

Divine Love

*as described in
I Corinthians 13*

*by
Douglas L. Crook*

Divine Love

*as described in
I Corinthians 13*

by
Douglas L. Crook

This book is a compilation of my sermon notes of a series of lessons I gave on the love of God as described in *I Corinthians 13*. These notes have not been greatly edited from their original “sermon note” format so you may find some of the thoughts not as fully developed as you might find in a “commentary” format, but hopefully this book will be helpful in stirring your interest in studying this subject further.

There are many lessons that we can learn from this passage and there are several profitable ways to study it. Please, take the time to open your Bible and read each of the references listed in the lesson as they appear. God’s word is life and light. Reading it will give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to reveal to you God’s eternal plans and purposes that are found in Christ for you.

Scriptural quotations in this booklet are made from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted. Definitions of the Greek words considered in this study may be verified through any number of Greek dictionaries and lexicons including Strong’s, Vine’s and Kittle’s.

I Corinthians 13:1 – 8a – If we are going to enjoy God’s best for time and eternity, we must understand, respond to and be characterized by the love of God. Paul makes it clear that we can do nothing of any real, eternal value without the love of God being the motivation behind

what we do. He clearly warns us that there is no reward for our deeds unless they are done by the power of love.

Some may be surprised to find that this well-known, wonderful, encouraging chapter on love is set in the context of a very severe and blunt letter of correction. I'm sure that many would describe Paul's words to the Corinthians as unloving. Certainly, those who have acted according to Paul's instruction in this letter have been labeled by others as unloving and ungracious. However, we will find that Paul's words and attitude towards the carnal Corinthians were in perfect accord with the description of divine love.

One of the reasons that we find this glorious love chapter embedded in this severe letter of correction to the Corinthians is that God's love is the answer to all bad conduct. **II Corinthians 5:14, 15** – If you try to do the right thing because of some kind of legality that someone else imposes on you or that you impose on yourself, you will not live a godly life. If you are bound and compelled by the power of love, you will be pleasing to the Lord and useful to your brothers and sisters in the Lord. The only way to live a life of righteousness is to understand, respond to and be characterized by the love of God. The only way to understand, respond to and be characterized by the love of God is to know the sound doctrine of the Bible as revealed to the Apostle Paul – **I Timothy 1:3 - 7** “*Now the purpose of the commandment (vs. 3 teach no other doctrine) is love from a pure heart.*” NKJV

Knowing the importance of understanding, responding to and being characterized by the love of God, we are going to take our time and consider each of these descriptive words and phrases found here in **verses 4—8a** of **Chapter 13** of **I Corinthians**.

I want to use a threefold approach in studying each

of these descriptions of love. 1) ***God's love for us*** can be described by each of these descriptive words and phrases. **I John 4:16** 2) ***Our love for God***. We are to love God with this same divine love and not some human emotion. **I John 4:19** Our love for God should fit the description of ***I Cor. 13*** because God Himself is the source of our ability to love Him. **Romans 5:5** 3) ***Our love for one another***. **John 13:34, 35** One thing that ought to set us apart from the rest of the human race is our ability to love our brothers and sisters with this kind of love that goes beyond human ability and is evidence of the divine nature within.

A Description – In ***I Cor. 13*** we have a description of divine love and not a definition. A definition defines the meaning and purpose of a thing. For example, I could define a Church building as the building in which a local congregation of believers assembles together to worship God and enjoy fellowship with one another. That defines its purpose, but it doesn't describe how that purpose is accomplished.

If I began to describe a specific Church building to you, then you could begin to understand how that building fulfills its defined purpose. I could describe it as having a spacious entry way with a tract rack, an auditorium that seats about 150, a balcony for musicians, a fellowship hall, a kitchen and Sunday School rooms. With the description one can begin to understand how a particular Church building fulfills its defined purpose.

A Definition – the world has many definitions of love, but the Scriptural definition of God's love can be summed up in the following way: "It is the desiring, seeking and commitment to bring about the well-being of another." We come to such a definition by understanding passages like **Jeremiah 29:11 / Romans 8:28 & Philippians 4:19.**

The Bible declares that God loves the human race.

“For God so loved the world that He gave...” John 3:16

The human race needed a Savior. God committed Himself to provide the One and only Savior, Jesus Christ. Sadly, most of the world will reject His love and its gift of eternal life.

The Bible also reveals that the love of God is experienced in a special measure by those who are born into His family by faith in His Son. What a precious revelation! God desires, seeks and has committed Himself to bring about all that is for my eternal well-being. He is **all-knowing**, so He knows what is best for me. He is **all-powerful**, so He is able to bring about that which is good for me. **He is eternal**, so His love will never fade or fail. **He is holy**, so nothing can ever corrupt His love. **He is righteous**, so He will always do what is right for me. Oh, saints, rest in and rejoice in God’s revelation of Himself!

Love Suffers Long – Our first descriptive phrase that we will consider is that divine love suffers long or is patient, perseveres and slow to respond in anger to the offenses of others.

1) God’s love for us – Because God loves us, He suffers long the sin of the human race and the disobedience of His children. He does not ignore or excuse it, but suffers it for a long period of time. But His suffering is not infinite or without end.

Many ask the question, “How could God send anyone to hell?” I ask, “Why doesn’t a holy and righteous God destroy wicked men who so boldly and openly blaspheme Him and His ways?” The answer to my question is that God loves the human race. The answer to their question is that when the love of God is fully and finally rejected, man has chosen his own judgment.

II Peter 3:3 – 10 – When I hear and see the scoffing and mocking of God and His ways today, I marvel at His love that is longsuffering. Righteous

judgment is coming on all who reject His love, but meanwhile God suffers man's insults and offenses in order that some might be saved.

The degree of His love for His children is even greater. His patience with us as His children is comforting. How patient our Heavenly Father is in teaching us His ways. He suffers through our unbelief, stubbornness, ignorance and rebellion because He loves us.

He constantly seeks what is in our best interest and patiently directs us to it. – *Psalm 37:23, 24* – I am struck with awe when I think of God's patience with Abraham – (Ishmael, Sodom), Jacob – (scheming, wrestling), Moses, (“I can't do it”), David – (after being so blessed, miserably failed) Peter – (constantly failing to comprehend God's will, denial)

He continually gives His children the opportunity to accept His best. I remember an incident that happened several years ago that the Lord used to illustrate for me the longsuffering and patience of God's love. I was helping two older gentlemen put up a rock veneer on the exterior of a Church building. The trick to getting the cultured stone to stick was to have just the right consistency to your mortar. Even if you had the mix right, if there were a lot of irregularities in the under surface, your rock would have a tendency to “pop” off. This older man, who was an elder in the Church, had one particularly stubborn stone that would not stay put. He would place it were it belonged and it would stay for awhile and while he reached for another stone, it would decide to fall. Finally, after countless times of repeating the steps to put it into place he spoke to it and said, “you might as well stay up there because I'm not going to leave until you do.” It fell off a few more times, but he patiently placed it back where it belonged and today it helps to beautify the

Church building in the place that had been chosen for it by a man who was willing to patiently suffer through in order to accomplish his purpose.

Philippians 1:6 – God will complete His work in His people. The degree of glory of the finished work will depend on the degree that we receive and respond to His love, but He will complete the work.

A revelation of God's love for us is not to be misunderstood as an excuse or reason to test His patience. We'll look at God's loving discipline later in the study and find that it is never profitable to resist or rebel against the will of God for your life, but it is important to know that as long as you are in this life, He loves you and will patiently give you opportunities to know His best in life and in eternity.

There is an end to how long God will suffer the rebellion and disobedience of His children without a response of judgment. That end will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ where there will be loss of reward for not surrendering to the Lord's longsuffering love. **II Corinthians 5:10**

However, even then, nothing can separate the child of God from the love of God that has made us children of God eternally by His grace. **I Corinthians 11:32** In this sense the long-suffering of God for His disobedient children doesn't have an end. Despite suffering long because of their disobedience, He will usher them in to His loving and eternal presence. God will put an end to His own suffering by glorifying the carnal saint and removing the sin nature. **I Corinthians 15:50**

I rejoice in the longsuffering of the love of God for me and for all of His children. It gives me assurance to know that when I've failed to be pleasing to the Lord, He will gladly pick me up and give me the opportunity to

walk in fellowship with Him if I will just respond to His longsuffering love.

If you have fallen short of understanding and obeying the will of God in any area of your life, don't listen to the lie of the enemy that says it's too late for you and that you have hurt God one too many times. That is a trick of the enemy to keep you in your self-destructive pit of carnality and despair.

Let God's long suffering love pick you up and set you again in the path of righteousness and blessing. Like the prodigal son who came to himself while sitting in the mire of the pig's sty, come to yourself, repent and trust in the unfailing love of God to embrace you and clean you up. Like that loving father, God will be watching, waiting for your return, no matter how much you may have made Him suffer with your disobedience.

2) Our love for God – To love God means that we are committed to that which will bring Him glory and honor. **John 14:15** – If we truly love God, we will honor Him by obeying His loving instruction. It is easy to say that we love God, but our love for God should be characterized by longsuffering or patience. Obviously, our longsuffering with God has nothing to do with us putting up with God's offenses toward us since He always deals with us in love. Nevertheless, many perceive God's ways or at least some things that God allows in their life to be offensive, hurtful and painful. Many Christians, when they experience trials, quickly abandon their service and obedience to the Lord. They stop reading their Bibles, stop praying, stop assembling together and stop ministering to others.

