

- ✍ We saw last time that it does not matter how gifted you are, or what you are capable of, or what you do, or even what you know, conspicuous spirituality, limitless knowledge, extreme faith, unbounded generosity, and ultimate sacrifice equals all zeros, and what is a string of zeros worth? How do we hold doctrine and love and the same time, especially since doctrine and love are in tandem throughout the Bible. Am I espousing that we throw out doctrine and just love each other?, ("the letter kills," some would say), certainly not! You can't have true love without sound doctrine, but even sound doctrine is worthless without love. The thing to remember as we juggle these issues is, which one is a means to an end, and which one is an end unto itself. Doctrine is a means to an end, that end being, living in a correct and loving relationship with God and our fellow man. Love is an end to itself. Be careful how you juggle these two things because if we drop one there can be dire consequences, Revelation 2:1-5, very sobering!!

1. We will start today by looking at God's caliber of love in detail, 1st Corinthians 13:1-4a.

- ✓ We could spend several sessions on just this one topic, "Patience." Isn't it interesting that of all the words used here to describe love that the Holy Spirit chooses patience to be at the top of the list?! So, I think we should treat it as the threshold for love because without it none of the others are true. Patience is foreign to our society, most of our pet peeves have something to do with patience, long lines, waiting for hours at a doctor's office, slow service at McDonald's, long sermons, etc. As believers, we have an incredible opportunity to shine in the area of patience because in this dark world patience is almost nonexistent.

2. Let's define patience so that we know what we are aiming at.

- ✓ The Greek word for patience is Makro-thumeo, "Makro" equals macro, which is at a distance whereas micro is close up, thumeo equals anger. "Far away anger" is how the Bible defines patience. How far away is your anger? Just under surface, right around corner, or the thin crust of composure? When God is allowed to work His love into us, our anger becomes more and more distant. Patience is a work of God in our life.

3. What part can we play, what can we do to open ourselves up for God's work?

- 1) Abide in Christ, "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5," this is the same "nothing" that Paul speaks of here in 1st Corinthians 13.
- 2) Take your foot off the accelerator, speed is addicting! We try to keep up with our world and then wonder why we act like they do. God required the Jews to rest one day in seven because it is necessary for our existence. Even though we are no longer held the Sabbath day, a regular time for rest and worship is an abiding principle. We rush about through our busy days and forget that all the accomplishment in the world minus love is a zero. So, we're flying down the Autobahn of life and running over those that we were left here to reach, somethings not right about that! Hurry isn't just of the Devil; it is the Devil. He loves to get us in a rush.
- ✓ Do you think your waiter cares about your views on the atonement? I bet not! That the mechanic who didn't get the part in because of someone else's delay cares that you haven't missed church services in 3 months? Probably not. Does your employee really care that you believe in the pre-tribulation rapture? Does the checkout girl care whether or not you read your Bible daily? What these people need to see is Jesus with skin on, that's our job! It's called applied theology, take your theology and apply it to your daily life! When we are patient with people, we are like God, our patience shows them the God who lives in us. Never forget that the door to salvation is still open to the world today because our God is patient, 2nd Peter 3:9.

When we are patient with people, we are like God, our patience shows them the God who lives in us. For some of us, the only reason we are still alive is because God is patient!
