

The Corinthian Letters, Lesson 50 1st Corinthians 13, Love is the Answer, Part 3

- ✍ Some would say that love is defined here in 1st Corinthians 13 which technically isn't true. I would say love is described here, there is a difference between the description of something and the definition of it.
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1. 1st Corinthians 13 describes love which contains and yet is much larger than a simple definition.

- ✓ A number of translations miss the mark here as far as communicating to us the force of this description. The NIV translation lists these descriptive words as predicate adjective, "love is_____." The Greek describes love with 15 action words not predicate adjectives. "Love *acts* patiently, *acts* with kindness, does *not act* with envy." These are action words not predicate adjectives. Love is an action, and that action is on display here in 1st Corinthians 13. Love is something that you do. This description calls into question statements like "love in action." Love, according to the Bible, doesn't exist apart from action.

2. We'll be considering the 2nd and 3rd acts that describe love today.

- 1) Love acts in Kindness, acting in love in this area just like in the area of patience affords us an incredible opportunity for a witness since kindness seems to be a thing of the past anymore. Random acts of violence, and days filled with further examples of just how cruel people can be seems to be the norm. Kindness is a commandment, Ephesians 4:32. Kindness reveals that we are God's children. Luke 6:35 . Kindness is powerful, Romans 12:20-21. Taking revenge does 2 things, takes what belongs to God and causes evil to win. Kindness destroys evil. Ask the Son of God who destroyed the power of the Evil One through the kindness of laying His life down for us.
- 2) Love does not act with envy, consider the prominent role that envy has played in the events of Scripture. Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Joseph thrown in a well, Moses leadership was rebelled against by His own tribe and then his own brother and sister, David spent years on the run because of Saul's insane envy, Haman plotted the destruction of all the Jews, Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. Envy makes it on God's 10 commands list, "do not covet" is the command against envy. Let's consider the word itself here in 1st Corinthians 13. The word here refers to both jealousy and envy which are two sides to the same coin. Jealousy says, how I feel about what's already mine. Envy says, how I feel about what's yours. Love doesn't care that you have or what you are, love doesn't begrudge you of anything.

3. What breeds envy?

- 1) Self-love, I love myself and so I want to serve myself either by sinful possessiveness in the face of your need or by desire of what you have that I want.
- 2) Comparison which is related to discontentment. If the whole world were blind would it change what you live in, drive, or wear?
- 3) Ingratitude, why does the Scriptures say we are to present our requests to God with thanksgiving? This tempers our requests, James 4:3-4.

4. To break envy's grip, we need to do the opposite of these things.

- 1) Be grateful.
- 2) Learn to be content, 1st Timothy 6:6. What kind of money would be freed up for the Lord's work if we all were content?
- 3) Change our focus, self-love is self-focus and is antithesis of real love.

The world is self-focused, and seeks its own, and focused on temporary things, but we know better, or we should! Focus should be on the things that are everlasting, then we will be free to love and be self-giving instead of self-serving.