If we truly love God, it will enable us to suffer long and faithfully persevere in our service and obedience to the Lord. **Hebrew 12:1 – 2** – Let us run with endurance. The Christian life is more like a long distance

race than a short distance sprint. Many Christians start out well and fast, but have no endurance. When the difficult times come or sometimes when things are not very exciting, they stop running, stop serving and stop honoring the Lord.

God is not impressed with those who start out fast and strong, but who quickly drop out. Are you in it for the long haul or are you only a fair-weather Christian? Only by serving the Lord out of love can you have the strength to suffer long. **James 1:2 – 5** – Let the trials manifest your love for Christ by manifesting your longsuffering. **James 5:11** – Job said, “*Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.*” **Job 13:15** We need the patient endurance of Job that comes from loving Jesus.

Sometimes we become impatient when we don't feel like God is answering our prayers or that He doesn't appear to be keeping His promises. **Hebrews 6:13 – 15** – Abraham patiently waited 25 years before God's promise to him was fulfilled. A faith that works by love is an enduring faith. **Galatians 5:6** You remain faithful because you know that the One you love will keep His promises.

How long are we to suffer the difficult times and remain faithful in our service and obedience to the Lord? **James 5:7 – 8** – Until the coming of the Lord who will put an end to all our suffering. Do you love the Lord? It will manifest itself in your willingness and ability to suffer long anything in the will of God that will honor the Lord Jesus Christ.

3) Our love for one another – John 13:34 – Loving one another is not an option if we are to love Jesus as we ought. That means that we must patiently endure the offenses and disappointments of our brothers and sisters in the Lord and not quickly write them off.

Obviously, I'm not talking about tolerating open sin and rebellion against God's word. The letter of *I Corinthians* gives us Paul's teaching on how to deal with such behavior. However, many times it is difficult to continue to interact and minister to those who simply do not mature as quickly as we think they ought or whose personality constantly clashes with our own. With such people it is easier just to say, "I don't want to mess with you anymore." "I don't care about what's best for you." "I'm tired of suffering because of you."

If there were ever a group of people that deserved to be spoken to that way, it was the carnal Corinthian saints. But why did Paul take the time to write them and visit them instead of just writing them off as a lost cause? Because he loved them. *I Corinthians 16:23, 24* – my love, my longsuffering love, be with you, Paul wrote.

I Thessalonians 5:14, 15 – We are to be patient with all and seek that which is good for all. The only way to do that is to love your brother with the divine love of God that comes only from Him and that manifests itself in the ability to suffer long. – *Romans 15:5 – 7*

It helps to think about how many times God would have given up on you if He were you and then to remember that He never did. He suffered through your foolishness, carnality, pride, stubbornness, ignorance and reluctance and yet continued to minister to you and patiently encouraged you to grow and mature. How can we do less for our brother or sister in the Lord?

Love Is Kind – “to show goodness and mercy when not deserved and when it cannot be repaid.” “To show oneself useful.”

1) **God's love for us - For The Human Race -**
Luke 6:35, 36 – God is kind to the unthankful and evil in many ways. He sends the rain on the just as well as the unjust. He causes the sun to shine on the evil and the

godly alike. The Hebrew equivalent to the Greek word translated “kind” that is found in the Old Testament is a word that is translated in a variety of ways. Some of the English translations of this Hebrew word are lovingkindness, kindness, mercy, goodness and a number of other similar words. **Psalm 136:1 – 3** – His mercy, His kindness endures forever. From creation to redemption to everyday blessings, all that man receives from God is by His lovingkindness that supplies what we need, though we don’t deserve it and can never repay Him.

Over and over again in the Old Testament men are called on to worship God because of His kindness. (over 250 times in the O.T.) **Psalm 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43** – God is not cruel, but kind and worthy of our thanks.

God’s kindness was fully manifested by the gift of His Son. – **Romans 5:5 – 10** If it were not for the kindness of God’s love we would be eternally separated from His glorious presence. He sought what was best for us when we didn’t deserve it and could not afford it. He provided our redemption by providing His Son. We can never repay what Christ paid for our eternal life.

Though God is kind to the unthankful, that doesn’t mean that everyone fully benefits from His kindness. His kindness has given all the opportunity to enjoy His blessing. None deserved that opportunity, but His love has given all the opportunity for eternal life. Because He is righteous, the offer of His kindness will have an end. Many will decline His kindness and its provision. **Psalm 85:10** – The cross is the meeting point of mercy and truth, righteousness and peace. Truth and righteousness usually oppose mercy or kindness and peace, but on the cross they came together and each was fully satisfied. To accept Jesus as your Savior is to benefit from His kindness that obtains your peace with God. To reject Christ is to face the truth that you are a sinner that is worthy of the righteous judgment of God.

God's Love For His Children – Some Christians make the mistake of looking at service to God as a burden and hardship instead of what it truly is and that is a glorious opportunity to be associated with Him which is afforded us by His kindness.

Others make another mistake. Though God does reward faithfulness in His children, we must not make the mistake of thinking that God's blessing us as believers is something we deserve. The fact that we have the opportunity to serve and worship God as His children must be understood to be the result of His kindness to us. Therefore, the blessings that are promised for faithfulness are the direct result of His kindness.

Psalm 23:1 – 6 – All the blessings, protection, restoration, deliverance, provision and guidance promised to us as believers in this comforting Psalm are the result of the lovingkindness of God. If we are presently living a life of victory and faithfulness and enjoying the blessings of God, lest we think we deserve those blessings, we should remember those times when we failed the Lord as His child and how when we acknowledged our failure, He kindly restored us back to fellowship and blessing. **Psalm 51:1, 2** We have the opportunity today to please the Lord because of His past kindness. If we are currently honoring the Lord with our life and enjoying His blessings, it is because of His kindness that gave us His Holy Spirit and placed within us the very life of Jesus Christ. Thank God for His kindness that enables us to enjoy the fullness of His blessings and rewards.

2) Our love for God – When we use this word to describe our love for God we have to modify our definition somewhat, but not so much as to lose the thought of making one's self useful without expecting or demanding something in return.

Obviously, God is always worthy of our service.

He deserves all our praise, service and worship. Our love for God cannot include the thought of mercy. However, our service and worship of God should be characterized by being willing to be useful to Him. Though God's kindness to Israel is probably the primary meaning in **Jeremiah 2:2**, I believe that God looked on any response of obedience from Israel as welcome kindness. Any remembrance of His people's faithfulness to Him brings Him great comfort.

Hosea 6:4 refers to the faithfulness, goodness or kindness of Judah. The kindness of much of God's people is as passing and unstable as a cloud or mist. Most of God's people are so unkind to God. Much of what is being preached today is about what we can get from God if we do something for Him. "Give your offering to God so He can make you rich." "Serve the Lord so you can get something out of Him."

Without question, God in His kindness has promised immeasurable blessing and reward for those who serve Him faithfully. We can expect Him to honor His word and anticipate those blessings, but we need to learn to serve Him because we love Him without demanding some blessing or reward for every little thing that we do.

Some people demand of God a special blessing for everything they do or they will do no more. Do you see how unkind that is? Our faithful service to the Lord is simply a reasonable response of gratitude for His infinite love toward us. **Romans 12:1, 2**

Let's not barter with God and demand certain things from Him if we are going to continue to serve Him. Let's just serve Him because we love Him. **Ruth 3:10, 11** – Ruth served Naomi and made herself useful to her because she loved her. She demanded nothing in return.

May we be so kind to God.

II Timothy 2:21, 22 – Let's be useful to God by abandoning all that would hinder us from being pleasing to Him. Let us serve Him because we love Him.

3) Our love for one another – Luke 6:27 – 37 – Jesus' love and kindness is our example to follow. We cannot exceed His love nor should we be satisfied with something less. The passage in **Luke 6** is one of the most misunderstood and misapplied passages in the entire Bible. Many have turned this passage into a blanket pardon for sin and by doing so have declared that there are no consequences for sin in this life or eternity.

Remember, Jesus is put forth as the example to follow. Are there consequences for rejecting Jesus as the Savior? Yes! Eternal condemnation. However, the example of Jesus' kindness is that despite the sin and offenses of evil men, He has kindly given them the opportunity to do the right thing. During this entire Church Age He gives them the opportunity to repent and honor Him.

This is how we should be kind to those who offend us. We are not to retaliate or dismiss them as worthless, but to continually give them the opportunity to do the right thing and honor God with their lives. Remember the context of this **Chapter 13**, the love chapter. Paul had demanded that the Corinthians judge the sins of one of its members and demanded that they separate themselves from such an individual. That sounds unkind. But what was the goal? **II Thessalonians 3:13, 14** – That the fallen brother might be ashamed, repent and be restored to godliness and fellowship.

Though many have abused and misapplied the lessons of **Luke 6**, the fact remains that we are commanded to be kind to the unthankful. We are

commanded to respond with kindness to evil. How? By constantly giving the offending one the opportunity to do the right thing and be willing to forgive them when there is repentance.

We should treat unbelievers who offend us with kindness by constantly living and proclaiming to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ that saves whosoever will. You cannot do that if you are locked in a constant battle of retaliation. Despite their evil behavior, let them know that Jesus loves them and wants to save them from eternal condemnation.

Our kindness to our brothers and sisters in Christ should be even more evident and intense. We can be so unkind to one another. **Romans 12:9, 10** gives us the scriptural balance. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. There is a judgment necessary. However, we are to love our brother with a kind affection. Whether a brother offends us personally or offends us generally by his carnality we must not cease to give them the opportunity to do what is right. Until such a brother abandons his sin, it may be necessary for us to separate ourselves, but never to consider him worthless or unworthy of our love.

