

The Power of Love II

I Corinthians 13:4-13

9/30/01

Intro

- Growth Groups are starting this week.
- Pray for the future of our country.

.....

Paul is dealing with a church that is divided. Spiritual pride had caused some to consider themselves spiritually superior to others. Paul knows the most powerful healing agent – love. But love is a choice. So he gives them instruction in what they need to choose.

These verses are some of the most applicable verses in the whole bible, because love is that which we need most, and that which is the farthest from the world.

This chapter is about the power of love.

I. Love doesn't take things personally.

Vs 4

A. Patience and the absence of jealousy require us to not take things personally.

- Patience is the taking things in stride that could otherwise offend.
- Jealousy has been assigned the color green. It's personal, and it's destructive.

Illus- Cain envied Abel and killed him; Joseph's brothers were jealous and sold him into slavery; the Jewish

leaders were jealous of the Apostles and had them jailed.

B. Can you imagine the Lord taking something personally?

- Love is not easily offended.
- Love bears all things and believes all things.

C. Taking offense is an obstacle to relationships.

Illus – One Sunday I felt strongly we should pray for people suffering under depression and for marriages under spiritual attack. A lady came up after the service and took offense because she thought I was attacking her!!

- It is interpreting life on the basis of past hurts.

II. Love requires maturity.

Vs 11

A. It is putting away childish things.

- The things that interested me when I was a child do not interest me anymore.

Illus- My daughter Nicole used to love it when I would throw her high up into the air. She hasn't asked to be thrown up into the air for a long time.

B. We start out in life basically self-centered.

Vs 4-5

- It takes maturity to realize the paradox of love.
- When I love others I am the one blessed.

Illus- There was dear saint in our church that died this week, Honey Jo. We had a service for her yesterday. During the service of one her friends told a story of sacrificial love. When his car broke down, she insisted he drive hers to work. What he didn't know until later was that she took the bus.

C. Humility comes before honor, and before love.

- Joseph, Moses, and David all went through humbling experiences before they were allowed to become great.
- Arrogance gets in the way of love, because we're always focused on ourselves.

Illus – Perhaps you've heard of the guy who took a first aid course, & was so proud of his accomplishment in completing it. No sooner had he finished it than he came upon an accident in which a person was injured.

He rushed over to where the injured person was being attended to by a woman, & took charge. He shoved everybody aside, including the woman, & said, "Give me room. I've just finished a first aid course & I know what to do."

He knelt down beside the injured person & started doing what he could. The woman he had pushed away stood there a few moments & then said, "When you get to that point in your first aid training where it says, "Call the doctor, I'll be right here."

III. Love demonstrates that God truly has our hearts.

A. It comes from being with Him.

Illus – When Moses was with God he took on God's glory.

B. Love becomes unconditional.

Vs 5

- It does not take into account a wrong suffered. (This is one of the hardest parts of love.)

C. The key to being able to love is to be convinced that you are loved.

- I'm convinced that 99% of our problems are due to not being certain of God's love for us.
- John 17:23 tells us that God loves us the same way He loves His Son. (He gave us the righteousness of Christ.)

Illus – Two brothers, both age eight, sign up for little league. Someone asks who is the one adopted, and they say, "Dad says he loves us both so much he forgot."

Conclusion

So how can we love others the way God loves us? Because we can love them, not because of them, but because of what's happenings inside of us. That's the nature of agape love – it is based on the one doing the loving, not the one being loved.

CS Lewis said, “God loves us not because we are lovable, not because we are lovely. God loves us because God *is* love.”