

## “Love Is Not All You Need”

### I Corinthians 13: 1-13

([www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=i+corinthians+13:1-13](http://www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=i+corinthians+13:1-13))

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#### **All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.**

We all want to be loved. We want to feel love. Many of us can remember a point in time when we knew we were loved unconditionally. A contemporary country song captures one such moment between a Dad and Daughter. Let yourself remember, “Butterfly Kisses.” This song captures the essence of Christ-like love.

Other songs do not do such a great job of guiding us on the path of love. The Beatles sang a song that is diametrically opposite of the sermon title. They sang, “Love is all you need.” Carrie Underwood song, “So Small”, captures a different kind of love that the ‘60’s didn’t know very much about. Two songs, using the same word “love” with very different meanings. Unfortunately, the English language does not give us clear definitions of words.

Some kinds of love are not all you need. And, one kind of love is indeed all you need. The Greek language had four different words for love;

- *eros*, sexual love;
- *phila*, friendship love;
- *storge*, family love; and
- *agape*, self giving love.

The Beatles sing about *eros* in their song, “All You need is love”. Everyone honest now and who was a teenager in the 60’s and sang this song along with the Beatles can attest to the kind of love they sang about. M. Scott Peck in his land mark book, *The Road Less Traveled*, calls this kind of love, cathexis. All humans know the reality and the effects of *eros*. Most people who have been married for any length of time also know that it is not enough because it does stay at the same level. Recent research indicates that, in part at least, what we call “falling in love” can be attributed to the presence in the body of the natural substance called “phenyle-thylamine” which is a form of a natural amphetamine. Can you imagine the Beatles singing, “All you need is phenyle-thylamine.” The problem is the research also reveals that we build up a tolerance for this chemical in about two years. Peck suggests that any successful marriage relationship that lasts to become a long term marriage moves from the early *eros* love to an *agape* covenant love based upon choice and character within the first two years. The Beatles are wrong. Love the way they sing about it is great, but not all you need.

Unfortunately, where most of us go when the phenyle-thylamine begins to run out in a marriage is to a relationship based upon what the other person can do for us. Psychologists define this kind of love as conditional love. Again, rock music captures this form of love dysfunction in the song, “Do you love me now that I can dance?” Conditional love is not love at all. It is a compromise for the moment. Yet, in many ways we practice this form of relationship with our spouses, our children, and our extended family. We say, “I’ll love you, if.... Or when...”

Love that lasts for a lifetime is very different from either sexual or conditional love. Love that lasts is Christ-like love. The Biblical word for this kind of love is *agape*. The Apostle Paul writes about Christ-like love in the Scripture for this sermon. He is writing to the church in Corinth very specific instructions on loving each other. This is not just a nice romantic poem to be read at weddings. Paul is writing to a church:

- Where the rich people come early to the *agape* (pot luck) dinners so that they can eat their food and not have to share with the poor people who will bring less food later. (Chapter 11)
- That needs to deal with a living situation amongst its members that even the pagans would not tolerate. (Chapter 5)
- That has a problem with some people saying they are more spiritual than the others because they are speaking in spiritual tongues. (Chapter 12).

Paul is not the only one of Jesus' followers to recognize the need for Christ like love to be actually lived in everyday life. The Apostle John also recognized that Christ-like love is connected to the way we relate to each person we meet, especially those who live closest to us. In **I John 4:20**, we read; ([www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=i+john+4:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=i+john+4:20)) *"If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: whoever loves God must also love his brother."* Christ-like love is learned and lived in the close personal relationships of family. Husbands and wives need Christ-like love. Parents and children need Christ-like love. The family is the learning ground for Christ-like love. And, such learning takes a great deal of the Holy Spirit's presence because Christ like love cannot be lived by yourself. Do you think the young parents of Patrick Henry Hughes easily stepped into the role of parents of Patrick? They could not have done what they did by themselves. The love they demonstrate is the love of Christ coming through them.

The Apostle Paul gives us the opportunity to specifically define Christ-like love. He sets before us standards of Christ-like love for us to be able to evaluate our selves in relationship to our family. Below are the sixteen defining verbs on a scale. Take time to do a personal inventory using each scale. This is between you and God. Be honest with yourself. God already knows.

### **The Bible's Love Test!**

**Love does not give up on people**

Rarely

Usually

**Love cares more for others than for self**

Rarely

Usually

**Love doesn't want what it doesn't have**

Rarely

Usually

**Love doesn't strut about**

Rarely

Usually

**Love doesn't have a swelled head**

Rarely

Usually

**Love doesn't force itself among others**

Rarely

Usually

**Love isn't always 'me first'**

Rarely

Usually

**Love doesn't fly off the handle**

Rarely

Usually

**Love doesn't keep score of the sins of others**

Rarely

Usually

**Love doesn't revel when others grovel**

**Rarely**

**Usually**

**Love takes pleasure in the flowering of the truth**

**Rarely**

**Usually**

**Love puts up with anything**

**Rarely**

**Usually**

**Love trusts God in all things at all times**

**Rarely**

**Usually**

**Love always looks for the best**

**Rarely**

**Usually**

**Love does not look back**

**Rarely**

**Usually**

**Love keeps going until the end**

**Rarely**

**Usually**

**After taking this love test: There is hope!**

After looking at yourself with honest eyes you can know that you have some work to do in yourself and with your family. Everyone does! The good news is that Christ's love is defined by the above standards. Christ is with you! Christ will empower you to live and love!

If you were to substitute the name of Christ for love on each standard above, you would have the way Christ loves you. Understanding the nature of Christ's love for you, I invite you to open up your heart and mind to receive anew Christ's love. Allow Christ's love to fill you up so that you can overflow into your family. Spend time with Christ accepting His love. Choose to allow Christ's love to be the spring of living water that overflows where you are weak.

You see, God loves you as a Good Father loves his child. God loves you, as St. Augustine said, as if you were the only child in the universe to love. God loves you with "Butterfly kisses" kind of love. When you can accept God's love deep within your soul, you can then live Christ's love out in your family, with your friends, and with each and every person you meet during the day! After all:

**All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.**