

Understanding Agape Love

I Corinthians 13:4-8 (Amp)

⁴ Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily.

⁵ It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's Love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong].

⁶ It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail.

⁷ Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].

⁸ Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end].

What Is Love?

Understanding Love from a Biblical perspective is essential to Christian growth. It is crucial that a Christian have the proper understanding of Love since it is the principal command of the New Testament. (See John 13:35) It is impossible to fully walk in Love unless you understand God's definition of Love.

The Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to define Love in 1 Corinthians 13 by using 16 Greek words and phrases. Eight of these are written in the positive, and eight are written in the negative. Eight of these words and phrases tell us what Love is, while the remaining eight tell us what Love is not. The characteristics of Love found in these scriptures are not based upon feelings, emotions and moods, but upon behavior, actions and deeds.

The Greek Word for Love mentioned in this passage is Agape. Agape Love is a Love that is based upon our will rather than our human emotion. Agape Love is a decision. It is a deliberate choice. The good news is that if you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, this Love is ALREADY in you. (See Romans 5:5) The focus of the Christian is not to seek to acquire this Love, but to develop it. You ALREADY have the Love of God within you. Your focus is to Grow in Love, Walk in Love, and to Live a Life of Love.

Originally, I developed the material in this brochure for my personal devotional life. For many years I have benefited from it personally. Recently, I was encouraged to share it with the body of Christ. I trust that this brochure will be a blessing to you and enrich your life.

God bless you,

Pastor Tom Arnould, Good News Church, Yukon, OK

Love Is Patient and Longsuffering

- Love has the capacity to be wronged and mistreated without retaliating; it is not defensive or aggressive.
- Love bears with the ill treatment of others.
- Love does not repay an insult with an insult.
- Love is slow to lose patience; it is long-spirited and forbearing. It is composed and calm.
- Love will leave your case in the hands of God who always judges fairly.
- Love does not strike back.
- Love has a gentle answer that turns away wrath.
- Love will respond in the opposite spirit. (It will repay blessings for insults.)

Love Is Kind

- Love is gentle, easy going and amiable; it is pleasant, gracious, kindhearted and compassionate.
- Love will look for ways of being useful, helpful and constructive. It is benevolent, hospitable and friendly.

Love Is Not Jealous

- Love is not envious; it does not set its heart upon and strive after that which belongs to someone else.
- Love is not resentful due to what someone else has or due to another's success or advantages in life.
- Love is non-competitive. It actually wants others to get ahead; it does not seek to outdo others; it does not attempt to monopolize; it is not possessive; it is not a busybody being watchful and envious of others.
- Love is "non-competitive" on personal issues.
- Love does not possess an attitude of rivalry, competing for superiority.

Love Does Not Brag

- Love is not boastful, egotistical or conceited. It does not parade its own excellence or show off; it does not flaunt and blow its own horn. Love does not self promote.
- Love is not anxious to impress others; it does not seek to attract attention to itself; it does not upstage others.

Love Is Not Arrogant

- Love is not proud or puffed up; it is not haughty; it does not exaggerate with the intention of impressing. It does not feel it is better than or more important than others.
- Love does not look down on others; Love lives without needing to be noticed. It is unpretentious.
- Love does not display an attitude of superiority.

Love Is Not Rude

- Love does not act unbecomingly, unseemly and inappropriately. It has good manners and is polite. Love respects the feelings of others.
- Love will build others up rather than belittle them; it is at home with all classes of people; it is not crude.
- Love is sociable, good-humored, good-natured, refined and enjoyable to be with; it wants others to be at ease.
- Love is not ill-mannered; it acts properly and courteously. It does not interrupt.
- Love does not dishonor others.

Love Is Not Selfish

- Love does not seek its own interest to the exclusion of others; it is not motivated by selfish advantage; it does not insist on its own rights or its own ways.
- Love is not self-seeking, self-centered, self-ruled, self-absorbed, or self-interested. It is not taken up with self-pity. Agape love is a self-sacrificial love.
- Love is considerate of others; it never places its own interests first; it does not demand precedence; it will prefer others above itself; it never wrongs anyone; it is not all wrapped up in oneself; it is not self-indulgent; it will yield its personal rights.
- Love gives, it is not stingy and tight fisted.
- Love gives without demanding a response.

Love Is Not Irritable or Easily Angered

- Love is not provoked; it does not fly off the handle; it is not agitated and inwardly upset at others. It is not bad tempered.
- Love is not touchy or moody; it will hardly even notice when others treat it wrong.
- Love is Graceful under Pressure; it is self-controlled; it doesn't pitch tantrums; it is not testy, quick-tempered and easily offended.
- Love is not thin-skinned, overly sensitive or easily annoyed. It keeps its head at all times in all circumstances and situations; it does not overreact; it will overlook an offense; it is not bad-tempered and easily exasperated.

Love Does Not Keep a Record of Being Wronged

- Love pays no attention to a suffered wrong.
- Love does not dwell upon evil thoughts regarding others; it never plots and premeditates evil; it is not resentful or bitter.
- Love takes no account of the evil done to it; it does not carry a grudge. (Love will forgive and forget).
- Love does not keep score of the sins of others; it will not render insult for insult.
- Love is not vindictive or antagonistic.
- Love keeps no record of the insults and injuries it has suffered; it will overcome evil with good.

- Love does not nurse and rehearse hurt feelings; it is not bitter.
- Love carries no animosity towards others.
- Love is never out to hurt anybody.

Love Does Not Rejoice at Injustice and Iniquity

- Love sees no fun in wickedness; it hates sin.
- Love is not cheerful about wrongdoing.
- Love cannot rejoice with evil.
- Love finds no pleasure in injustice done to others; it finds no satisfaction in the shortcomings of others.
- Love does not search for the imperfections and faults in others; Love takes no part in anything wrong.

Love Rejoices in Truth

- Love rejoices when right and truth prevail and wins out.
- Love takes pleasure in the flourishing of the truth; it aggressively advances the truth.
- Love joyfully sides with the truth; Love is pure without being mixed with hypocrisy; it is free from falsehood.
- Love honors God's Word

Love Bears All Things

- Love bears up under anything and everything that comes; it is tolerant of others.
- Love endures patiently in silence; it knows how and when to be quiet. It does not complain.
- Love never gives up; it can outlast anything; it is quietly persistent.
- Love knows no limits to its endurance.
- Love endures in the face of difficulties and misfortunes

Love Believes the Best in Others

- Love is always ready to believe the best of every person; it credits others with good intentions.
- Love never regards anyone as hopeless; it never gives up on people; it is slow to expose.
- Love is willing to trust; it never loses faith and believes all of God's promises; it is not gloomy; it sees the best in others.
- Love knows that Believing the Best in People will Bring the Best out in People.
- Love knows that if you treat people according to their potential, you will make them what they should be.

Love Remains Hopeful

- Love anticipates a positive outcome.
- Love's hopes are fadeless under all circumstances; it is always hopeful; it always looks for and expects the best.
- Love is optimistic and cheerful.
- Love has positive expectations regarding the future.
- Love has confidence in the promises of God.
- Love foresees a bright future.

Love Endures All Things

- Love will persevere in Love in spite of negative, conflicting and contradictory circumstances.
- Love will endure with patient fortitude through trials without weakening; Love remains strong under pressure.
- Love endures hardness and persecution.

Love Never Fails

- Love never fails (never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end); Love is permanent and endless.
- Love never dies; it remains loyal to the end; Love is eternal; Love always wins.