

A The supremacy of love

❖ The most excellent way

- What kind of love is Paul presenting in 1 Corinthians 13, and why does it surpass any spiritual gift? (1 Cor. 12:31-13:3)
- In Greek there are several words to define love. Paul chooses *agape* (selfless, unconditional, and reflective love, which seeks only the well-being of the beloved), which is the same one that John uses when saying that “God is love” (1 John 4:8).
- No spiritual gift is useful if it is not exercised motivated by this kind of love. In fact, all our actions and thoughts should be infused with *agape love*.
- Jesus warned us that, because of wickedness, this love will grow cold (Matthew 24:12). But we must not allow this to happen to us, in our homes, or in our churches.

B The characteristics of love

❖ What love does

It suffers long	<i>makrothymeō</i> : to have long spirit, to endure, to be patient	Show patience and tolerate the mistakes of others
It is kind	<i>jrēsteuomai</i> : act benevolently	It is merciful and compassionate
It rejoices in the truth	<i>synjairō</i> : to express sympathy, to congratulate	It rejoices with those who support the truth
It bears all things	<i>stegō</i> : to cover with silence (to endure patiently)	Hide and keep silent about the faults of others, without revealing them
It believes all things	<i>pisteuō</i> : to have faith, to give credit, to trust	It does not condemn, but rather grants the benefit of the doubt
It hopes all things	<i>elpizō</i> : to wait or to trust	Always expect something good to happen
It endures all things	<i>hypomenō</i> : to resist, to endure, to have fortitude, to persevere	Endure hardships, trials, and persecution

❖ What love does NOT do

It does not envy	<i>zeloō</i> : to have a burning feeling	It does not envy those who have other gifts or virtues
It does not parade itself	<i>perpereuomai</i> : to boast, to brag	It does not want to be praised by others
It is not puffed up	<i>fysioō</i> : to swell up, to become proud	It does not have an exaggerated view of himself
It does not behave rudely	<i>asjēmoneō</i> : to act improperly	It does not act against social and moral norms
It does not seek its own	<i>zēteō</i> : to search	It gives up his rights for the good of others
It is not provoked	<i>paroxynō</i> : to sharpen something to irritate, incite or exasperate	It is neither irascible nor overly sensitive
It thinks no evil	<i>logizomai</i> : take inventory	It forgives and disregards offenses received
It does not rejoice in iniquity	<i>jairō</i> : to be cheerful, happy, or to feel well	It does not rejoice in mistakes, but seeks to correct them

❖ A portrait of Jesus

- *He suffers long* : He endured beatings, insults, and contempt (Matt. 27:27-31)
- *He is kind* : He cared for everyone who was suffering
- *He rejoiced in the truth* : He taught the truth with clarity and conviction
- *He bears all things* : He did not judge the sinful woman and granted her forgiveness (Jn. 8:10-11)
- *He believes all things* : He trusted in the sincerity of Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:8-9)
- *He hopes all things* : He prepared 12 men for an “impossible” mission
- *He endures all things* : He endured hunger, rejection, pain, and persecution
- *He does not envy* : He did not seek honors, and he associated with the humble
- *He does not parade himself* : Although he was the King of the Universe, he did not boast about it
- *He is not puffed up* : He was willing to do the humblest jobs
- *He does not behave rudely* : He behaved courteously and correctly with everyone
- *He does not seek its own* : He always did the will of his Father (Jn. 6:38)
- *He is not provoked* : Even when he was struck, he responded with courtesy (John 18:22-23)
- *He thinks no evil* : He asked forgiveness for those who crucified him (Lk. 23:34)
- *He does not rejoice in iniquity* : He spoke harshly to the unjust Pharisees (Mt. 23:27-28)

C The perseverance of love

❖ The greatest of virtues

- The Corinthians were showing by their attitude what love does not do: they were envious; boastful; vain; they acted improperly; they were selfish; they were easily irritated; they were spiteful; and they tolerated sin.
- Like them, we must abandon these faults and abound in the virtues of love, as Paul teaches us, in order to use spiritual gifts correctly. He also invites us to abide in two other virtues: faith and hope.
- When Jesus comes, sin will cease to exist, and we will enjoy eternal life with Him. Then, prophecy, tongues, and other gifts, along with faith and hope, will no longer be necessary. But love will endure forever (1 Corinthians 13:8).