The Lord has often reminded me of my need to be kind to my brothers and sisters in the Lord. I am easily frustrated with Christians who neglect their responsibility to serve and honor the Lord faithfully. Carnal Christians who choose to live their life selfishly until they get in trouble and then need God and the Church and God's people to minister to them have a tendency to upset me. But the Holy Spirit is faithful to remind me that one reason why we are commanded to faithfully assemble ourselves together is to be able to give such carnal Christians the opportunity to do the right thing. We don't embrace or encourage their carnality. In fact we are called to judge it and call it what it is, but we are to constantly

give them the opportunity to repent and honor the Lord. Many will never take the opportunity and respond to the kindness of love. Others will and that makes it worth suffering the hurt and disappointment of the carnality of others. I want to be useful to my brothers and sisters in Christ by being used of God to proclaim the will of God and the whole counsel of God that they might have the opportunity to respond and honor God. *Ephesians 4:32*

God has been so kind to me. How can I be any less kind to my brothers and sisters in the Lord? I have offended others and they have been so kind not to reject me and given me the opportunity to do the right thing. The result has been restoration and fellowship. Again, how can I do anything less?

Love Envies Not – Not Jealous – Greek – “a burning passion or desire.” The Greek word can be used in a good sense or a bad sense, depending on the context. Obviously, the context here is that love is not envious in the bad sense.

The English definition of the word envy is, “a feeling of discontentment and resentment aroused by contemplation of another’s desirable possessions or qualities with a strong desire to have them for one’s self.”

1) God’s love for us – When we begin to apply this description of God’s love for us, it may at first seem difficult for us to understand how God is not envious and how do we benefit from that truth. After all, what could God possibly envy anyway? He’s God. His every experience and possession is nothing but good and pleasant, right?

This attribute of God’s love for us is best demonstrated in the life and death of Jesus Christ. As the Son of Man, the Promised Redeemer, Jesus’ lot, His portion was to leave the throne room of Heaven, descend

to this sin-corrupted world, be born as a Man, suffer the needs and frailties of a human body, experience rejection, persecution, injustice, torture and death. Now let's ask the question again. Aren't all of God's experiences and possessions good, pleasant and desirable? Obviously not. If Christ's nature were not a nature of love, He could have looked at His portion and been discontent. He could have looked at the alternative of simply staying in Heaven and letting man fend for Himself. That alternative would have been very appealing to me.

But God is love and love envies not. Jesus was content with His role in our redemption despite the unpleasantness of the task. God the Father was content to offer up His Beloved Son in order to reconcile me unto Himself.

Isaiah 53:1 – 5, 10, 11 – Thank God for His love that would not allow Him to be discontent with the only path that would lead to my reconciliation. Instead of discontentment and resentment, His love found satisfaction in the way of sorrow, pain and death, because it brought about my justification.

In the wilderness Satan offered some more attractive, envious alternatives to Jesus' path of bringing about the reconciliation of the human race. **Luke 4:1 – 13** – There was nothing in Jesus to allow Him to fall into the snare of discontentment with the will of the Father for Him in redeeming mankind because He was God and God is love and love envies not.

Even Peter tried to take Jesus down a different path than the one that lead to the torture of the cross. **John 18:10 – 12** – Jesus was content to drink His cup, His portion, even though it was a way of suffering and death.

God's love for us that does not envy, did not stop at the cross. He constantly seeks what is in my best

interest and there is no desire for any alternative. Nothing appeals to God more than my eternal well-being no matter what the cost to Himself. **Romans 8:32** I find great comfort in knowing that God loves me with a love that does not envy any other way than the way that leads to my eternal well being.

2) Our love for God – Do we love God with this same kind of love? Are we committed to bringing glory to God at any cost? Like Jesus, as children of God, we have a race to run, a cup to drink, that is the will of God. However, Satan is persistent to offer us many apparently desirable and envious alternatives to God’s will for our life. Too often, as we contemplate the alternatives, we become discontent and resentful of the will of God and passionately seek to claim those alternatives as our cup for life.

Let’s briefly look at the life God has called every believer to and see how that at first glance, it may not seem like the most desirable path and why many quickly become discontent with it and envy an apparently more desirable way of life.

In General - Philippians 1:29 – The way of faith many times is a way of suffering. That suffering can involve many areas of our life, physical, emotional and/or spiritual. The way that brings glory to God is often inconvenient and difficult. There is an enemy out there that wants to keep us from honoring God and doing what is in God’s best interest. However, God is faithful to lead us in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Are we content with those paths of righteousness?

Psalms 73:1 – 14 – Why would anyone be content with a life that is characterized by suffering and trials? Why shouldn’t we passionately desire any other lifestyle? Because we love God and love envies not. If you are

tempted to murmur because of the way God is leading you and you are envious of the apparently “carefree” life of the carnal and ungodly, you need to examine your love for God.

II Corinthians 12:7 – 10 – The will of God for Paul included a physical ailment that was used to work God’s will for God’s glory in and through Paul. Paul’s cup also included suffering, much persecution, dangers and perils, persecution, beatings and imprisonments. Yet he was not resentful of his race course, but rather gloried in the way and in the things that God ordered for His life because they honored God.

We should be willing to serve and obey God no matter what the cost, first and foremost because we love Him. For the child of God that loves the Lord there is no other path to choose but the one that honors God.

It’s also important to understand that obedience to the will of God **is** the most desirable path for time and eternity. Those who fear the Lord should not envy the ungodly or the carnal individual. Those who live by faith that works by love are the ones who should be envied.

This life – Hebrews 13:5, 6 – Those who fear the Lord have the promise of the protection, guidance and provision of the Lord in every situation. We have the promise that all things work together to bring about our eternal good. We have the promise that God will answer our prayers and supply our every need. We have been promised joy unspeakable and full of glory and a peace that passes understanding. No other life, but a life of faith can promise those things and deliver.

Future – Hebrews 11:24 – 26 – I don’t envy the world with its self-indulgent living and its short-lived pleasures. Such self-indulgence leads to eternal losses. Would you envy a man eating a full steak dinner with all

the trimmings when you only had a plate of beans and vegetables? Well, you might unless you knew that the man's steak was laced with poison that resulted in a cruel, agonizing death. Then you would be thankful for your portion that lead to health and strength and you would be content to eat your fill.

We need the eternal perspective of life that will enable us to see this life for what it is. It is a time of preparation for eternity. Any other life, other than a life lived to honor, worship and serve the Lord, is a wasted life.

Philippians 3:7 – 14 – May we make Paul's desire to win Christ our own desire. We are given the opportunity to walk in the path of righteousness that leads to being a joint heir with the Heir of all things, a co-regent with the Lord of lords and King of kings. We serve Him, not desiring any other way of life, because we love Him, but the bonus is that such a life is the best, most rewarding life that anyone could possibly live.

The sufferings of a life of selfishness are just beginning and are eternal. For the believer who walks by faith, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

Romans 8:18

If you are personally going through a very difficult time in your life and you are tempted to murmur and become discontent with the portion God has allotted you, before you start envying someone else's portion, examine your love for God. Take God's word as true when He tells you that His ways are best ways. Start thanking God for the cup He has given you to drink. Keep your eyes on the goal and finish your course with joy – **Hebrews 12:1, 2** – Jesus didn't desire any other course than the one that purchased our redemption. May we not desire any other

life than the one that will bring Jesus the greatest glory.

3) Our love for one another – We are to love one another with this same love that envies not. So much chaos and destruction comes in the Body of Christ when one of God’s people becomes envious of another believer’s place, gifts and/or talents. To envy another’s place is to resent your own and that leads to neglect of your own necessary function in the body.

1 Corinthians 12:14 – 18 – God has placed each in the Body as it as pleased Him for His glory. You are where you are and have the gifts and talents that you have for His glory. You have everything you need to glorify God right where you are. **James 4:1 – 3** – So many divisions and hurts have resulted from jealousies among God’s people and from individuals trying to usurp a place that God has never given them. You cannot love your brother and envy him at the same time. Love seeks your brother’s eternal well-being. God’s best for your brother can only be obtained by him faithfully functioning in the place in the Body where God placed him. Therefore, you would not seek to make his place your own if you love him.

1 Corinthians 3:3 – Envy is a manifestation of the flesh. **Galatians 5:19 – 21** **Romans 13:10 – 14** – The way to avoid envy is to dedicate yourself to a life of godliness and service in the place where God has placed you. Don’t give the flesh opportunity to make you discontent with your place in the body. **Galatians 5:25, 26** – Seek the direction of the Holy Spirit for your place and ministry and then allow Him to equip you and to open the doors for you to be successful in doing the will of God. If you have to push, fight, connive, demand and take from others to obtain your goals you are not being led by the Spirit, but rather by the flesh.

Envy and arrogance go hand in hand. You

wouldn't think so, but they do. One who envies has the arrogance to think that he deserves the place of another and that he can fill it better than the one God has placed there. **James 3:13 – 18** – Envy destroys peace. Peace is the proper functioning of all the parts in their proper places. A well tuned motor running smoothly is a picture of peace. What would happen if one of the pistons decided it didn't like being attached to the crank shaft and disengaged itself? It would fly through the top of the engine and cause tremendous damage.

One of the greatest causes of envy among God's people is the failure of God's people to be content with the preaching and teaching of sound doctrine. Sound teaching reveals to us God's plans and purposes for us as a body and as individuals. If we are not constantly immersed in His word, we are going to lose sight of those plans and purposes and of the guidance of the Holy Spirit and we will then have our attention and affection drawn to lust after positions, possessions, gifts and talents rather than the will of God.

