

### The Greatest Gift of All – Part 3

1 Corinthians 13; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 11-12-2023

*Is God's love, true Christian love, the real goal of your life in all your relationships?*

**Love is “patient” (13:4):** *Don't give people what they deserve for their sin and failure.*

**Love is “kind” (13:4):** *Do good to others regardless.*

**Love is “not jealous” (13:4):** *Don't be unhappy that others have what you don't. Be happy for the happiness of others.*

**Love “does not brag” (13:4):** *Don't lift up yourself for all to see. Seek to lift up others rather than yourself.* Next, Paul highlights the reality that pride, which focuses us on ourselves, is a great hindrance to noticing the needs of others and caring about their happiness. Here he focuses on the outward pride that others can see. (Revelation 13:1-6) God is perfectly ‘not a braggart’! (Isaiah 66:1-2) It is not boasting to speak the truth! And God always tells us the truth of His glory and greatness! So, we need to speak the truth about ourselves and be careful of empty boasting. (Proverbs 25:14; 1 Corinthians 4:7; 1:31) Boasting is the *elevator* that lifts up ourselves and puts others down. Love and boasting don't go together. Do you feel like you need to let people know your past successes or present achievements in order to gain their approval and feel loved and accepted? Do you feel like you need to elevate yourself in respect to others in order to feel better about yourself? Are you more focused on yourself in your everyday conversations than other people? Or do you desire to encourage others in light of their gifts and successes? Do you desire to lift up the downcast rather than lifting up yourself? Do you focus on the other person rather than yourself? Are you using your words to lift up others or to lift up yourself in the eyes of others?

**Love is “not arrogant” (13:4):** *Don't have an inflated opinion of yourself. Believe what God says about you.* Next, Paul moves to mention the inward pride that is unseen and may be undetected even by the person in which pride resides. (Ezekiel 28:1-17) God is perfectly ‘not puffed up’! (Matthew 11:28-30) God does not think too highly of Himself, but thinks rightly about Himself which actually makes Him tender toward those in need of Him. So, we should be like God, thinking rightly of ourselves so we will be tender toward others. (Romans 12:3; James 4:6; Ephesians 4:1-2) Arrogance is the *inflated bounce house* that fills a tiny yard that eliminates room for anyone or anything else. Do your thoughts tend to ‘peer down on others’ and look down on them whether you say anything or not? Do you often wonder how other people could do some things or not do some things and think that you are glad that you are different? Are you privately happy that you are not like other people? Or do you see how you are like those around you? Do you see the log in your own eye? Do you recognize yourself as the ‘chief of sinners’? Do you recognize that you are not beyond doing or saying anything? Do you see your desperate need for a Savior like everyone around you?

**Love “does not act unbecomingly” (13:5):** *Don't ignore standards of decorum and decency. Put on proper courtesies and clothing and conduct.* It is interesting, in light of PRIDE marches in our day, that Paul follows a discussion of pride with the matter of proper behavior! Love never

pursues happiness in an unbecoming way. (1 Corinthians 7:36; Romans 1:27; Revelation 16:15; 1 Corinthians 12:23; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8) **God is love:** God is perfectly ‘never unbecoming’! (Matthew 17:24-27; Job 1:22) God never offends selfishly or unnecessarily. So, in imaging God, we should make it our goal to never offend or dishonor others sinfully or selfishly or unnecessarily. We are to be concerned about what is honorable in God’s eyes and in the eyes of men. (2 Corinthians 8:18-21) Are you impatient and rude with others? Outside your family? In your family? Do you disregard common courtesies like proper greetings and goodbyes and acknowledgements and ‘thank you’s’? Do you dishonor others in other ways? Or do you try to be courteous to all, to strangers and friends and family? Do you make an effort to show recognition and honor and courtesy to all?

**Love “does not seek its own” (13:5):** *Don’t pursue your own selfish ambitions. Seek your own happiness in the happiness of others.* Paul moves from the matter of public decorum and decency to what often is the reason for the lack of these: selfish ambition. (John 19:1-16) **God is love:** God is perfectly ‘not simply self-seeking’! (Philippians 2:3-11) God does not simply pursue His own personal interests with no regard for His creatures and their happiness. So, to image Him, we should not simply pursue our own personal interests without regard to the happiness of others or without also pursuing the happiness of others. (Philippians 2:14-18) Love is searching for avenues to increase the happiness of others in pursuing its own happiness. Do you ever have the attitude: ‘What I want is what I want’ or ‘It’s my life, I can do with it what I want’? Do you ignore the needs and happiness of others unless it directly affects your own needs and happiness? Or do you habitually consider the needs and happiness of others when considering how to meet your needs and pursue your own happiness? Are you gladly willing to sacrifice for the needs and happiness of others because you recognize that pursuing the happiness of others is pursuing your own happiness?

**Love is “not provoked” (13:5):** *Don’t be touchy or easily angered. Trust God to be the Defender and Provider and Protector for you and others.* Paul moves from the problem of being quick to assert ourselves to the problem of being quick to defend ourselves. (1 Samuel 25:2-17) **God is love:** God is perfectly ‘not touchy’! (Luke 9:51-56; Mark 14:61-65; Mark 15:16-20) Jesus didn’t respond with anger and vengeance when He was provoked with rejection and mocking and spitting and hitting! God doesn’t respond that way when He is daily mocked and rejected by unbelievers. So, to image Him, we are not to be easily and quickly angered and retaliatory when ‘poked in the eye’ or when ‘our buttons are pushed’! (Matthew 5:38-42; James 1:19-20) Love doesn’t flinch when prodded. Do you have a short fuse? Are you thin-skinned? In certain areas? With certain topics? With certain people? At certain times of the day? After certain events? During certain activities (driving, sports)? Do people easily push your buttons? Or are you slow to anger? Are you quick to hear and slow to speak and slow to anger? Does it take a lot to make you angry? Can you respond calmly and with kindness in the face of provocation?

**Key to Love: Faith** (1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:6) **What do I do if I fail to love like this?**

- Receive Jesus:** Turn from sin and trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior! – John 1:12
- Rest in Jesus:** Trust in His life and death for us! – Galatians 2:20
- Hope in God:** Believe the love of God for you and His promises! – 1 John 4:16-19
- Pursue love:** Repent and seek to obey His Word by the Spirit! – 2 John 1:6