



8/26/25

I was thinking about a phrase that changes the way I approach the Lord when I'm feeling like I've failed Him... He wants us to dwell with Him... but He doesn't say, "OR ELSE." The reason we dwell with Him is BECAUSE He loves us so much. Not OR ELSE, but BECAUSE. Does that make sense? Or am I just being weird???

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 Corinthians 13 ~

In Ephesians 3:14-19, Paul prayed that the Lord who is able to do far more abundantly than we ask or think would strengthen us with power through His Holy Spirit so that we could comprehend what is beyond comprehension... the love of God, so that we could be filled with all the fullness of God. Well... how big is this love and why is it so hard to comprehend? 1 Corinthians 13 is going to give me insight into what the supernatural, sacrificial love of God is.

Vs. 1-3 ~ In order to understand these 3 verses, I need to see what comes before it. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul was talking about spiritual gifts and how we're called to use them to build each other up as the body of Christ. He said we should "earnestly desire the higher gifts," but there is still something more excellent than those gifts... love. Without love, the gifts become useless and destructive because they become something we use to make a name for ourselves, and not to care for the body of Christ. I could speak in the languages of people and angels, but without love... my paraphrase of this would be... my words are like the sound of fingernails scraping on a chalkboard. Ugh! That hurts just thinking about it!

I could be able to speak the word with all kinds of power... I could have incredible insight and understanding into all kinds of things... I could even have faith that moves mountains... but if I don't have supernatural, sacrificial love, it is so meaningless that I myself am nothing.

I could be so sacrificial that I give away everything I have. I could even be a martyr and sacrifice my own life. But if my sacrifice is not motivated from supernatural love... I gain

nothing.

Before I move on to what love is, I have to start with the premise that GOD IS LOVE. JESUS IS LOVE. Jesus can speak any language... but what makes His voice so beautiful as my Shepherd is that He speaks with love.

Jesus has ALL power and understands ALL things... all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him... and what makes that so wonderful is His love. Anyone who knows what He knows, but isn't motivated by love, will use all that power and knowledge to domineer over others. Jesus used His power and understanding to save others.

The Father gave His Son for my salvation. The Son delivered His body to the cross. It was ALL motivated by love. By His love, He gains reconciliation with people who don't deserve it! He doesn't consider that I don't deserve it. He just loves me.

Vs. 4-8a ~ So what is this supernatural, sacrificial love that He has for me and that He wants me to have for Him and others? He has commanded "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." And John His apostle said in 1 John 4:19, "We love Him (and others) because He first loved us." I can't love Him or others if His love is not being poured into my heart... and it is!

God is patient with me, and His love in me helps me to patiently wait for Him... and have patience for others. O Lord, I don't always patiently wait for You. I run ahead of You and take matters into my own hands. I'm dumber than a sheep! The sheep hear Your voice and respond to You. Sometimes I hear Your voice and run from You. Praise You that Your love for me is not dependent on my love for You!

God is kind to me... and He helps me to be kind to Him and others. O Lord, I confess I'm not always kind to You. By my actions and thoughts, I accuse You of not being who You say You are. That is not kind. Please forgive me.

God does not envy me... Why would He? He's God! But Lord, please help me not to envy Your position as the one on the throne. You deserve the throne! And help me not to envy what others have but be so secure in Your love that I can celebrate with them for what they have. I can only do that when I trust Your love for me.

God does not boast over me. He does not hang His power over my head, but He uses His power to make me better. I have no reason to boast over Him or others... but I still do it. Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, "Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.'" How often do I try to boast in myself? Or shame myself that I am not the wisest or the strongest or the wealthiest or the most beautiful or the one in the best shape or whatever?

Let me boast only in You, my Lord... boasting in You alone will keep me from trying to be superior to others.

Lord, You are not arrogant with me, but Jesus described His heart - the seat of His emotions, desires, and actions - as humble and gentle. You are humble with me... to the point that You died for me. Help me to be humble before You... and humble toward others. What reason do I have to be proud in light of who You are? None.