I Peter 2:1 – 3 tells us we need to be willing to take in the milk of the word so that we can grow spiritually. As we take in the milk of God's word, we will grow and begin to take in the meat of the word which will cause us to be content with who we are in Christ. **I Timothy 6:3 – 6** - Be content with God's word and you will be content to serve Him in whatever capacity He gives you. It will cause you to be thankful for your brothers and sisters in Christ and to support and encourage them in their place in the body rather than envy them.

Love Does Not Parade Itself, Vaunteth Not, Not Proud, Does Not Brag-

“not boastful, does not exalt itself.” **Not Puffed Up, Not Proud, Not Arrogant** – “doesn’t boast of self-sufficiency.” Literally, “to inflate.” The thought is that of an over inflated opinion of oneself and one’s abilities.

1) **God’s love for us** – Paul’s primary purpose in the 13th chapter of I Corinthians was to describe for the Corinthians how they should love one another. He uses language that is best applied to the human experience. Nevertheless, Paul’s teaching is clear, God alone is the source of this love and it is with this same divine love that God loves us.

When we apply these descriptions to God’s love for us we have to alter our definitions somewhat in order to use a vocabulary that is more fitting the eternal God, but we don’t have to alter the definitions so much as to lose the underlying and corresponding virtue of God’s love for us that is to be reflected in our love for one another.

For example: Our present description says love does not exalt itself. Yet we know from the the word of God that God does rightfully exalt Himself and commands us to exalt Him as well. Love does not boast of a self-sufficiency, but God is Jehovah, the One who exists in and of Himself. Nonetheless, in the proper context, these descriptions are accurate when applied to God’s demonstration of His love for us that brought about our redemption.

In the case of God, these virtues might best be described as a choice to refrain from insisting that man acknowledge His praise-worthiness in order to accomplish our redemption.

Philippians 2:5 – 8 – The Son of God humbled himself and made Himself of no reputation – emptied Himself – did not selfishly parade the majesty of His deity, but took the form and place of a servant. Oh what love! Jesus came to minister to my need of redemption. He is the Son of God. When I think of the Eternal Son of God coming to this earth, clothed in the form of His own Creation, I stand in awe of His love.

It would have only been reasonable for Jesus to demand that His creation acknowledge and worship Him. To declare Himself to be the Son of God was not an over inflated opinion of Himself, for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. But to accomplish my redemption, His love for me compelled Him to humble Himself and make Himself of no reputation among His creatures and to submit Himself to their sinful intentions and murderous plot in order to deliver them from their sin once and for all.

Matthew 12:14 – 21 – He came as the gentle Lamb of God to die to conquer by love and not force or self-promotion. I marvel at the constraint of Christ’s love for me as He suffered all the mocking and blasphemy that He endured from His enemies: the scourging, the injustice, the torture of the cross and the cruel mocking, “*He saved others Himself He cannot save.*” **Matthew 26:51 - 54** He could have called 12 legions of angels and silenced the mockers and paraded Himself around for all to see who He truly was, but because He loved me, He did not exalt Himself. He humbled Himself, that I might be exalted together with Him.

As the pre-incarnate Son of God, He is Jehovah, the One who exists in and of Himself. Nevertheless, in His love for me, Jesus, as the Son of Man, demonstrated His dependence on God the Father. – **John 5:30** – He

willingly took a place of subordination to secure my salvation. Jehovah, out of love for me, was willing to become the Head of a new race of men that is fully dependent on the will of the Father and fully equipped by the Godhead to fulfill that will. He chose a position of weakness because He loved me. **II Corinthians 13:4**

Furthermore, we see this aspect of the love of God in the unity of the Godhead. In ancient mythology the gods are presented as arrogant, petty, jealous and competitive. The Godhead of love is revealed to be in perfect harmony. Father – “this is my beloved Son.” Son – “I come to do the will of my Father.” Holy Spirit – “comes to glorify Christ.” What a comfort in knowing that there is no arrogance in the Trinity. All Three are working in perfect harmony for my good.

2) Our love for God – There are many religious people who say they love God, but all the while they are boasting in their works, ceremonies and righteousness. **Galatians 6:14, 15** If you are trusting in anything else other than the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for your acceptance by God, you are arrogant and puffed up. It is not until we realize that we are nothing and can do nothing to redeem ourselves from our hopeless condition in sin that we are able to love the One who loved us and gave us His Son.

Jeremiah 9:23, 24 – Our glory is in knowing Jesus as our Redeemer. **I Corinthians 1:29 – 31** – Our love for God begins when we stop boasting in ourselves and start glorying in Jesus Christ who has made us children of God based on His own merit and righteousness. This is why so many refuse to come to Jesus Christ for salvation. They just cannot humble themselves to see themselves as lost, vile sinners in need of a Savior.

After Salvation – Sometimes, after we have

walked with the Lord for sometime, we may be tempted to think that we are somebody special in and of ourselves. We may think that God is fortunate to be associated with us because we have done so much for Him. We may be tempted to think or demand His blessings based on our past service to Him as if we were capable of rendering that service on our own.

I Corinthians 15:10 – We have no cause to parade around and draw attention to ourselves. It is God’s grace that enables us to do anything for His glory. **II Corinthians 4:5 – 7** – We have the privilege to be associated with the Eternal God and His eternal purposes. We are nothing but fragile vessels of clay that have been made privileged instruments of the glory of God. If we love Jesus, we will stop boasting in our service to Him and make our only and our constant boast the cross and grace of Jesus Christ.

3) Our love for one another – If we love one another, we will humble ourselves before one another and not demand that everyone acknowledge how important we are. There is so much competition and demand for recognition among God’s people today. Vaunteth = parade = “look at me.” “See what I can do for God.” “Too bad that you are not as talented or as gifted as I am.” The phrase “puffed up” reminds me of the puffer fish. The puffer fish is a relatively small fish, but has the ability to inflate itself to appear quite large to impress other fish and intimidate any possible predators. The fish does often succeed in fooling other fish, but when it’s all said and done it is still just a little fish full of air. Saints we must not be puffer Christians.

In the natural, when there is swelling in our body, what does it indicate? Something is wrong. The same is true in the spiritual body of Christ. If we are swollen,

puffed up, then there is something wrong spiritually. This of course was the problem in Corinth. There were those who thought they were better than others because they had certain gifts or because they associated with certain individuals they considered to be better people, which made them better than those who associated with certain other people. You cannot love your brother if you think he is inferior to you and therefore think it beneath you to seek his well-being. Do you see how contrary to the message of the Gospel and the love of God that attitude is? God loved us and we were inferior and undeserving. Jesus did not feel it beneath Him to minister to our need of salvation. Who are we to parade around as superior or to have an over inflated opinion of ourselves?

Philippians 2:1 – 4 – Apart from Christ, you are nothing. Apart from His enabling, you have nothing of importance to share with anyone. In Christ, you have been made a useful member of the body of Christ and so has everyone else who has put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Thank God for the privilege to serve and honor Him in anyway and to anyone He chooses. Thank God for any and all members of the body that He uses to minister to you. **Ephesians 4:14 – 16** – Don't let swelling cause the body not to function as it ought. **I Corinthians 3:5 – 8** - We have nothing to boast in, but we have a great responsibility to be faithful to the one who has given us so much.

I Peter 5:5 – 11 – It's easy to be humble when you constantly look to Jesus as your example. When we compare ourselves with others, we have a tendency to think we are better than some. May we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and He will exalt us in His time and by His grace. May we have the mind of Christ, a mind to humbly serve our brother for their eternal good and may we never feel that such service is beneath us. **John 13:1 - 17**

Love Is Not Unseemly, Unbecoming, **Rude**

– Love never conducts itself in a manner that is inconsistent with one who desires, seeks and is committed to the well-being of another.

1) **God's love for us** – This is such a comforting truth for the believer. Too many of God's people have the concept or attitude that God is out to get them. They despair in times of trials and feel that God has abandoned them. They become discouraged and bitter thinking that God has rudely ignored their prayers.

Matthew 7:7 – 11 – God will always deal with me as is becoming a loving Father. The secret to a joyous life, full of peace and comfort, is learning to accept everything in your life as from the hand of your loving Father. If it is your desire to honor God with your life, He will direct your steps and all the events, places and people that cross the path in which He leads you. *Proverbs 3:5 – 8* If He is directing everything in your life, including the difficult and unpleasant things, and if He loves you and love never conducts itself in such a way that is unbecoming one who seeks your best interest, that means that even the unpleasant things are beneficial to bringing about your eternal well-being.

Romans 8:28 – All things work together for my good because God loves me and is in charge of my life and will never conduct Himself toward me rudely or in an inappropriate way as my Heavenly Father. *II Corinthians 4:15 – 18* – These truths are not new to most of us, but saints it's time we apply the truths we know to our daily lives and understand that they are the solution to overcoming every problem we face in life. Too many Christians can recite the truths of Scripture, but never apply those truths to solve the problems of life.

It is one thing for a child to know that $2 + 2 + 2 =$

6. It's quite another thing for that child to apply that knowledge to solve a problem. If that child goes into the house to get himself and his two friends some apples and each of them like to eat two apples a piece, how many apples will he need to bring out? $2 + 2 + 2 = 6$ or $2 \times 3 = 6$. Simple, right? If that child is like most Christians, he will simply go into the house, fall down and start to cry, "I don't know how many apples to take out for my friends and me!" His father may say, "but son, how much is $2 + 2 + 2$?" "It's 6, but what does that have to do with my problem?"

