

How Love Solves Church Problems (1 Cor 13)

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Introduction: How many churches have suffered through carnal fights?

A. Without exception these battles come from men who want to pervert the gifts of God to draw attention to themselves. **(1 Cor 4:6-7)**

1. God's plan is to draw our attention away from ourselves and make us like Him.
2. The change of our hearts takes time. Satan will not give up, especially with Christians. **(Jas 4:13-18)**

B. Where does God place the value? **(1 Cor 12:31)**

1. The Corinthians were seeking the gift of tongues and placing a great value on it.
2. Why did they place the value here? This was a mistake. They were not interested in the work of God but in self-advancement.

I. Things that have less value than love (13:1-3)

A. **Eloquence**

1. This has a value. What was the strength of Apollos? **(Acts 18:24)**
2. Paul lacked this, but was he useful to God? **(2 Cor 10:10; 11:6)**
3. How does God view eloquence without love? Where are you?

B. **Wisdom**

1. Wisdom has a value depending on its source. **(1 Cor 1:18-22; 2:6-7, 13)**
2. Is this wisdom enough? What does God say? **(1 Cor 8:1)**

C. **Faith**

1. We need to feed our faith and have it increase. **(Heb 11:6; Eph 6:16)**
2. What is faith without a foundation? **(Eph 3:17)**

D. **Martyrdom**

1. We need men and women who have the courage to stand! The testing and exposing of false teachers takes great courage. **(Rev 2:10; Eph 6:10-11)**
2. Still this alone is without value to God. The Ephesians learned this. **(Rev 2:2-4)**

II. The components of God's love (13:4-7)

A. **Love suffers long** - "an element of constraint to be patient or forbearing."

1. Do you help others to grow or hate them for their weaknesses?
2. How can love do this? You are not in the center of things. **(Rom 15:1)**

B. **Love is kind** - "gentleness".

1. This a must in the work of God. **(2 Tim 2:24-26)**
2. Love will show this kindness that builds others? Who do you go to for help?

C. **Love does not envy** - "of hostile emotion based on resentment (be moved with envy, be filled with jealousy, be jealous of **(Acts 17.5).**"

D. **Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up** - "as speaking arrogantly boast, brag; behave as a braggart or windbag." Also as: "puff up, blow up; only fig. in the NT make proud or arrogant, cause to become haughty **(1Cor 8.1)**; become conceited or proud **(1Cor 4.6).**

- E. **Love does not behave rudely** - “as defying moral standards act disgracefully, behave improperly; as defying social standards be ill-mannered or rude (**1Cor 13.5**).
- F. **Love does not seek its own** - “to strive for” and “to one’s own interest or advantage.”
 - 1. Here is the acid test to see if God’s love is really in our lives?
 - 2. Can we do the work of the Lord with this attitude? (**Phil 2:19-21**)
- G. **Love is not provoked** (is not irritable or resentful RSV) - “as keeping a mental record take into account, keep in mind, count (up)”
- H. **Love thinks no evil** - “denoting a lack of something...bad, not as it ought to be”
- I. **Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth** - “rejoice, be glad, be delighted” and as: “disregard for what is right; (1) as disregard for divine law, “ and as: “of what has certainty and validity, of the real state of affairs, esp. as divinely disclosed truth”
 - 1. Are you glad when evil comes upon those who have hurt you.
 - 2. We must guard our hearts here. (**Rom 1:32; 2 John 4**)
- J. **Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**
 - 1. God’s love is all encompassing. (**Gal 5:14**)
 - 2. Is your life empty? What is in your heart?

III. God’s Comparison of Love Verses Spiritual Gifts (13:8-13)

- A. Love will long outlast spiritual gifts (**V8**)
- B. Spiritual gifts were only a partial knowledge verses the full knowledge God is giving. (**V9-10**)
 - 1. When will that which is perfect come? (**Jas 1:25**)
 - 2. Spiritual gifts were only a temporary measure.
- C. True maturity would look to things that are really valuable. (**V11-12**)
- D. Even among things of great importance, Love will outlast them too. (**V 13**)

IV. Where does love come from?

- A. This love is learned. (**Luke 7:40-43; 1 John 4:18,10**)
 - 1. We choose to love. But How?
 - 3. God has chosen to identify Himself by this. (**1 John 4:8**) (Ex. How many abilities does God have? What has He emphasized?)
- B. Do we give the emphasis that God does?
 - 1. Our relationship with God is identified by it. (**1 John 4:8; John 17:23,26**)
 - 2. Our relationship with both the world and other Christians are described by it. (**John 13:34-35**)
 - 3. Our growth and faithfulness is measured by it. (**Eph 3:14, 17-19**)

Conclusion: When God gives this kind of emphasis, we had better open our eyes.

- A. It is possible to have good knowledge and be fighting God. (**1 Cor 8:1-3**)
 - 1. Does the love of God describe your life?
 - 2. Be honest, are the fruits of God’s love in your life?
- B. Why does love last over other things?
 - 1. Jesus knew it would, His kingdom is built upon it.

2. Are you ready to begin serving God? You cannot remain in isolation!