

Introduction

Today is January 1, the start of a new year. When we think of New Years, many people set new resolutions and goals for the year. Because of these resolutions, the health clubs see more people the first few weeks of the year than at any other time. At the beginning of the year, the President gives a state of the union address to Congress about the current state of affairs, and plans to address some of these matters. It is a fulfillment of Article II, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution. New Year's resolutions and the State of the Union are just two examples of taking the time at the beginning of the year and looking at what is important and making adjustments to fulfill these priorities.

In our spiritual lives, the first and foremost commandment is to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. The second commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. At the center of both of these great commandments is love. Jesus said that all the other commandments were depend on these two commandments.

(Matt 22:37–40) “And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ {38} This is the great and foremost commandment. {39} The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ {40} On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

Jesus also said that love was the way that people would know we are His disciples. He said, “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Love is the earmark of the church, the way that we are to be identified by all men. Therefore, I cannot think of anything more important, any higher priority to speak about on January 1, than love.

(John 13:35) “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Many years ago, Karen and I were doing some marriage counseling with a couple. As we listened to each of them, they did not have anything nice to say about each other. It felt like we were referees more than counselors. Both people said they loved the other person, but their words and actions did not communicate love. Therefore, I asked them some questions. (I have changed the names, but the example is true.)

“Would you say that Bob is patient with you?” Betty answered emphatically, “No!” “Bob, do you think that Betty is patient with you?” He answered just as emphatically, “No!” “Betty would you say that Bob is kind to you?” She replied, “When we first started dating, he acted kindly towards me, but that stopped once we got married.” Bob, would you say that Betty is kind to you?” Again, the answer was, “No!” “Betty, does Bob take into account the wrongs that you have done?” She shook her head no. I knew the answer to this because they both kept bringing up past offenses. They had a full account of all the wrongs that had been suffered. I asked Bob the same question, and he also said that she took into account the wrongs suffered. I asked a few more questions out of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, and then I read the passage to them. I told them that this is how God defines love. Now, let me ask both of you again if you have ever loved one another. Neither one of them had ever loved one another. This couple had some physical attractions and some feelings for one another when they began dating. Like many other people today, they did not really know what love is.

With ten children, I have had a number of conversations with them about love. Some thought that because I was older that I didn't really understand love. One of them said that love is an emotion. I told them that emotions do not define love. It is great to have positive feelings, but love is far more than that. Biblical love is more than a feeling. Biblical love has character and commitment. The apostle John wrote to help us understand Biblical love, and said, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Real love is sacrificial and lays its life down for one another. Jesus is the greatest example we have of love.

(1 John 3:16) "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Our passage today is about defining love. Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand what Biblical love is, so he gave fifteen statements about love. There are five attributes that define love. There are five actions that love does not do, or avoids. There are five actions that love takes. Ultimately, God was giving all of us an understanding about Biblical love, not just the Corinthians.

Defining Love

1. Understanding Agape
2. Understanding Attributes of Love
3. Understanding Actions of Love

(1 Cor 13:4-7) "Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, {5} does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, {6} does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; {7} bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

Defining Love (1 Cor 13:4-7)	
Understanding Agape	
Understanding the Attributes of Love	
Is Patient	
Is Kind	
Is not Jealous	
Is not arrogant	
Is not provoked	
Understanding Actions of Love	Understanding Actions Love Avoids
Rejoices in the truth	Does not brag
Bears all things	Does not act unbecomingly
Believes all things	Does not seek its own
Hopes all things	Does not take into account a wrong suffered
Endures all things	Does not rejoice in unrighteousness

1. Understanding Agape

Paul has been talking about the surpassing value of love, and now he begins to define love for us. The Greek word that is used for love here is agape. There are eight Greek words for love, but only three are found in the New Testament. A familiar word for love is eros, and it is not used in the New Testament, but was a common word. Eros means a romantic and passionate love. Eros

comes from the Greek god, Eros, who in mythology was the son of Aphrodite, the Greek equivalent to the Latin Cupid. Many people today confuse godly love with this sexual love.