How does the believer keep from becoming overwhelmed and discouraged in difficult times? How do you and I keep faithfully, joyfully serving and praising God when everything seems to be going wrong? We apply the simple, fundamental truths of the Gospel to our problems. My Heavenly Father is the Almighty God. + He loves me and is committed to my eternal well-being. + No one and nothing can overthrow His purposes of love for me. + Love never behaves itself unseemly. = That means that God is working in me and through me something good and eternal through my present trial. Knowing that will enable me to give thanks in and for everything God allows in my life. **1 Thessalonians 5:15 – 18**

You will find Christ' dealings with you to be in accordance with who He has declared Himself to be: the Good Shepherd, Faithful High Priest and Espoused Husband. When this life is over, you will not be disappointed if you have lived your life in the fear of the Lord. God will not rudely withhold from you anything that He has promised. **Romans 8:16 – 18**

2) Our love for God – If we truly love God, we will not conduct ourselves in such a way that is

unbecoming for who we are. We are the children of God. **Philippians 1:27** – Is our behavior appropriate for someone who claims to desire, seek and be committed to that which will glorify the Lord Jesus Christ? If we love God, it will be. When we do fail to walk as children of light, we will make the proper corrections to our conduct when it becomes apparent that it is unbecoming for a child of God.

Romans 13:11 – 14 – Let us walk properly, in light, according to what God has revealed to be right and good. Let us set aside the selfish sins of the flesh and let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ and His virtues of holiness.

Ephesians 5:1 – 20 – Let’s be imitators of God, walking in love, forsaking the sins of the flesh, proving, testing, examining what is pleasing to the Lord. Let’s redeem the time, “buying up” or utilizing every opportunity to bring glory to God by understanding His will. It is becoming a child of God to spend time and energy studying God’s word, encouraging your brother and sister in the Lord and promoting the preaching and teaching of the whole counsel of God. Do you love God? Are you redeeming this short time here on earth to use it for the eternal glory of God?

3) Our love for one another – We can be so rude to one another. May the Lord help us not to conduct ourselves in an unseemly manner towards the family of God. **Ephesians 4:1 – 7** – Our unity is in Christ alone and it is only as each of us live for the glory of Christ that we can fully benefit from our unity. It is only as we acknowledge our unity, our brotherhood that we can begin to conduct ourselves like a loving family. **Bearing with one another in love** – “to put up with one another” That is, no matter what, you always look for that which is

in the best interest of your brother or sister. That doesn't mean that you will never be stern, but it does mean that you always conduct yourself as is appropriate for a loving brother or sister in Christ.

It is rude and unbecoming when we attack one another because we have been hurt or offended. **Galatians 5:13 – 16** – We should never respond or react from bitterness, anger or malice, but always in love. Our actions must be dictated by who we are. We are children of God. God is love. We must always ask ourselves, what does the word of God say is appropriate behavior for me in this situation with my brother? Then we must act accordingly. That's love.

1 Thessalonians 4:9, 10 Speaks of the need to increase brotherly love. Thank God for the times we have allowed His love to cause us to conduct ourselves properly, but we all have room to allow that love to increase so that we always conduct ourselves in a becoming manner that glorifies God.

Love Does Not Seek Her Own – Love is not selfish, but looks to benefit the one loved. Love is giving and generous not stingy and miserly. It does not demand its way or rights. Love does not seek or demand benefits for itself, but for the one loved.

If I were forced to choose only one of these descriptive words or phrases to best describe God's love, I would probably choose this one because all the rest of the characteristics described here would easily be seen to result from the virtue of selflessness.

1) God's love for us - As a righteous and Holy God, God had every right to satisfy His just wrath on the human race by simply speaking the word and destroying us and removing us from His creation. All through the Bible, both Old and New Testament, we read of God

being angered, sorrowed and grieved by the sins of man. Think of how much grief God could have spared Himself if He had chosen simply to have gotten rid of us.

God's just wrath had to be satisfied if He were going to be true to His righteousness, but His love would not allow Him to satisfy His wrath in such a way that would only benefit Himself, though that would have been the most convenient for Him. God's love compelled Him to satisfy His righteousness in such a way that I would benefit.

Isaiah 53:6, 4, 5, 10, 11 – It is difficult for us to fully comprehend such selfless love from the Almighty God. But this is the revelation of God's love. He could have made any choice He cared to make that would have been much more convenient for Him and that would have cost Him far less. But His love for me would not allow Him to make any other choice. I needed the benefit of salvation, forgiveness of sins and eternal life. God had it in His power to give it to me, but it was going to require Him to have to give what was rightfully His and what was not ours to demand or expect. We had no right to salvation, but He generously gave us His Son to purchase for us what was in our best interest.

John 3:16, 17 – God's love compelled Him to generously give us His Son to die for our sins and pay our debt that we might have everlasting life. As the chorus says, "He paid a debt He did not owe, we owed a debt we could not pay." Thank God for the generous giving of His love. **1 John 4:9, 10** – Praise God for the selfless manifestation of His love in sending His Son to appease His wrath in order to pour out on us His favor. **Romans 5:6 – 8** – The absence of love results in the desire to destroy your enemies, but love seeks what's best for others.

If God loved us when we were His enemies and

He did what was in our best interest then, how much more, now as His children, can we be assured of His always seeking and providing for us that which is beneficial for us. This brings us back to our previous description, love does not behave itself rudely or in an unbecoming manner. **Romans 8:32** – The generosity of His love is unending and measureless. What comfort, peace and joy are found in remembering that the Almighty God loves me and is always seeking my best interest.

It may be in God’s best interest to “get me,” as some fear, but that is not what’s best for me. His love compels Him not to seek His own benefit, but mine. He does it in a way that is consistent with His righteousness and holiness, but in a way that never contradicts His love. Only God knows what is truly best for me.

As His children, to fully benefit from the generosity of our Father’s love, we must walk in fellowship with Him. We remove ourselves from the practical benefit of God’s love when we, like the prodigal son, leave the house of loving obedience and service. Even when we walk in rebellion our Father seeks our best interest and sends conviction and loving discipline to bring us back to His best, but unless we respond to His love, we will not benefit from it to the fullest. **II Thessalonians 3:5**

This Life – **Philippians 4:19** – Anything I need, spirit, soul or body, to have God’s loving will accomplished in me and through me, He will generously supply. **Psalms 84:10 – 12** – there is no greater life to live than a life that is lived resting in the love of God.

Eternity – Love never fails, never ends. We will continue to know and experience the generosity of God’s love forever. **Revelation 21:3 – 7** – We will eternally benefit from Heaven and its blessings and riches because

God has loved us with a love that does not seek its own. The more fully we respond to His love for us, the more fully we will enjoy the benefits of His love both now and in eternity. That brings us to the second aspect of this love.

2) Our love of God – If we love God, we will not seek our benefit, but God’s. We will live for His glory and not our own.

Philippians 2:19 – 21 – Paul makes a sad statement in this passage. Only Timothy was like minded, seeking the good of others, for all the rest sought their own. This is still true of the vast majority of God’s people today. Unloving, selfish living can manifest itself in many different ways.

One way is to live after the deceitful lusts of the flesh that love the sinful pleasures of this world. **II Timothy 4:7 – 10** – Paul selflessly served God because he loved the appearing of the Lord. Demas loved this present world and all its pleasures. Another way is to pretend to serve and worship the Lord, but with purely selfish motives. “Lord, I’ll do this if you do that. I’ll serve you, God, as long as everything always goes my way and you make my life smooth and easy. If not, if you don’t always answer my prayers the way that I demand you to, then I’m not going to serve you any more.” Still another way, is to be stingy with God with what we give Him of our time, energy and resources. “God should be happy that we give Him anything,” is the attitude of most Christians. “If we show up to Church twice a year to acknowledge and worship God, He ought to be grateful, after all He knows how busy we are.” **Mark 12:29, 30**

We would be in a very sad condition if God were as stingy toward us as the vast majority of His people are with Him concerning their time, energy and resources.

Matthew 16:24 – 26 – If you love the Lord Jesus Christ it will compel you to deny yourself in order to bring glory and honor Him. He is worthy of our love. It is only our reasonable, grateful service to live for His glory. But it is also our great privilege to be identified with the Lord of lords and King of kings. **John 3:30** – “*He must increase, but I must decrease.*”

S.O.S. 2:16 / 6:3 / 7:10 – Our love needs to mature like the Shulamite’s love for Solomon until we come to the place that we live to please the Lord regardless of the sacrifice and cost to ourselves and whether or not we receive anything more from God than the immeasurable blessing that we have already received. That kind of life of loving service can only come from resting in His love for you that has already made you eternally rich. You don’t have to spend your life looking out for yourself, trying to get ahead, because in Christ you have already been made eternally rich. You don’t have to waste your life living for yourself, because Christ has died for you to make you an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ, if you are willing to suffer with Him.

3) Our love for one another – In our relationship with other Christians, we must not merely seek what’s in our own best interest. **I John 4:9 – 12** – If God generously gave Himself for us, how can we do any less for our brothers and sisters in the Lord? **I John 3:6 – 18** – John is speaking here of the evidence of spiritual heritage or spiritual realms. He is not saying that it is impossible for true Christians to sin or hate or be insensitive to their brother’s need. Nor is he saying that if we do those things, we lose our salvation and return to being a child of the devil. John is saying that the source of sin, hatred and murder is Satan. Satan appeals to the fallen sinful nature of man to seduce him to godless living. Those who are

unsaved, who do not possess eternal life are incapable of loving. **Vs. 15** – “*no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*” All their acts are sinful, hateful and murderous because they belong to the realm of Satan, death and sin.