You're not rude to me... though I deserve it. Your words are gentle and kind. Please help me not to be rude to You... or to anyone.

You don't insist on Your own way with me. You give me room even to fail. You're not a tyrant. How often do I insist that You give me what I want? O Lord, forgive me! Let me not act like I'm entitled to anything! And help me not to insist that others do what I want them to do. It's not all about me. 🙏

You are not irritable with me! You SHOULD be, but You're not! O Lord, please help me to get this through my head! Am I irritable with You? Do I get mad at You when I don't understand what You're doing? O Lord, I do. Please forgive me. And please forgive me for all the times I get irritated with others. What right do I have to take offense at others when You don't take offense with me?

You do not resent me! If I could grasp that I don't irritate You and that You don't resent me, my life would be so much better!!! The thing is, my feelings do not dictate truth. I CAN hold to this truth because You said it... and Your love for me is not dependent on me. Father, how often do I resent You for not giving me what I want? For not making my life easier? And when I resent others, ultimately I'm resenting You, because You are sovereign over ALL.

You don't celebrate my sin... You help me overcome it. Please help me not to celebrate my sin or anyone else's. Help me to encourage others to draw near to You rather than condemn them when they fail... or enable them to keep failing.

You celebrate the truth in me. When You see me do something right, You could say, "Well, you're just doing what you SHOULD do. Why should I celebrate that?" But that's not what You do! You say, "That's My girl!" Help me to celebrate YOU! You are THE TRUTH! And help me to celebrate when I see others walking in the truth. Help me to encourage them and not feel threatened by them. I will only feel threatened by others' success when I am not secure in Your love.

You bear my burdens... You know there are some loads that are too hard for me to carry alone. In fact, ALL loads are too hard me to carry alone. I need You. Help me to love You by allowing You to bear my burdens, and by being Your hands and feet to others as I help them with the things that they can't carry alone.

You believe all things in me... because You ARE love. You know exactly what You're doing in my life and You WILL accomplish it. So help me to believe YOU. That's how I show You my love... and help to believe that Your word is true for others... so I can treat them with faith that You're working in their lives, too.

You hope all things for me... this is not about wishful thinking, but absolute certainty. You have absolute confidence in what You're doing in my life. So I can put all my hope in You, and I can treat others with that same confidence that You're able to do far more than I ask or think.

You endure all things with me... You're with me in my suffering, You're with me when I sin. "For the joy of glorifying the Father and bringing me salvation, You endured the cross, thinking nothing of the shame it brought You" (Hebrews 12:2). O Lord, how often have I questioned Your love because of what I had to endure? Help me to say with Paul, "I consider everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing my Lord Jesus." And help me to endure with others. "Shared suffering is endurable suffering" (Bob Kelleman).

You NEVER fail to love me in ALL these ways. Never ever for all eternity. I want to love You like that... and to love others like You love me.

Vs. 8b-13 ~ When I was a child, a young believer in Christ, I spoke, thought, and acted selfishly. Only in Christ am I able to put all that selfishness away and love as He loves.

All the gifts God has given us are temporary and partial. They are just preparing us for the perfect, when Jesus takes us home. Please help me to think with that perspective. My hope is not in today. It's in eternity with You. My faith is not in the temporal pleasures of this world. It's in You.

Right now, I can't see it all very clearly. But I can trust that You do. Right now, I only know in part... but I can trust that someday I will know everything that matters completely... in the same way that You know everything about me completely right now.

So... I pray that I will dwell in the hope I have in You... and not let anything get my eyes off of what I do know. I pray that I will anchor myself in my faith in You... my confidence, conviction, and commitment to You... and please let no doubt derail my faith. But the most important thing is... I pray that I will be absolutely secure in Your supernatural, sacrificial love and that I will love You first, and then others, wholeheartedly.

Now to You who are able to do all that I ask or think, to You be the glory forever and ever.