The second Greek word is phileo (Strong's G5384). Phileo comes from philos, which means a friend. Philos means to have a brotherly love, or a love as a friend. The city of Philadelphia is the city of brotherly love. It is affectionate, but not in the sense of eros. When Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love (agapao, Strong's G25) Me?", Peter answered by saying, "You know all things; You know that I love (phileo, Strong's G5368) You." (John 21:17)

A third Greek word is storge, which is a type of phileo, and is a love specific to families. This is often referred to as a familial love, as a parent would have towards his children. It is used in Romans 12:10, and is compounded with philos (philostorgos, Strong's G5387), and is translated as being devoted or kindly affectioned to one another.

The fourth Greek word for love is agape (Strong's G26), which is used in this passage. It is used 116 times in the New Testament. This is the word that is used to describe God's perfect love towards us. In Romans 5:8, God demonstrated His love (agape) towards us while we were yet sinners by Christ dying for us. In John 15:13, God tells us that there is no greater love (agape) than this, that one lay down his life for his friends, which is what Jesus did for us. In John 3:16, God loved the world, that is the whole world of sinners. God's perfect love for us is sacrificial, selfless, non-discriminating, and intentional. God loved us when we were sinners and hostile towards Him. God loved us before we loved Him.

(John 15:13) "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

(Rom 5:8) "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

(John 3:16) "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

In 1 John 4:7-10, John tells us that everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Those that do not love, do not know God, for God is love. God's love was manifested to us by God sending His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. God loved us and sent Jesus to be a propitiation or satisfaction for our sins.

(1 John 4:7-10) "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. {8} The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. {9} By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. {10} In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

2. Understanding Attributes of Love

a. Love is Patient (1 Cor 13:4)

The first characteristic that Paul gives of love is that it is patient. The KJV translates it as "Charity suffereth long." The Greek word that is translated as patient or suffereth long is makrothymeo (Strong's G3114). Makro means long, and thumos means wrath or anger. It means that it takes a long time to become angry or upset. Thumos comes from thuo (Strong's G2380),

which means to breathe hard. When someone has been stirred up to the point that they are breathing hard, they have thumos. A person with love takes a long time to get stirred up.

(1 Cor 13:4) "Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,"

(1 Cor 13:4 KJV) "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,"

There are two similar words that are used in the Greek. When someone patiently endures in difficult circumstances, hupomone is the word that is used; and it means to remain under. When someone is patient towards a person, makrothumos is used, which means to be long suffering or patient.

In 2 Peter 3:9, Peter, when writing about the coming day of the Lord, wrote that the Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient (makrothumos) toward you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance." God loves us with a patient love. This patience is motivated by love for people and wanting to give people the opportunity to come to repentance and be saved. We know our love for others by our patience with them. We know their love to us or lack of love towards us by their patience or impatience.

(2 Pet 3:9) "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient (makrothymeos) toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

b. Love is Kind

The second attribute of love is that it is kind. The word for kind in the Greek is chresteuomai (Strong's G5541). It means to show oneself useful, to act benevolently or kind. It comes from the word chrestos (Strong's G5543) which means to be employed or by context to show yourself useful, good, or kind.

(1 Cor 13:4) "Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,"

Paul wrote that it is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance. We try to show God's kindness to people, because it is that kindness that leads to repentance. They will know our love by our kindness. A number of years ago, Steve Sjogren, a pastor, church planter, and author, wrote a book, *Conspiracy of Kindness*. He and a group of people began to do acts of kindness in their community. They might show up at a gas station and clean the toilets for them. They might clean windshields for people, or rake leaves for them. They found intentional ways to show kindness to people. He wanted people to experience the love of God through acts of kindness.

(Rom 2:4) "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"

In the Old Testament, King David demonstrated kindness to Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was the crippled son of Jonathon, David's friend. In 2 Samuel 9:7 David says to Mephibosheth, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly." David was showing kindness. He was demonstrating love through kindness.