God, however, is the source of love and righteousness. All who are born of God have had the seed or nature of God placed in them. That seed cannot sin. All who truly love with this selfless love that causes us to lay down our life for the brethren and to minister to our brother’s need as the Lord directs and supplies, do so because they possess their Father’s nature. Loving your brother is an evidence of your spiritual heritage. It is evidence that you are God’s child and that you have eternal life and that you are a citizen of the realm of Christ. **John 13:34, 35**

Because the believer possesses both the sinful nature of Adam and the sinless nature of God a true Child of God sometimes sins and hates like a child of the devil. He does not lose His salvation, but He is not living up to the full potential of who he is. We can be assured that John is not teaching that true believers can never fall short of their full potential by reading his exhortation in **I John 1:8 – 10**. The emphasis of John’s teaching is that we should act like whose children we truly are. As the children of God we are to love our brothers and sisters in the Lord in such a way that we always seek their best interest no matter what the cost to ourselves.

I love God because I have had a personal revelation of how much He loves me. I never want to bring my Heavenly Father shame or reproach. If I hate my brother or am insensitive to his needs, I disgrace my Father and act like His enemy, Satan, who has come only to steal, kill and destroy.

Paul is such a wonderful example of the

characteristics of both realms. Before his conversion, though religious, Paul was a murderer full of hate - *Acts 26:9 – 11* After being born again and translated to the realm of life and light Paul was given the ability to love even his enemies. *1 Thessalonians 2:1 – 12*

May we all be shining examples of God's grace that translates us from the kingdom of sin and death and makes us New Creatures in Christ, children of God that possess their Father's loving nature. May we forsake the stingy selfishness of the flesh and walk in the loving generosity of the Spirit – *Ephesians 4:28*

Love Is Not Easily Provoked, Or Incited To Demonstrations Of Anger –

“Not irritable or touchy, not exasperated to the point that it ceases to be committed to the well-being of the one loved.”

This doesn't mean that if you love someone you will never be angry with them. It simply means that your love will not be overcome or conquered by anger. Your actions and attitude toward them will continue to be motivated by love and not anger.

Man's anger demonstrates itself in mere retaliation for the offense. Love always desires what is in the best interest of the one loved, even when that one has caused offense. Love may manifest itself in necessary discipline, but it is administered in love for the well-being of the one disciplined.

The only other use of the verb form of this word in the New Testament is found in *Acts 17:16* – Paul was clearly angry and stirred up against the idolatry of the Athenians. But his response to their idolatry was not dictated by his anger. He did not burn the temples down and break the idols and call the Athenians names. He responded in love by patiently proclaiming to them the

Gospel of Jesus Christ that would reconcile them to their Creator and God and deliver them from their idolatry.

With this understanding of this description, let's now consider the 3 aspects of Divine love.

1) God's love for us - This virtue of not being easily provoked goes along with His longsuffering and stresses that God is not quick to bring judgment or discipline for the offenses of man.

God's Love For The World – *Psalm 145:8, 9* – God's anger and wrath against the sins of man are just, but because God is love He is slow to demonstrate and manifest His anger. This is why Jonah was so reluctant to go and preach to those in Nineveh because he knew God to be gracious and full of compassion and slow to anger. Jonah preferred to see Israel's enemies consumed by God's wrath.

God continues to pour out His compassion and mercy on lost humanity in order that they might turn to Him through faith in His Son. Nevertheless, there will come a time when God will have to judge in wrath because He is righteous and because His love for His Son and for His people will require it. *Psalm 2:1 – 12* The execution of His wrath on the ungodly will be a demonstration of His love for His Son and for us.

His love is not easily provoked, but if you have never accepted Christ as your Savior, the message to you today is, now is the day of Salvation. Repent of your sin, the offenses that have angered God, and you will never know His wrath. *II Corinthians 6:2*

Romans 4:24, 25 – Our sin offended God, but because of love, His first response was not one of anger, but love that delivered up His Son to the cross to cover our offenses and reconcile unto Himself all who believe.

God's Love For His Children – As believers, we

are the children of God and we will never experience the condemnation of His wrath, no matter how much we may anger Him or offend Him as disobedient children. **I Corinthians 11:32** Nevertheless, God is offended and angered by the sin and carnality of His people. But His love is not easily provoked and He is not quick to respond with severe punishment. When He does respond to our offenses with discipline, it is always administered in love for our eternal good. God is not standing around looking for the slightest reason to knock us upside the head. He is eager for us to succeed. He patiently picks us up from failure and encourages us to carry on in faithfulness.

Nehemiah 9:16, 17 – Even under the Law of Moses, we see this virtue of the love of God manifested toward His rebellious people Israel. In this age of Grace this aspect of God’s love has been even more clearly revealed and demonstrated.

As children of God there are times when we disappoint and offend our loving Heavenly Father. If we do not have a revelation of His love for us that is not easily provoked, we will live in constant fear of His retaliation for our failures and spend our time running from Him instead of running to Him.

Luke 22:31 – 34, 60, 61 – Knowing before hand the denial of Peter, Jesus is not exasperated, He simply encourages him to strengthen his brethren when he returns. Jesus’ look reminds Peter of Jesus’ prediction of the cruel betrayal of his Lord, but His look was also to remind Peter of Jesus’ love that had already interceded for him and that would restore Peter to a place of service to the Lord. God is more concerned with us being successful in walking in His will than He is about being angry over the shame we may bring to Him when we fail. He is more concerned with helping us succeed than in punishing us

for failure. The fact is, the more we yield to His love, the more we will glorify His name and the less we will bring reproach to Him.

Because God loves us He is not looking for opportunities to punish us at the slightest provocation, but rather He is constantly encouraging us and inviting us to draw closer to Him. The Lord's encouragement to Peter was, "Peter you are going to deny me, but when you return to me, and I've already prayed that you would, strengthen your brothers." Knowing that about God's love doesn't make me want to fail Him more, but it does give me the confidence to return to Him when I do fall short of pleasing Him. That confidence will lead to repentance and restoration and a dependence of His love that will strengthen me to be faithful in my walk with the Lord. **Psalm 103:8, 13, 14, 17**

2) Our love for God - Do you love God with a love that is not easily provoked? Many Christians are easily offended and angered by God's word and they allow their anger to manifest itself in bitterness and rebellion against God.

John 6:53 – 63 – The disciples were offended by what Jesus had told the people about the need to eat His flesh and drink His blood. He of course was speaking of spiritual bread and spiritual life that come from believing that His death was the sacrifice for sin. But they misunderstood Him and must have thought to themselves, "How does He expect us to win over anybody with that message?" But His words are spirit and life. His words are the only message that can produce life in us and in those around us. His words are the only words that will enable us to enjoy abundant life.

It is our sinful nature that is offended by God and His words. God's word cuts us deeply and it hurts.

Instead of being angered and offended by God's word and its conviction, we should willingly surrender to its surgical precision and allow it to bring spiritual health in our life.

Hebrews 4:12 – 16

Resting in His love for you that is not easily provoked will allow you not to be easily provoked by His words no matter how deeply they may cut you. You will understand that there is nothing that is truly offensive in God's love for you. **S.O.S. 5:16** — He is altogether lovely.

3) Our love for one another – We must learn to love one another with a love that is not easily provoked. We are so easily offended by others. When someone offends us, it is too easy to stop seeking and desiring their best. Remember, just because you love someone doesn't mean that you won't ever be angry with them or offended by them or annoyed by them. It does mean that your anger will not dictate your attitude and actions toward them.

Proverbs 18:19 – One of the greatest obstacles to our own spiritual growth is our own anger against a brother or sister who has offended us. Why? Because it causes us to throw up walls like a fortress to protect ourselves so we don't get hurt again. The problem is that those fortified walls that we have put up in our heart and mind also hinder the entrance of the word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Psalms 119:165 – If you love the word of God, you will not be offended or caused to stumble by the offenses of others. You will continue to submit to the authority of the word of God that will transform your heart and mind. God's love, as revealed in His word, will dictate how you think and act toward your brother and sister in Christ and not your anger.

When you open up yourself to love someone, you open yourself up to being hurt and offended. But if you love with the love of God you will not be easily provoked. Offenses will not keep you from seeking what is best for your brother or sister. **Proverbs 15:18** – Being slow to anger allays, or puts to rest, and quiets contention. Problems among God’s people are often made worse than they really are by the reactions to the original offense. If we would learn to respond in love instead of reacting in anger to the provocation, we would enjoy greater unity among God’s people. **James 1:19, 20** – Man’s wrath or anger never accomplishes the will of God. The only way to learn to be slow to wrath is to learn to love with the love of God that is not easily provoked.

Those who will be given the crowns of the overcoming saints will be those who have learned to love their brother with the love of God – **Proverbs 16:32** – Being slow to wrath and having self-control over one’s anger are virtues of God’s mighty men and women who love one another with the love of God.

I Peter 3:8 – 12 – We are commanded to love as brothers. Does the phrase, “not easily provoked,” describe your love for your brothers and sisters in Christ? If not, repent. Let the Spirit of God tear down the walls that the offenses of others have caused you to build around your heart and mind. Let the word of God penetrate deep into your heart and then allow the Spirit of God to use you to minister blessing to others.

Love Thinketh No Evil, Doesn't Take
Into Account Wrongs Suffered,
Doesn't Keep A Record Of Wrongs – “Not

resentful, doesn't hold a grudge.” The Greek word translated “think” has to do with a mental accounting. It is to keep something in mind, to recollect and ponder, in this case, wrongs done.

This is very closely related to our previous descriptive phrase that describes God's love as not being easily provoked and stresses that love is slow to anger and is never overcome by anger to the point that it ceases to be committed to the well-being of the offender.

Our present description, thinks no evil, stresses that even when love has been provoked it doesn't keep a list of those provocations as reasons why it cannot seek what's best for the offender.

