

1 Cor 13 1-8a (edited)

*Though I speak with tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I accomplish...nothing!*

*And though I have the gift of prophecy, understand all mysteries and have all faith, but have not love, I am... nothing.*

*And though I give everything I have and am, but have not love, I gain.... nothing!*

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

Love does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Had one of those "well, duh!!!" moments lately? I did. For decades Val and I have read through the entire Bible every year. Like you, we always run into several surprises and discover things we've never seen before. For the last several years I have been reading through entire books in one sitting, (except Psalms . I read five Psalms a day in December.) Most of the scriptures were intended to be read, or listened to, that way. I highly, highly recommend the practice. Not to the exclusion of in-depth study, but in addition to it. Anyway, it was as I was reading through 1 Corinthians in one sitting that the "well duh!!!" happened. Chapter 13, verses 4-8. This is not just a neat, poetic description of love that Paul came up with and decided to stick in here, nor is it exhaustive. But it is exactly what love needed to look like in the Corinthian church at that time. Let me explain what hardly needs explanation

Love suffers long and is kind it doesn't take up law suits, but takes injury responding with kindness (6:1-7)

Love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up by gifts, wealth or knowledge (4:6-8; 8:1)

Love does not behave rudely, it waits at the love feast and Lord's table for the poor and disenfranchised (11:18-33)

Love does not seek its own it doesn't demand its rights, but seeks the good of others (10:23-33)

Love is not provoked, thinks no evil but accepts brothers and sisters (12:25-26)

Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth doesn't condone idolatry or immorality (5:1-2; 8:1-13)

Love bears all things even severe temptation (10:13)

Love believes all things including the resurrection (15:12)

Love hopes all things including the return of Christ (15:19)

Love endures all things making it through the fire of God's judgment (3:14)

Love never fails churches have and will; Christians have and will; but love never!

There are many other instances of how love applies to the Corinthian church. I have only listed a few obvious ones to help you get the idea. There are many more treasures awaiting you. (How love looks when church stinks!)

#### Self Check Questions:

1. Do I love the church of Jesus Christ even when it is filled with failure and sin?
2. Am I committed to loving the church, even when the church turns against me and disappoints me?
3. Do I find evidence in my heart of a *me* and *them*+perspective about the church, instead of an *us*+perspective?
4. Do my words, attitudes and private thoughts reflect what Christ thinks about His church?
5. Do I really believe in the resurrection and the glorification of the entire church? Do my prayers reflect this faith?

**For Further Study:** Check out the glorious truths about the church of Jesus Christ in Ephesians. Make a list of everything you learn about the church. Check out Paul's perspective on the church of Corinth by going through both letters and noting those passages that reveal his heart towards the church. See also John 17, and note Christ's perspective on His people.

Lord, I often find loving You easy, but loving Your people hard. Forgive me for looking only at their faults instead of their future. You laid down Your life for Your church. You have called me to do the same. I want to do more than simply serve Your church. I want to love Your church as You do. I want to see Your church as You do. O Lord of the church, give me the grace to delight in Your church and to rejoice that I am forever a part of it, with all its problems and all its promises! Give me Your love to love Your people just as they *are*, knowing what they *will be* one day soon! In Jesus Name, Amen+

**Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you continually. Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4**  
**Ron & Val**

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.