

# Be Know For Love

## Part Three

*1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 13*

**1. Love is: Patient.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Love is: Kind.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Love does not: Envy.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Love does not: Boast.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Love is not: Proud.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Love is not: Rude.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Love is not: Self-seeking.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Love is not: Easily Angered.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Love does not: Keep Record of Wrongs.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Love does not: Delight in Evil.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Love: Rejoices in Truth.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Love: Always Protects.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Love: Always Trusts.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Love: Always Hopes.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Love: Always Perseveres.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**16. Love: Never Fails.**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_

**17. Love is: The Greatest.**

West Valley Church  
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11/8/20

## Be Known For Love Part Three

Many of you helped out last year as our church raised funds so that a young man whose family has been a part of our church could get a guide dog he needed. He has seizures and can hurt himself by falling when a seizure comes on him without warning. So you helped pay for the training and care of his dog. His dog can sense when he's about to have a seizure, alerting him to sit down or lay down before it strikes, so he won't fall and harm himself. I am always amazed at trained guide dogs and what they can do for their disabled owners.

We are all familiar with seeing eye dogs that are used as eyes and ears for the blind. These dogs are so highly intelligent that they can deduce *where* their master wants to go, can memorize their routes and even know what buses or subway cars to get on. There's something else that is quite fascinating about these seeing-eye dogs; they do something called "intelligent disobedience." Say for example the blind person wants to take her usual daily walking route, but today there is a hazard that she is unaware of; a hole has been dug in the sidewalk that the blind person could fall in and injure herself. The blind person will insist that the dog move forward, but it won't. In fact, it will turn sideways and block the master from moving forward. The dog is intelligent enough to know when to disobey what it is being told, in order to do what is best for the person, even if the person doesn't know it or see it. Intelligent disobedience.

Here's why I tell you that. It's time for the people of God to display some intelligent disobedience. The world around us – the culture, the news, and social media, will tell you to act, think, and behave a certain way. They are programmed to tell you what they want you to think and to do. In fact, Facebook has algorithms designed to feed you specific information in order to stir up what they think you want and need to hear, and what advertisers want and need you to hear, all so that you will think and act a certain way.

It is time for the people of God to practice intelligent disobedience. STOP doing what everyone and everything else is telling you to do. What the people around you need is for you to be known for LOVE. And you and I as Christians must disobey what we are being told by culture, and we must be known for love. If your candidate won, you might be tempted to gloat and to continue seeing the opposite party as the enemy, or to follow your party blindly. If your candidate lost, you might be tempted to fight, to see the other side as the enemy, and to give in to despair or fear or anger. But you and I need to practice intelligent disobedience; while there are forces that seek to get us to hate people, we need to choose love. The love of God in our lives, demonstrated in West Valley, is what will bring about a healthy community and

country. Love is countercultural, while anger, division, and hate is the norm. In the words of Pastor and writer Carey Nieuwhof, “The gravitational pull is toward hate, not health. Healthy doesn’t happen on its own.” You and I need the Holy Spirit to fill us, so that we can be vessels for this love that our community and country need so desperately.

This is the third of a four-part sermon series that we have been in called, “Be Known For Love,” because as followers of Jesus, the first thing that should come to someone’s mind when they think about you and me is not what political party we belong to and not what particular issue we stand for or against, but the first thing that should come to their mind about you or me is, “that person is known for love.” Last week we realized that to have this love, we must repent of our sin, repent of trying to love in our own strength, and instead we must submit to the Holy Spirit. His love in us results in all those good character traits listed in Galatians 5 and God’s nature of love becomes our nature.

Today we are going to dive deeper into what this love is, because it is very specifically described for us in God’s Word. The Bible’s most detailed description of what real-world love looks and acts like is found in the first letter to the Christians living in first-century Corinth. This passage has been called the “hymn to love,” and you might be familiar with it because it’s shown up in a lot of wedding ceremonies, which is kind of interesting because the love that Paul writes about is far more than married love.