1) God's love for us – Not only is God not easily provoked because of our offenses, but once the offense has been dealt with and His grace applied, He doesn't keep a list of those failures, though they be many, as obstacles to keep us from His love.

Whether you have never been born again or you are a child of God, don't let Satan lie to you by telling you that your sin is too great for God to love you. He does not keep an inventory of the injuries done to Himself when there is repentance and an acceptance of His grace.

Make no mistake about it, those who reject Christ will be judged before the Great White Throne Judgment. **Revelation 20:11 – 15** – Their sins will be remembered and judged justly because their names were not in the Book of Life. But God's love sent His Son to die for even those who will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. They will have simply rejected His love.

But when you accept Jesus as your personal

Savior, God has chosen to forget to remember any of your sins that deserved the outpouring of His wrath. **Psalm 103:8 – 12** – He has not dealt with us according to our sins, because when we accepted Christ, He put them out of His mind and considered the subject of the guilt of our sin, eternally resolved.

Isaiah 38:17 – If you are characterized by unrest, confusion and distress over where you will spend eternity and you are afraid that your past sins will eventually cause God to retaliate against you, rest in Christ who is your peace. Because of Christ, all your sins have been thrown behind the back of God. He is not constantly remembering your past evil and holding back some of His blessings because He remembers when you were so vile and vulgar.

Some have told me that they have lived in sin too long and done too many wrong things for God to love them and forgive them. **Romans 5:20** – This verse is best translated, “where sin augmented, one upon another, grace overflowed.” I once tested the use of a visual aide to help understand the meaning of this verse. I took a large, glass measuring cup and began to fill it up with Styrofoam balls of varying size. Some were quite large. Others were small. I continued to cram the cup full until I could not get any more in. These different sized balls represented the various sins of an individual’s life. Then I took a pitcher of clear water and began to pour it into the cup filled with the Styrofoam balls. As the water began to fill the bottom and rise to the top it began to push all the balls out of the cup. As I continued to pour the water and allowed it to overflow, all the balls were thrown from the cup. The water represents the love and grace of God that overflows the heart of those who believe and receive His grace.

Because God is love your sin is not greater than

His grace and love. There is no past sin that can keep you from attaining to the highest place in glory once you have surrendered to the love of God.

Every believer will also have his works judged after this life before the Judgment seat of Christ. **II Corinthians 5:10** – God does keep a list, if you will, of our failures and successes in order that He may give His children rewards or withhold them. But none of the things on that list will keep Him from loving us. They will simply determine the degree of glory we will be able to enjoy in Heaven. However, even those failures as His children are forgotten if we will repent of them and walk in the light of God's word. **I John 1:9** – He cleanses us, removes them from our hearts and from His mind.

2) Our love for God – It is foolish for us to consider any of God's ways as offensive, but many do. Some keep a list of all the times they feel God failed them. Some feel God wronged them by allowing their child or spouse to die prematurely. Others complain God did not give them the job, house or mate that they wanted.

Anytime they are challenged to serve God or to call upon him in faith and dependence, they call to mind some perceived failure on God's part to help them in the past and then they refuse to honor Him and to live for His glory. **Numbers 11:4 – 6** – In Israel's mind, God had failed them in removing them from the abundant meat and spices of Egypt. They refused to go on with the Lord.

Christians that murmur like Israel because of the supposed offenses of God are miserable individuals. Instead of wasting their time being bitter over supposed wrongs, they should be trying to count the immeasurable blessings that are ours in Christ. **Psalms 103:1 – 5**

If you love God, your life will be characterized by praise and thanksgiving and not murmuring and

complaining. Don't think on perceived evils by God, but think on and rejoice in the realities of His blessings.

3) Our love for one another - Though we do get provoked, annoyed and angered by our brother in the Lord, love will not allow our anger to respond in a way that is not beneficial to our brother.

What's more, love will not allow us to continue to dwell on past offenses when they have been dealt with according to God's instruction. Even if they are not dealt with properly, our actions will be dictated by love that seeks the well-being of the offender.

Remember, love "thinks no evil." It doesn't keep a mental record of wrongs that stand as obstacles to the expression of our love. Thinking on the wrong doing of others will lead to bitterness. Bitterness is a cancer that will bring death to your spiritual fruit. If you are constantly dwelling on the wrongs that others have done to you, then you are headed for a spiritual crash and malfunction.

A computer malfunctions and crashes when it gets stuck in a loop. That means that a program tells the computer to execute another line of instructions, when it goes to that line of instructions it sends it back to the previous line of instructions that in turn sends it back and then it is stuck in an endless loop that locks up your computer until you shut it down. Sometimes a computer crashes when one program tries to use memory that is being used by another program and the first program refuses to free up that memory.

Many Christians are stuck in a spiritual and mental loop because all they can think about are the wrongs done to them by their brothers and sisters in the Lord. You need to shut down and reboot. **Philippians 4:8, 9**

Ephesians 4:31, 32 – Contrary to what many think

about forgiveness, we cannot forgive those who do not seek our forgiveness, but those who do, we must forgive.—**Luke 17:3** But even when some do not seek our forgiveness we are to continue to love and seek and desire what's best for them. That means we have to get out of the loop of dwelling on those offenses and put away bitterness, anger, evil speaking and malice no matter what the offender may or may not do.

Love Rejoices Not In Iniquity, But In Truth

1) **God's love for us** – If someone hasn't been paying close attention, much of what I have said in the course of this study could be misconstrued to mean that God simply ignores our sin, especially as believers, because He loves us. To adopt that erroneous thinking is to miss the whole foundation and meaning of love. Love is God's unwavering desire for us to enjoy His best for time and for eternity. Sin robs us of God's best. Therefore, God hates sin. He does not rejoice when man sins. He grieves.

God's Love For All Humanity - Genesis 6:5 – 8

– Many see only God's wrath and judgment in this passage. I see His love and grace. His love made Him grieve over man's sin because their sin separated them from Himself and His blessing. Because God loved the human race, He hated our sin and before He could pour on us His blessing, He had to judge our iniquity according to His truth and justice. Only through a righteous, truthful judgment of our sin could we be able to enjoy the blessings of eternal life.

Psalm 85:9 – 13 is a prophecy of the restoration of Israel, but is also a picture of the redemption of the human race. Israel's redemption and humanity's are based on the same sacrifice, Jesus' death on the cross.

Jesus said, “*I am the Way, the **Truth** and the **Life**.*” The love of God does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the **Truth**. God rejoices in the Truth of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of His Son to pay the debt of the sin of the human race once and for all.

God’s Love For the Believer – When we are born again, we partake of God’s love in a greater and more personal way. We become His children. However, God loves His children with the same quality of love that does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. God does not overlook the sin of His children just because He loves us. Sin grieves the heart of our Father. *Ephesians 4:30* – When God’s people walk after the flesh rather than after the Spirit, the Triune God is saddened.

Sin keeps us from walking in fellowship with God and that means sin keeps us from God’s best for His children. *1 John 1:4 – 7* Many Christians wonder why they do not enjoy fullness of joy. The answer for the vast majority is because they are not walking in the light of the truth of God’s word.

God loves you. Do you want to make His heart rejoice? Walk according to the truth of God’s word. *Psalm 43:3, 4* - Send out Your light and truth.

Loving Discipline - When we fail to walk according to Truth, we should expect and accept our Father’s loving discipline that will bring us back to a life of righteousness if we surrender to it. *Hebrews 12:5 – 11* – It is His unfailing love that will teach us to live holy and righteous lives according to His Truth.

If you are not allowing His love to teach you to walk in loving obedience, then you are not fully benefiting from His love. You are belittling His love. There are consequences for rejecting the working of God’s love in your life. Simply, you will not enter into His best now or in eternity that He desires to give all of His children.

2) Our love for God – If we love God as we ought, that love will cause us to hate sin in our own life and to rejoice in the truth of God’s revealed will for our life.

Psalm 97:10 – 12 – It is impossible to rejoice in sin and carnality and at the same time truly love God with this divine love. A love for Jesus Christ will give you a revelation of the vileness of sin or how it grieves the Lover of your soul.

II Corinthians 5:14, 15 – Your love for Christ will be a restraining power to keep you from sin. Sin grieves your Lord. Sin reflects poorly on the reputation of the Holy Son of God. When someone asks why you don’t do certain things or go certain places, you shouldn’t say because our Church or our pastor doesn’t allow that kind of thing, but rather you should say because you love Jesus and that thing or the things that take place at certain places are not pleasing to Him because they are contrary to His righteousness and His truth.

When we do fall short of pleasing Christ, we should not rejoice, but sorrow with a godly sorrow that will lead to repentance and restoration to a life of godliness. **II Corinthians 7:10**

May we learn to rejoice in the Truth of God’s word. – **Psalm 119:142, 162, 163** – Does the Truth of God’s word thrill your heart? If it does, it is the result of you loving God.

3) Our love for one another – If we love one another we will encourage one another to walk in truth. **III John 1:3, 4** – Does the godly living of others make you rejoice? It should, if you love them and if you love God because godly living leads to the eternal well-being of the individual and to the glory of God.

When your brother or sister falls into sin and

disobedience to the will of God, do you rejoice or possibly gloat? Or do you sorrow and weep? **I Corinthians 5:1, 2, 11** – Our brother’s sin should make us mourn if we love him because that sin is not in his best interest.

Galatians 6:1 – How do we restore a brother who has fallen in sin? By exhorting, encouraging and leading them back to a life of godliness through repentance and restoration. If you love someone, you will not be silent when they walk in open rebellion against the word of God.