(2 Sam 9:6–7) “Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, “Mephibosheth.” And he said, “Here is your servant!” {7} David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly.”

c. Love is not jealous

The third attribute of love is that it is not jealous. The Greek word for jealous is zeloo (Strong’s G2206). When Paul encouraged the Corinthians to be zealous for spiritual gifts, it is the same root word for both words. Jealous is a strong passion, a boiling passion about something.

(1 Cor 13:4) “Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,”

(1 Cor 12:31) “But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.”

We often think of jealousy as a bad attribute, but it also has good connotations. God is a jealous God. He said that His name is Jealous. God jealously desires our affection. We are the bride of Christ and He is jealous for us. On the other hand, we are not to be jealous for what belongs to others. We should not be discontent with what we have and want what others have. When God tells us that love is not jealous, He is speaking about the negative side of jealousy, the envying of what belongs to others.

(Ex 34:14) “for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”

Love is not jealous. You know if you are envious or jealous of people, you are not walking in love. Ask God for more love for that person. Envy and jealousy will damage relationships. Again, jealousy is just a characteristic to let us know if we have love.

d. Love Is not arrogant

The fourth attribute of love is that it is not arrogant. The Greek word is physio (Strong’s G3361), which means to be puffed up or inflated. Paul used that word earlier in 1 Corinthians 8, when he was trying to get the Corinthians to consider love when determining what liberties they would use. He said, “Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.” Love is not puffed up, but is looking out for what is best for others.

(1 Cor 13:4) “Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,”

(1 Cor 8:1) “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.”

Arrogant people do many things that reveal arrogance. Probably one of the most obvious signs of arrogance is a critical spirit. Arrogant people are always finding fault with others. Nothing anyone else does measures up in their eyes. They see what people are doing wrong. They are above others, and so they must look down at others. They act as judges. We must learn to

encourage others, not judge them. Arrogant people expect others to serve them. We must learn to serve others, not expect them to serve us. We must learn to look out for the interest of others, not just our own interests. If we are arrogant, we are not walking in love.

e. Love is not provoked

The fifth attribute of love is that it is not provoked. The Greek word is *paroxyno* (Strong's G3947), which means to be easily provoked or stirred.

(1 Cor 13:5) “does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,”

One time I was having a discussion with a pastor, and I became very provoked. The man was misusing Scripture. He was saying some very harsh, unkind things, and making some very wrong judgments. The more he talked the more I became provoked. I did not do anything outwardly to show my provocation, but I was internally provoked. Later that day, the Lord convicted me of my lack of love for this man. Therefore, I went to the man and apologized to him for being provoked. I said that I was not walking in love, and I asked him to forgive me. I said nothing of all the wrongs that this man was doing. I repented for my wrong attitude. I was not walking in love. Love is not provoked. We know if we have love by this characteristic.

Love is not provoked. Provoke means to anger, vex or exasperate. Love does not get angered or vexed or exasperated. When we get angry at someone, it reveals that we do not have God's love for the person. We find that Jesus was stirred up over the money changers in the temple. He had a righteous anger over the situation. We have the right to be upset about sin, but we need to maintain love for the sinner.

There are 51 times in the Scriptures where the word provoke is used. Most of the time it is used in our provoking the Lord to anger through our idolatry and sin. The implication is almost always of our doing wrong that provokes God. When Scripture says that we are not to be provoked, in the context of how the word is used, it is saying that when our brother sins, we are not to be provoked. Love covers a multitude of sins. We need to exercise forgiveness towards one another. When we forgive, we are not provoked.

3. Understanding Actions of Love

a. Love rejoices in the truth (1 Cor 13:6)

Love rejoices with truth. The couple that said that they loved one another, but could not live together, constantly accused the other person of lying. Both of them lied to one another. Neither one rejoiced in truth. Love rejoices in truth, even if it requires us to humble ourselves and admit our wrongdoings. We know love by our commitment to truth.

