

2. The Characteristics of Agape-Love

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Intro

Last week we looked at what agape-love is. We focused on the first 3 qualities of agape-love:

- Love is patient
- Love is kind
- Love does not envy

Today we are going to look at the next 6 qualities of agape-love.

4. Love does not boast, or brag

It means that love does not brag about self. Love does not parade its accomplishments. Bragging is the other side of jealousy. Envy wants what someone else has, while bragging is trying to make others jealous of what we have. Envy brings others down while bragging builds us up.

In your home, how do family members handle winning a board game? Have you heard this expression, “Ha! Ha! I won! You lost! I beat you!” A backyard sports game can get ugly in a hurry when bragging enters in. The same holds true with accomplishments or anything else we do to make others jealous. Love does not brag. This kind of love is humble and wants others to succeed.

5. Love is not proud, or arrogant

This New Testament Greek word literally means puffed up like a windbag. It is a self-effacing quality of love. Pride is being big headed; love is being big-hearted. Pride and arrogance breed contention.

True love will always be far more impressed with its own unworthiness than its own merit. True love protects us from having an inflated view of our own self-importance. Pride is fundamentally opposed to love. Love is not proud or arrogant.

6. Love is not rude, or ill-mannered

Love makes us more tactful and polite. The loveless person is ill-mannered, and often crude. There is graciousness in Christian love which never forgets that courtesy and politeness is always to be practiced. People in general just have some natural tendency to rudeness and sometimes they are insensitive. Love does not act unbecomingly or inappropriate. It is sensitive not to hurt the feelings of others.

The principle here has to do with poor manners. It's when a person does not care enough for those who are around to act politely. It cares nothing for their feelings or sensitivities. The loveless person is careless, overbearing, and often crude and can say rude things.

7. Love is not self-seeking, or selfish

If you could cure selfishness you will have just replanted the garden of Eden, an utopia! Here is probably the key to everything. The evil root of fallen human nature is in wanting to have its own way. There are people who always insist upon their privileges; and rights. It is those who are always thinking of what people owe them.

Love thinks less of its rights and more of its duties. Rather than demanding our rights, we should give ourselves to others. Essentially the Bible calls us to put others first, above ourselves. But that is very difficult. We want to fight for our rights. In the home sometimes we hear someone say, “It's not my turn to wash the dishes!” “I didn't let the cat out!” “That's not my mess!” May God help us to become selfless and focus more on the well-being of others.

8. Love is not easily angered, or loses its temper

Love guards against being irritated or angered by things said or done. Love is not touchy. It does not have temper tantrums or “fly off the handle.” Love guards against being angered by things said or done against you. Love is not easily provoked.

How do you respond when the TV remote is misplaced? When someone cuts you off on the road? When we lose our temper, we harm others.

Love does not get angry at others when they say or do something that displeases us.

In the home telling our children that we love them is not convincing if we often yell at them for doing things that easily anger us.

It does no good to excuse yourself when you say: “I know I lost my temper but it’s all over in a few minutes.” So is a nuclear bomb! Well you know what I mean.

A great deal of damage can be done in a very short time. Temper is always destructive, and even small temper “bombs” can leave much hurt and damage, especially when they explode on a regular basis.

Agape-love is not easily angered and doesn’t explode in fits of rage. It exercises self-control by the Holy Spirit’s power.

9. Love keeps no record of wrongs, holds no resentment

The New Testament Greek word is a bookkeeping term that means to calculate, as when figuring an entry in a ledger so that it will not be forgotten. That is precisely what so many people do. One of the great arts in life is to learn what to forget. Love does not store up the memory of any wrong it has received and harbour resentment.

In Christ, God forgives us for our sins so fully that He has no more record of them. The Bible tells us, “*Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account*” (Rom. 4:8). And “*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them*” (2 Cor. 5:19).

We need to do the same. A writer tells how “*in Polynesia, where the natives spend much of their time in fighting and feasting, it is customary for each man to keep some reminders of his hatred. Articles are suspended from the roofs of their huts to keep alive the memory of their wrongs—real or imaginary.*” Some of us have too many reminders hanging from the roofs of our memory in the huts of our minds.

You destroy your relationships by writing down every wrong with the pencil of memory but never taking any off with the eraser of forgiveness. Resentment is careful to keep books, which it reads and re-reads, hoping for a chance to get even. Love keeps no record of wrongs. One of the church fathers said that a wrong done against love is like a spark that falls into the sea and is quenched. Love quenches wrongs rather than records them.

Keeping track of things done against us is a sure way to unhappiness. Jesus said, “*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy*” (Matt.5:7).

Jesus manifested this kind of agape-love in His life. He never boasted, was not proud, not rude, not self-seeking. He was not easily angered and kept no resentment in His heart. Let’s follow His example in our lives.

Next week we will look at another 6 characteristics of agape-love found in 1 Corinthians 13:6-8.