Remember that we’ve talked about the word for love that is used most in the New Testament – the word is “agape” – unconditional, undeserved, unearned love. While the Greek world had several words for types of love, agape was not one of them. The early Christians made agape their word for love (it’s used 116 times in the New Testament). Christians understood love as the quality that is seen on the Cross. It is a love for the utterly unworthy, a self-sacrificing love that comes from a God who is love. It is a love that is lavished on others without even thinking about whether they are worthy or not. It is a result of the nature of the One who gives it, not based on the worth or attractiveness of the one to whom it is given.

The Christian who has experienced God’s love for him while he was a sinner (Romans 5:8) has been transformed by that experience. So now, the Christian sees people as those for whom Christ died, the objects of God’s love, and are therefore the objects of the Christian’s love, too.

This is the love that Paul writes about in 1 Corinthians 13. Let’s stand together so we can honor God’s word and really focus on what it is saying:

“If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away...

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:1-8, 13, niv)

Thank you for standing – please be seated. If you have your Bible or Bible app, you might want to leave it open to this passage, because we are going to go through it and apply it to our lives.

The Apostle Paul sets this up by talking about having great virtues, but without love they are nothing. The culture of Corinth prided itself in pursuing knowledge, and also in having rhetorical skills; so if someone could philosophize *and* speak eloquently at the same time, *that* person was a star. But Paul says that having those abilities without possessing love is just hot air. Anyone who is impressed with *saying* instead of *doing* is nothing more than a noisy gong. Corinth was known for making fine brass, which was used in their worship of the false God Dionysius, so a noisy gong was an image and sound they would have been familiar with. The point is, the best speech of earth or heaven, without love, is only an empty noise. Then Paul says that if he has all kinds of profound spiritual insight, or has superhero faith powers that could move mountains, it still is nothing without love. Paul then describes generosity without love as being nothing. What he actually describes in verse three is this: if I were to sell myself into slavery (basically selling all I have), and give that money to feed the poor, without love, even *that* is nothing. So speech, knowledge, power, and generosity – all virtues held incredibly high in that culture and in ours – if I have all those things, but I am not known for love as God loves, it's just a bunch of worthless noise. *Love is the one thing we need most.* Nothing can make up for the lack of it.

No matter who is president, as great an orator as any of our politicians might be, as great an amount of money and special interest funds they may have access to, as great as any government social programs might be that they can pass into law, *without love it is all nothing.* They might even say they are doing it out of a loving heart, but without the love that originates from God that can transform lives, it's ultimately not worth the paper the ballots were printed on – no matter how many times you count them. But, when we have experienced and received this love of God in Christ, we will begin to show this love to others! This passage gives us a very detailed description of what this love looks like – how it does and does not behave. So we are going to look at each of these, and as we do, make this a check list of the things you do, or do not, have in your life. So if you have our church app, you will see the outline that you can fill in, and for each one of these, you can check yes or no if you feel you do, or do not, have these.

So let's take an inventory. First...

### **1. Love is: patient**

The word that Paul uses here means the opposite of "short-tempered." So let me ask you: when you read about or talk about what's happened with the elections, do you feel your fuse getting lit? Do you get angry quickly? Do you post your anger on Facebook or Twitter, or express it to whoever you are talking to, or maybe you raise your voice to your spouse or to the TV or even your dog or cat?

Remember that Romans 5:8 says that while you were still a sinner – *you* were hostile and an enemy to God – Christ died for *you*. Over and over again, the Bible shows how patient God has been with you (e.g., 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 2:4, 9:22), and *that is what we are to be*. This patience that we need is patient with *all people* – just like God has been toward you. Think about the last week or two. When you think of the people who are leaders of the opposite political party from you, in our county or state or nation, do you get angry? If so, then what you've shown has *not* been love; what you need is patience. Prayerfully, and honestly, check the box whether you can say you have a patient love or not.

I am \_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_ patient.

The other side of this love is that it isn't just patient toward others, but it takes the next step and *demonstrates* it...

