

The Ultimate in Christian Behavior

1 If I could speak in any language in heaven or on earth but didn't love others, I would only be making meaningless noise like a loud gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I knew all the mysteries of the future and knew everything about everything, but didn't love others, what good would I be?

And if I had the gift of faith so that I could speak to a mountain and make it move, without love I would be no good to anybody.

3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would be of no value whatsoever.

4 Love is **patient** and **kind**.

Love is not jealous or boastful or proud **5** or rude.
Love does not demand its own way.
Love is not irritable,
and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged.
6 It is never glad about injustice

but **rejoices whenever the truth wins out**.

7 Love **never gives up**,
never loses faith,

1 Corinthians 13

is **always hopeful**,
and **endures through every circumstance**.

8 Love **will last forever**,

but prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will all disappear.

9 Now we know only a little, and even the gift of prophecy reveals little! **10** But when the end comes, these special gifts will all disappear.

11 It's like this: When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child does. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.

12 Now we see things imperfectly as in a poor mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity.

All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God knows me now.

13 There are three things that will endure – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love.

Perhaps the greatest reason for not becoming proud and puffed up about how spiritual we may think we are is the fact that when we compare ourselves to the love described in this chapter, we always fall very short. Let's keep coming back here and working on our own life – it will keep us from ever becoming too critical of others or of thinking too highly of ourselves. 2 Peter chapter 1 teaches us that perfecting this love will keep us from falling away from God!

No one is perfect in all these areas ... but a life like this should be our intent and goal.

Among all the gifts and talents that God generously gives to people, the three that will last beyond this world are faith, hope, and love – and love supercedes the other two.

The reason we must love, rather than judge, is because we see ourselves and others imperfectly. It is like we see everyone in a mirror that distorts.

This makes us incapable of judging accurately.

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Ephesians 4:21-32

21 Since you have heard all about him and have learned the truth that is in Jesus,

22 throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception.

23 Instead, **there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes.**

24 You must **display a new nature** because you are a new person, created in God's likeness – righteous, holy, and true.

25 So put away all falsehood and "tell your neighbor the truth" because we belong to each other.

26 And "don't sin by letting anger gain control over you."
Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry,
27 for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.

28 If you are a thief, stop stealing.
Begin using your hands for honest work,
and **then give generously to others in need.**

29 Don't use foul or abusive language.
Let everything you say be good and helpful,
so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

30 And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

31 Get rid of all

bitterness,
rage,
anger,
harsh words,
and slander,
as well as all types of malicious behavior.

Unless I truly love those I am interacting with – my words and life become meaningless noise and of no value to them.

I am of little value to a person that I do not love!

32 Instead,
be kind to each other,
tenderhearted,
forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.