounds.*

b) *God doesn't call us to "nurse" our wounds, but to "notice" what He's trying to do in and through us! (Phil. 2:13) Since "Hurting People, Hurt People",*

God may be using the "hurt" to draw our attention to their needs! (Ro. 12:12-21; Mt 5:43-46)

"People need Love the most, when they deserve it the Least!"

2) Respond to what's needed. James 1:22 *"be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,"*

(See also Gal. 5:13 and James 2:15-17)

2. Agape love (Charity) is Powerful!

A. We need God's Wisdom (James 1:5) to:

1) Recognize the difference between what's desired, deserved, and decreed by God.

(To "see" with His eyes)

2) Respond to those needs with Christ's love. (To "reach out" with His love).

B. We need God's grace to love!

1) Agape takes us to the end of our strength, and to the endless supply of God's!

Phil. 4:13 *"I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me"*

- 2) In 2 Cor 12 Paul asks God to remove an irritation described as a “Thorn in the flesh”:
- God Answered: vs. 9 *“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*
 - Notice Paul’s new “paradigm”: vs 9 *“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”*

Conclusion:

- 1 Cor. 13:1-3 reminds us of how empty our life, love, sacrifice and service are unless motivated (empowered) by Agape love.
- The chapter goes on to reveal different “facets” or characteristics of this remarkable love.
- The First two are foundational to understanding and applying the others.
“Charity Suffers Long (Patient) and is Kind!” (Profitable and Powerful)
Illustrate with Jesus’ approach with the Samaritan Woman in John 4.

Application:

1) Kindness is Critical to Intimacy. 1 Pt 3:8

After spending 7 verses discussing marriage, Peter writes:

*“be ye of one mind, (homo’phrōn: harmonious)
having compassion (sympathēs: sympathy)
love as brethren, (philadelphos: brotherly love)
be pitiful, (eusplanchnos: tender hearted)
be courteous: (philophrōn: inclined to be Kind!)”*

2) Criticism is Caustic to intimacy! 1 Pt. 3:9

*“Not rendering evil for evil, (kakos: worthless, injurious)
or railing for railing: (loidoria: slander, revile)
but contrariwise blessing; (eulogi’a: commendation, benefit, adoration)
knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.”*

Kindness is the practical application of the Golden Rule!



*“all things ye would that men should do to you,
do ye even so to them” (Mt. 7:12)
“grieve not the Spirit of God... Let all bitterness, and
wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking,
be put away from you, with all malice:
And be ye kind one to another,
tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”
Eph. 4:30-32*