### **2. Love is: kind.**

God didn't give you what you deserved; in fact, he gave you what you didn't deserve: he gave you love. That's kindness. The word for kindness that Paul uses here is not used anywhere else in the New Testament. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul may have actually coined this word himself. I imagine that as the Holy Spirit was moving Paul to write this, there just wasn't an existing word that was good enough to describe how kind God's love is. Kindness means to be merciful and gentle and to act kindly toward someone else. It includes the idea of giving to others something they don't deserve. Kindness could be respect, a compliment, or it could be something material like clothes or food or money. Love reacts with goodness toward those who treat them poorly and it serves them instead of giving them what they deserve. Think about an enemy – someone who treats you poorly, doesn't respect you, or tried to cheat you out of something. Have you acted in kindness to them in return? If not, you don't have this love. So prayerfully and honestly check whether you are or are not kind.

I am \_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_

Next, Paul says that...

### **3. Love does not: envy.**

This word “envy” is an emotion word – it involves strong feelings of jealousy. Love is happy for the success of others, not envious or resentful when others succeed. Think of anyone who is a rival to you; if it’s the president you didn’t vote for, or someone at work or school who’s getting more recognition than you ...prayerfully and honestly check which one is you:

**I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_** envious.

Next...

#### **4. Love does not: boast.**

Do you feel that you have to constantly “sell yourself”? The literal translation of the word Paul uses here is someone who is a “wind bag.” True love is *more* impressed by its *unworthiness*. So consider your life and check:

**I do \_\_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_\_** boast.

Along the same lines...

#### **5. Love is not: proud.**

If a person is a ‘wind bag,’ then they are also inflated with their own self-importance. I know some people are sore losers, but have you ever met a sore winner? That’s a person who, when their team beats yours, they rub your face in it. I know there are many Democrats who want to do that to Republicans now. *Not so with love*. All three of these last words speak to the same issue. Paul has told the Corinthians that we are one body as Christians. If one part of the body hurts, the whole body suffers with it. If one part rejoices, the whole body rejoices. When we love, we are happy for the success of others and don’t value ourselves more than those who are not experiencing the same triumphs as we are. So consider your own life:

**I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_** proud.

Paul continues with the negative examples of love – what love is *not*, by saying that...

#### **6. Love is not: rude.**

This word is one that is bigger than just the four letter word, “rude.” It means anything disgraceful, dishonorable, or indecent. Love doesn’t create regret; love instead gives honor to others and behaves in ways that make people proud to say they know you. If someone has to make excuses for you, or is ashamed by you, then you are not acting in loving ways.

**I am \_\_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_\_** rude.

Also...

## 7. Love is not: self-seeking.

This means that real love is not selfish; love doesn't insist on having its own way. Love requires *selflessness*; it puts the interests and needs of others first. Are you this way? If you are married, maybe you should ask your spouse! Either way, be honest and check whether:

I am \_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_ self-seeking.

Then, continuing in the same line of what love is *not*...

## 8. Love is not: easily angered.

Love isn't easily stirred up or provoked. So love doesn't have a selfish concern for its own rights. So, for example, do I have a right *not* to wear a mask? Of course. But I have a *greater* concern for the safety of others that trumps my rights. One translation says that love is not "touchy." You don't have to walk on eggshells around someone who is known for love. There is a place for anger (Ephesians 4:26) – to be angry when others are mistreated, for instance. But still there is a right and wrong way to express it. So, if I have a co-worker who gets on my nerves, love doesn't change the fact that he gets on my nerves, but love means I don't get "provoked" by that person. Love absorbs for the sake of others.

I am \_\_\_\_ I am not \_\_\_\_ easily angered.

The seventh of the negative examples is that...

## 9. Love does not: keep record of wrongs.

So much of what we get worked up about is over our power and control. We're all control freaks in our own way. And when someone doesn't do what we think they should do, or think the way we want them to, we get upset. This is an accounting term. For instance, I get angry when there are protestors who commit violence and vandalism and steal and destroy things. But I have to pray about it, and make sure I don't hold it against every millennial I know, or every Gen Z-er, or every Black person or Latino...We can violate this love even if it's against someone we will never meet. Love does not take note of every evil thing someone does and then hold it against them – whether I know them or not. This means that love always, always, always, forgives. Is there someone you refuse to forgive?

I do \_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_ keep a record of wrongs.

The last of the negative examples is that...

