

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

(I Corinthians 13:1-13)

- Introduction:
1. The badge of discipleship is our love (John 13:34-35).
 2. One cannot be saved unless he loves (I John 4:7-8).
 3. This lesson is intended to define the love that God expects us to demonstrate.

I. ACTIONS WITHOUT LOVE

- A. (I Corinthians 13:1-3).
1. Speaking in tongues - meaningless noise without love.
 2. Other spiritual gifts - amounts to nothing without love.
 3. Benevolence - no profit without love.
- B. Christianity involves more than just duties to be performed, obligations to be met, and rituals to be practiced, it involves the heart.
- C. (II Corinthians 13:5) Examine yourself.

II. WHAT LOVE DOES NOT DO

- A. Love does not envy (13:4).
1. Envy is mentioned as one of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:21).
 - a. Cain killed Abel because of envy (I John 3:12).
 - b. The Jews killed Jesus because of envy (Matthew 27:18).
 - c. The apostles were imprisoned because of envy (Acts 5:17-18).
- B. Love does not vaunt or parade itself (13:4).
1. A spirit of arrogance is not a fruit of love.
 2. "When someone sings his own praises, he usually sings alone."
 3. Love esteems others rather than self (Philippians 2:3).
- C. Love does not behave unseemly or rudely (13:5).
1. Love is courteous toward others.
 2. Some take pride in their tactlessness, by stating that their only being honest. However, more often than not it is a sign of their lack of sensitivity.
- D. Love does not seek its own (13:5).
1. Love is not selfish; it should consider others.
 2. Love involves self denial (Romans 15:1-2).
- E. Love is not provoked (13:5).
1. A Christian should not be noted for his anger, much rather, his peaceful nature (James 1:19-20).
 2. Although injured by others, love returns good for evil (Romans 12:21).
- F. Love takes no account of evil (13:5).
1. Love does not keep a running list of injuries sustained or sins committed by others.
- G. Love does not rejoice in iniquity (13:6).
1. Love does not enjoy watching, listening to, or participating in unrighteousness.

III. WHAT LOVE DOES DO

- A. Love suffers long (13:4).
 - 1. Love is merciful and forbearing with others.
 - 2. Knowing what it is like to be guilty of sin, we ought to be patient and longsuffering with others when they sin.
- B. Love is kind (13:4).
 - 1. Kindness will seek to spare another's feelings even while being provoked.
 - 2. (Ephesians 4:32) Be kind to one another.
- C. Love bears all things (13:7).
 - 1. Doing the unpleasant is one of the greatest test of love.
 - 2. (I Peter 4:8) Love covers a multitude of sins.
- D. Love believes all things (13:7).
 - 1. This does not mean we are to be naive or gullible, but we should be ready to believe the best in people.
 - 2. Innocent until proven guilty is not just an American philosophy, it is a Christian philosophy.
- E. Love hopes all things (13:7).
 - 1. Love expects the best in life and the best in men.
 - 2. A pessimistic Christian is about as natural as a refrigerator in an igloo.
 - 3. Love should anticipate that "all things work together for good" (Romans 8:28).
- F. Love endures all things (13:7).
 - 1. No doubt, by the end of our life, we will have many battle scars from our walk with Christ, however love endures (Galatians 6:17).
 - 2. Love never gives up on yourself or others.

Conclusion: 1. Love is essential to our salvation, therefore we must work to possess these qualities of genuine love.