II Thessalonians 3:14, 15 – Love your brother. Rejoice when he walks in truth. Weep when he walks in sin. Be sensitive to the direction of the Holy Spirit to know what you should do or not do to bring your fallen brother back to a life of obedience to the Truth of God’s word.

Love Bears All Things – “variously interpreted; to endure, bear, sustain, cover, conceal, contain.” (from Adam Clarke’s Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996, 2003 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.).

All of these nuances of the word can be used to describe divine love. Love endures and suffers long. It also covers and conceals sin and seeks to contain the damage of offenses. The *NIV* translation translates this phrase as, “*Always protects.*” That translation is an accurate understanding of the thought of containing the damage of sin.

1) **God’s love for us** – **Romans 4:6 – 8** – Our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. This covering of sin is not a “cover up.” Rather, it is a putting away of sin by the execution of justice. It is a removal and concealing of our sin. No matter what you have done, God’s love is able to bear it and cover it.

We use a saying in English that might help us to understand the Scriptural thought of the covering of sin. You may go out to eat with a friend and when the two separate checks come for your dinners, your friend may take your bill and say, "I've got you covered." Does he mean that he is going to put your bill in his pocket and hide it from the waiter? No. He means that he is going to put his cash down and pay the debt of your meal. Jesus' blood covered our sin by paying the debt of our sin, once for all.

God's Love For His Children - Psalm 51:9, 10 – David had grievously sinned against God. Yet, because David repented of his sin and threw himself on the love of God, God's love was sufficient to bear David's sin. Though David's sin resulted in much pain and sorrow for him the rest of his life, the damage of his sin was contained and was not allowed to hinder his fellowship with the Lord.

No matter how miserably you may have failed as a child of God, remember God's love bears all things. You must throw yourself upon the love of God in repentance and forsake your sin. When you do, you will experience the love of God that bears all things.

2) Our love for God – 1 Corinthians 11:31 – If we love God we will cover our own sin and contain its damage by judging it in accordance with God's instruction. When God's people refuse to repent of sin, the damage of sin reeks havoc among God's people. There are always consequences and scars because of sin, but saints, we can contain the damage by judging our sin and calling it what God calls it. We can keep our failures from robbing God of His glory and from keeping us from His best if we will simply love Him enough to bear, properly cover and contain all our failings through self-

judgment in the light of the word of God.

3) Our love for one another - 1 Peter 4:8 – Love doesn't sweep the sins of a brother under a rug, but assists the fallen brother in containing the damage and in directing him to the cleansing, covering power of the blood of Jesus Christ. The Greek word translated "restore" in **Galatians 6:1** means to mend or to put back to its original condition. When we help to guide a fallen brother or sister back to a life of godliness and obedience, we have restored him or her and covered their sin. The covering and containing of sin required by love is the result of the application of the remedy which is repentance and returning to godliness and obedience.

Too many times God's people have been afraid to confront a brother or sister that is living in open rebellion against the word of God for fear of causing damage. Sin is the cause of damage. Love bears, covers and contains the damage of sin. Love will cause you to help your fallen brother or sister to see their need to forsake their destructive sin and return to a life of obedience and godliness. Love will enable you to bear and endure all the unpleasantness, awkwardness and ridicule of such a task.

Love Believes All Things – The Greek word carries the thought of trust. Obviously, this is not saying that love believes everything it's told. Love is not naïve. We are constantly told in the Scriptures to try, test and examine all things and hold to that which is true. Love does not rejoice in iniquity and lies, but rather in truth.

The primary thought in this case would be that love is willing to put its trust in the one loved. This is not a blind trust, but a giving of the opportunity to be trusted. This is a difficult part of loving. To love someone is to seek their best and trust that they have the capacity to receive and act upon what is best for them. That trust may

often be disappointed. Yet love continues to give the opportunity for the one loved to respond to her trust.

1) God's love for us – The Lost - God loves the unsaved by continuing to offer them salvation. Saul of Tarsus witnessed and consented to the death of Stephen. He heard Stephen's testimony and message and did not receive it. Yet, later, Christ entrusted this same man with the dispensation of Grace. *I Timothy 1:11, 12*

God's Love His Children – Because God loves us He entrusts us with His will and His word. We have been entrusted as God's ambassadors and the stewards of the manifold grace of God. *I Peter 4:10* Many times we prove ourselves to be untrustworthy, but because He loves us, He continues to give us the opportunity to show ourselves to be trustworthy.

Peter's experience of denying the Lord and yet being given the keys to the kingdom to open up the Gospel to the human race is a good example of God's love for us that believes all things. *Jeremiah 3:1*

2) Our love for God – God is always trustworthy, but we many times fail to love Him enough to trust Him for every area of our life. Your faith in God and His word is directly linked to your love for Him. *Galatians 5:6* – The only way to live by faith is to love God with all your heart.

II Timothy 1:12 – I know whom I have believed, whom I have trusted. He is able to keep all that we are willing to commit to Him. Because I love Him, I will trust Him and commit every aspect of my being into His capable, trustworthy hands. Job said, “though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” *Job 13:15*

3) Our love for one another - It is very difficult to give someone an opportunity to be trusted when trust has been betrayed, but love requires that we do when God's instruction has been obeyed.

Love is not naïve or gullible. It does not take everyone at their word, especially when that word has proven to be unreliable. It does, however, give opportunity to apply God's remedy for unfaithfulness and to once again be made useful to God and His people.

These opportunities are not given at the risk of the harm of others, for that would be unloving to them. However, love seeks a way that will be in the best interest of all. Paul's dealings with John Mark are a good illustration of love that believes all things.

Acts 15:36—41 II Timothy 4:11 – John Mark had sorely disappointed Paul before and Paul refused to take him along on the next trip. To do so would have been detrimental to the spiritual well-being of others. Nevertheless, because John Mark repented of his earlier unfaithfulness and because Paul loved John Mark, Paul believed him worthy of the opportunity to be trusted again.

Love Hopes All Things – expectation of the desired end.

1) **God's love for us** – God never questions that His love is sufficient to make us what we ought to be in His sight. He expects all that believe on His Son to be made New. God expects all that surrender and apply His grace to attain to His best. I Thessalonians 5:23, 24 He never looks at any of His children and says, “that one is so bad, I don't think my grace is sufficient for that one.”

The provision is for all and is sufficient for all to attain God's best. God's grace is sufficient to bring about God's desired end for His people. Understanding the love of God that hopes all things makes me understand that I can attain to God's best. It gives me boldness, assurance and confidence, not in my ability, but in the love of God that expects His grace to be sufficient to complete His work in me to the highest degree.

2) **Our love for God** – If you love God, you will expect Him to always keep His word. If you love Him, you will expect to be made ready to rule and reign with Christ as the Lamb’s wife. You will surrender to His Grace that will teach you to live godly and transform you from glory to glory. - *II Corinthians 3:17, 18* *II Samuel 7:25 – 29* – David expected God to make of him and his house all that God had promised.

3) **Our love for one another** - *Ephesians 3:14 – 21* – Do you love your brother? Then you will expect, that if he surrenders himself to the love of God, he will be filled with all the fullness of God. If you fail to love him, you will give up on him.

Love Endures All Things – Lasting, untouched, unharmed, unhindered, unchanged despite difficulties and obstacles.

1) **God’s love for us** – *Hebrews 12:2, 3* – Jesus endured the cross because of His love for us. He persevered despite the difficulty, pain and sorrow to Himself because He loved me.

2) **Our love for God** – *II Timothy 2:12* – If we suffer or endure with Christ now, in this life, we will reign as a co-regent with Christ in eternity. The Greek word translated “reign” literally means a co-regent, one who rules jointly and equally with another. Our love for Christ will cause us to persevere through any adversity, trial or hindrance and remain faithful to the Lord. To suffer with Christ is to be willing to be identified with Him and His ways no matter what the cost may be or who may oppose us.

3) **Our love for one another** – *II Timothy 2:8 – 10* – Our love for the brethren will motivate us to make any necessary sacrifice for the edification of the body. We will endure rejection, persecution, misunderstanding

and injustice and yet faithfully serve and minister to the Body of Christ because we love our brothers and sisters in the Lord with the divine love of God that endures all things.

Love Never Fails – The Greek word translated “fail” literally means “to fall down.” It is used in a variety of ways to describe the fall of people or things. A man falling down on his face or walls collapsing are just a couple of ways in which this word is used.

It can also mean to fail or to be overcome. It is with this sense that Paul probably uses the word. Love will never cease. Love will never be overcome.

1) **God’s love for us** – *Romans 8:35 – 39* – Nothing can separate us from God’s love because nothing can overcome His love. His commitment to our well-being is as eternal as God Himself. Since nothing can overcome His love, I can receive every blessing and every trial as from the hand of my loving Father who is working all things for my eternal good.

2) **Our love for God** – *Acts 20:22 – 24* – Overcomers are those who love God and His Son with all their heart, mind and soul. Nothing is allowed to keep them from bringing glory to God. Nothing is stronger than their love for Christ.

3) **Our love for one another** - *I Thessalonians 2:7 – 12* – No task is too overwhelming or too difficult. No sacrifice is too great when you love the brethren and it is in their eternal best interest. Love is never overcome by anything because there is nothing greater than the divine love of God that is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.—*Romans 5:5*

No subject is as comforting and at the same time so challenging as the subject of the love of God. May we rest in God's love for us. May we respond to His love for us by loving Him in return with the love He has given us. May we be channels of His love to love one another that the world may know that we are the disciples of Christ.

*Douglas L. Crook, Pastor
Abundant Grace Fellowship
4535 Wadsworth Blvd.
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033*

*303-423-2625
dlcweston@juno.com*