THE Love CHAPTER

LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND...
LOVE NEVER FAILS

The Love Chapter

Torrance, California

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Love Requires Courage

1 Corinthians 13

First Corinthians 13 is one of the most beautiful, inspiring, and relevant passages in the New Testament. Its relevance lies in the very importance of relationships in our lives. God created us to be relational beings. Relationships are not optional. They are central to what it means to be human. We inevitably relate to God, nature, and each other. Love is what makes relationships possible. Love binds people in relationships.

However, we are broken people. Sin has affected our relationships. They are not what they should be: there is distrust, pain, anger, misunderstanding, fear, isolation, and abuse. We are afraid of being hurt—

so much so, that we hardly let anyone, including God, see us with our guard down. Fear has kept us from true intimacy and from deep, satisfying relationships.

How, then, can we feel safe to open our hearts and let others see who we are? The apostle Paul shows us "the most excellent way" to feel safe to open our hearts to others, and to be safe for others to open their hearts to us. The love that Paul describes fosters intimacy, openness, security, comfort, growth, and support. It is a love that is applicable to all areas of our lives: from spouses and children, to people inside and outside the church, to people we meet unexpectedly, accidentally, or temporarily in our daily activities. We are safe because God has shown this love to us through Christ, and the Spirit pours it in our hearts daily. He fills us with all the love we need. It is a love that "drives out fear" (1 John 4:18).

"God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us."—1 John 4:16b–19

1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is

LOVE.

Overview of 1 Corinthians 13

The beautiful words about love occur in the context of Paul's teachings about spiritual gifts. God gives spiritual gifts to his people for the benefit of the whole church. The apostle shows "the most excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31). That is, when God's people exercise their spiritual gifts in the context of love, they work the way God intends them.

*1. **Gifts without Love** = Nothing*

- Tongues
- Prophecy
- Knowledge
- Faith
- Martyrdom

*2. **Definition of Love***

Love is
- Patient
- Kind

Love does not
- Envy
- Boast
- Keep record of wrongs
- Delight in evil

Love is not
- Proud
- Rude
- Self-seeking
- Easily angered

Love does
- Rejoice with the truth
- Protect always
- Trust always
- Hope always
- Persevere always

3. Love Never Fails

- Prophecy
- Tongues
- Knowledge

These gifts will end

Love is the perfect goal and fulfillment of

- Incomplete knowledge
- Incomplete prophesy
- Growth
- Sight/Recognition

Conclusion

Love is the greatest of eternal affections/ attitudes

FAITH HOPE LOVE