## 10. Love does not: delight in evil.

We hear this one and we think, "I'm not guilty of this one, because I'm not Felonius Gru from the *Despicable Me* movies; I'm not Dr. Evil." But this is be much more

subtle than that. Have you ever excused something you did by saying, “Well, at least I didn’t get caught...” Or, have you ever been so mad at the Democrats, or at the Republicans, that you think it’s fun or funny to re-post something on Facebook that you would never say to someone in person (but you excuse it because you don’t know them personally)? Or, maybe you think that it’s okay for rioters to burn and steal because they have a right to their anger. Do you enjoy listening to someone on a video “really stick it” to AOC, or ACB, or DTJ, or whoever? If so, you are rejoicing in evil.

**I do \_\_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_\_** do this.

Finally, then, we are back to the positive things that love does...

### **11. Love: rejoices in truth.**

Instead of delighting in evil, love share’s truth’s joy. Love means I am willing to do whatever I can so that people receive justice. Truth is whatever is true and right, so whenever others are maligned or oppressed or mistreated or taken advantage of, love means that I work for them to be treated fairly and rightly. The greatest truth of all, of course, is the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life – Jesus Christ himself, so if I have love it means I will do everything I can at all times to introduce people to Jesus. If not, then I don’t love them enough.

**I do \_\_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_\_**

So naturally then...

### **12. Love: always protects.**

This is an interesting word because it means literally “always covers.” It means to cover, as in armor that covers and protects a person. But more than that it also means that it covers over the wrong or bad things in a person. It doesn’t point out what’s wrong with others. And the word also means that it endures or never gives up doing that. So love protects others who cannot defend themselves, and it does not point out the faults or wrongs of others – without end.

**I do \_\_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_\_**

### **13. Love: always trusts.**

So not only does love cover over people’s faults and shortcomings, it also believes the best in them. This isn’t a blind trust that just lets people take advantage of you or others. But it does mean that we will give people the benefit of the doubt, and always assume that their intentions were good. When someone doesn’t meet our expectations, we don’t assume the worst; *we assume the best*. Love isn’t gullible – it’s far from it; love doesn’t mean that I am deceived. (God isn’t deceived by you;



you don't have him fooled – he knows all your worst – but he still believes the best in you). That is what you and I are to do for each other and others.

I do \_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_

#### **14. Love: always hopes.**

Love always looks forward. This isn't an unreasoning optimism that doesn't take into account reality. It means that I will refuse to take failure as final for someone. It means that I have confidence that, by God's grace and through Christ, better and the best is always ahead for everyone. Check if you do or do not do this:

I do \_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_

Because love means I will never give up on this hope for others...

#### **15. Love: always perseveres.**

It doesn't mean that I just shrug my shoulders and go "Oh well" about someone else. It means that I actively, without giving up, hope and seek the best for people. The word would describe a soldier in the thick of battle who keeps fighting anyway. Do you have a family member or coworker that keeps disappointing you? We do. But we don't quit hoping the best for them, praying for them.

I do \_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_

#### **16. Love: never fails.**

This means that love doesn't fall, it won't collapse; it can hold up the weight of the world and love will not come to ruin. Love can bear up under any weight and it won't ever run out. Is your love for others limited? Have you had about all you can take? Then you might want to consider which line you want to check:

I do \_\_\_\_ I do not \_\_\_\_

Because...

#### **17. Love is: the greatest.**

When you think about most of what we need each day as Christians in this life – things like church, Bible studies, spiritual gifts...most of those things we *won't* need when we get to heaven. Even faith – trust in God – and hope, confidence in the future – we won't need those because we will see face to face that in which we are now only trusting. We don't need hope because we will have all that we've been waiting and reaching for, and life will only, always, get better and better. But *love will always be present. Love is the currency of heaven, love is the lifeblood of heaven, love is the air we breathe in heaven, love is the fertile soil of heaven, love is the building*

*material of heaven, love is the culture of heaven, love is the gravity of heaven, love is the clock and timeline of heaven.* God does not use faith or hope in himself, but God IS love. Love. Never. Fails. The last word of this amazing chapter is LOVE. There is nothing more important, nothing greater, than love. Love is what God's people MUST be known for.

*Pray.*