

LOVE IS



1 Corinthians 13:4-5

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

DAY 1: LOVE IS PATIENT AND KIND

We have recently been in a series at church called “Faith, Hope and Love”. In 1 Corinthians 13:13 it says “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

I thought that we could take this opportunity to explore together what love is and isn't, and so for this week we will be looking into five things that 1 Corinthians 13 says about love.

Today we are looking at the phrase in 1 Corinthians 13:4 which says “**Love is patient, love is kind**”.

This is a very well-known part of Scripture and is often quoted at weddings. I wonder sometimes if the Bible is lived out as well as it is memorised, and so today we will aim to challenge ourselves to live out this well known passage.

Would you say that you are a patient person? Would you say that you are kind? I know that for most of us we would have had at least one time within the last week where we lost our patience with a situation. Or a time where we were unkind to someone.

God doesn't just want us to be patient some of the time. God doesn't just want us to be kind some of the time. God wants us to love Him and love our neighbour (Matthew 22:37-39) by being patient and kind ALL of the time.

I think this is a big enough challenge for all of us today. Thankfully God wants to help us to achieve this. Why don't you ask Him to help you to be patient and kind to everyone you encounter this week.

DAY 2: LOVE IS CONTENT

1 Corinthians 13:4 says that love “**does not envy**”.

Envy: a feeling of discontented or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions or qualities.

When you read this list of facts about love in 1 Corinthians 13, there is no way that you cannot feel convicted by it. As if the challenge to be kind and patient yesterday wasn't enough, the Bible is now telling us to feel content.

We have all had moments in our lives where we have wanted what someone else has, whether that's a house/job/family/healing. It feels almost natural for us to look at other people's lives from the outside and think “wow, I want that”.

I love where I live. I love that when I got married God provided miraculously for us to be able to buy a home. When my husband and I moved in, we were over the moon and thought our maisonette was beautiful. The maisonette that we live in is surrounded by these big fancy houses that we drive/walk past every day. They look lovely on the outside and you can often find yourself dreaming about what it would be like to live there. And then you have to quickly remind yourself that you are happy and content with where you are.

I have come to realise that sadly, as humans, our feelings of “wow” about our own lives are all too easily overshadowed by the seeming “wow” of other people's lives.

It is ok to appreciate what someone else has and be happy for them, but let us not live life feeling discontent or resentful. Remind yourself to be thankful for what you have. What can you thank God for today?

DAY 3: LOVE IS HONOURING AND SELFLESS

1 Corinthians 13:4 says that love “**does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking**”.

If you love then you do not make people feel shame or disgrace.

If you love then you do not put yourself before others.

BUT

If you love then you are honouring; you show respect.

If you love then you are selfless; you put others first.

If you are going to choose to love today, then that should outwork itself by you being honouring and selfless.

In the morning before you get out of bed it is easy to have the INTENTIONS of honouring and being selfless. But as soon as you get out of bed and wake up your kids/get in the car/get on the bus/start your working day... it is hard to follow through with the ACTIONS of being honouring and selfless because others don't always live by the standards that we are trying to live up to. When others are not honouring and are not selfless, it is easy for us to want to repay them with the same. But the Bible teaches us to live differently.

When someone has dishonoured you; repay them with honour.

When someone has been self-seeking; repay them by being selfless.

We should not aim to get justice, for that is what God will do (Deuteronomy 32:35). God has simply instructed us, as we read on Day 1, to love people. Wow - what a challenge.

God showed us that He loved us when we didn't deserve it. God demonstrated His own love for us, as described to us in Romans 5:8, in that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”. We should mirror this honouring and selfless love to others around us. When have you not felt like honouring or being selfless recently? What could/did you do to show honour and selflessness in that situation?

DAY 4: LOVE IS HUMBLE

1 Corinthians 13:4 says that love “**does not boast, it is not proud**”.

BOAST: to **talk** with excessive pride about yourself/what you have/what you've done.

PROUD: to **feel** excessive pride about yourself/what you have/what you've done.

It is interesting here that both of these things are mentioned: boasting and being proud. If it only said “love does not boast” then you could be inclined to think that if you just didn't talk about your prideful feelings then that was ok, as long as you just felt it on the inside. But it goes on to tell us that love is also “not proud”, which means that it doesn't even feel prideful on the inside.

In some ways, I personally think that not boasting is easier to control than not feeling proud. You can try to train yourself to not talk with pride; but to not feel proud is a whole new challenge.

Micah 6:8 tells us: “the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what He requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

Anyone can train themselves to have self-control with their words and not **speak** with excessive pride. But if we want to not **feel** excessive pride, then there is only one solution: to walk humbly with God. People who do not believe in God will naturally think that their achievements are all a result of their own actions; however when we believe in God, we must know that He has something to do with it.

What have you achieved recently that you could have (or did) boast about? How could you give the credit to God and walk humbly with Him today?

DAY 5: LOVE IS FORGIVING

1 Corinthians 13:5 says love **“is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs”**.

Love is forgiving. For some, this will be the hardest challenge out of all of the devotions this week. Colossians 3:13 tells us to “forgive as the Lord forgave you”. We all know that we have done things wrong which have hurt God’s heart - yet God has still chosen to forgive us. You know what others have done wrong which have hurt you – and now it is up to you to choose if you will forgive them.

Even if someone keeps on doing wrong against you, Matthew 18:21-22 reminds us that we should just keep on forgiving... to the point where we have forgiven so much that we lose track!

Is there someone who has hurt you/betrayed you that you can forgive today? It is hard to forgive, but God forgives us out of love, so maybe we can choose to follow His example and choose to forgive out of love as well.

Over the past five days we have looked at how love is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-5. I once heard a preacher remind me of the fact that God is love (1 John 4:8), therefore all of the things that love is, are what God is.

If God is love, and God is all of these things that love is; then if we want to be more loving, we need more of God. Why don’t you ask God to fill you up to overflowing with His love today, and then share that love with those around you?