

THE DOCTRINE OF LOVE

TEXT: (I Corinthians 13:4-8, NIV)

⁴ Love is patient (suffereth long, KJV), love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

I. THE UNIQUE VALUE OF LOVE

A. The Preeminence of Love

1. "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians 13:13, NIV).

B. People Need to Show Love

1. "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother (or wife, or husband, or child), he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen" (I John 4:20, NIV).

C. The Power of Love

1. "For love is as strong as death" (Song of Solomon 8:6, NIV).
2. "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me" (Ruth 1:16-17, NIV).
3. "Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her" (Genesis 29:20, NIV).

II. THE CHARACTER OF LOVE

A. Long Suffering and Kindness

1. "With all lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unit of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3, KJV).
2. "Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering" (II Timothy 4:2, KJV).
3. "Jesus of Nazareth...went about doing good and healing" (Acts 10:38, NIV).

B. Love Envieth Not; Love Is Never Jealous

1. "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Philippians 4:11, NIV).

C. Love Is Not Boastful

1. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (I Corinthians 13:4, KJV).

D. Love Is Courteous

1. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly" (I Corinthians 13:5, KJV).
4. The ability to recognize and allow for another's faults and shortcomings will prevent many arguments and hurt feelings.

E. Love Is Not Selfish

1. "The Son of Man came not to receive but to give" (Matthew 20:28, Paraphrased).

F. Love Is Self-controlled

1. "Love is not easily provoked" (I Corinthians 13:5, KJV).

G. Love Doesn't Keep Score

1. "Love thinks no evil" (KJV).
2. "Love keeps no record of wrongs" (NIV).

H. Love Hates Sin

1. "Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth" (I Corinthians 13:6, NIV).

I. The Permanence of Love

1. "Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (I Corinthians 13:7, NIV).
2. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true,...honest,...just,...pure,...lovely,...of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8, KJV).
3. "Love never fails" (I Corinthians 13:8, NIV).

III. LOVE—REVEALING GOD TO THE WORLD

A. As Christ Loved

1. "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:1-2, NIV).
2. "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:44, NIV).

B. We Should "So" Love

1. "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" (I John 4:20, NIV).
2. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (I John 3:16, NIV).
3. "We love because he first loved us" (I John 4:19, NIV).
4. "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (I John 4:10-11, NIV).

C. We Should Love without Fear

1. "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:18, NIV).

CONCLUSION:

1. "Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred" (Proverbs 15:17, NIV).