(1 Cor 13:6) “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;”

b. Love bears all things (1 Cor 13:7)

Love bears all things. Love does not bear a few things, but all things. We can know if we have love for someone by whether we are willing to bear all things with the person.

(1 Cor 13:7) “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

In Galatians 6, Paul wrote about restoring those who were struggling with sin. He tells us to restore them in a spirit of gentleness. Then, he adds that we are to bear one another’s burdens. When people are getting free from a sinful habit or lifestyle, they go through a process. Sometimes, that process is quick, but at other times it is a season of getting free. Paul tells us to bear the burdens of those we are helping to restore. I believe that bearing is much more than an attitude; it is praying for the person and walking through the process with them. It is asking the tough questions and showing tough love when needed. It is a commitment to that person, and to the process they are going through, Paul ended by saying that when you bear someone’s burdens, you are fulfilling the law of Christ, which is to love one another. Love bears all things, which is what Jesus did for us. He bore all of our sins on the cross.

(Gal 6:2) “Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”

c. Love believes all things (1 Cor 13:7)

Love believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. The Greek word is *peisteuo* (Strong’s G4100), which means to believe, or to put your trust in. The root word is *pistis* (Strong’s G4102, which is to have faith. The root word of both of these is *peitho* (Strong’s G3982), which means to be convinced of or have confidence in.

(1 Cor 13:7) “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

People appreciate a vote of confidence from others. A husband wants to know that his wife believes in him and has confidence in him. A wife wants to know that her husband has confidence in her. An employee wants to know that the manager has confidence in him. We want others to believe in us, in our abilities, in what we say, and in what we plan on doing. Our actions and history of actions can hinder or help others believe in us. I have more confidence in someone when I see them following God. I have more confidence in someone who always speaks the truth. A person with agape love is willing to believe all things about God and others. Does someone believe in you? Does someone hope all things for you? If not, they do not love you. You can know love by whether they believe and hope all things for you.

d. Love hopes all things (1 Cor 13:7)

Love hopes all things. The Greek word for hope is *elpizo* (Strong’s G1679), and it means to expect, confide, trust, or hope. Hope is one of the big three that Paul mentions in verse thirteen. He said, “but now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Hope is important, and it is also a part of love, for love hopes all things.

(1 Cor 13:7) “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

(1 Cor 13:13) “But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

In 1993, I had just finished the last round of the PGA Tour Qualifying School, which was held in Palm Springs, California. I had played well all week, and unfortunately, I had triple-bogeyed the final hole to miss my tour card by one shot. I was pretty dejected as I walked from the scoring area to the parking lot. As I walked, the Holy Spirit gave me a song out of Romans 15:13. The verse reads, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you

will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” The Lord not only gave me the song, but He infused in me a joy, peace, and hope. After I had put away my clubs, I went back to the scoring area, and was met by a reporter from Sports Illustrated. His interview with me turned into a three-page article, and that was followed by many TV, newspaper, and magazine articles about us. The hope, joy, and peace that the Holy Spirit put in me was very evident to this reporter.

(Rom 15:13) “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

e. **Love endures all things** (1 Cor 13:7)

Love endures all things. The Greek word is *hupomeno* (Strong’s G5278), which means to stay under, hold out against; sustain or undergo without impairment or yielding. When you endure something, you make it through the process until the end is reached.

(1 Cor 13:7) “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

When we study the use of the word endure in Scripture, we find that God, His nature, His lovingkindness, His word, everything about God endures forever. The things that keep us from enduring are the sins that so easily beset us. When we walk according to His ways, we endure. For us to have the kind of love that endures all things, we are going to have to rely upon Jesus, keeping our eyes on Him, who endured the cross and endured hostility by sinners against Himself. He is the standard that we look up to so that we can have endurance.

(Heb 12:2-3) "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. {3} For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart."

(James 5:11) "Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful."

f. **Love does not brag** (1 Cor 13:4)

Love does not brag. The Greek word is *perpereuomai*, which means to boast or vaunt itself. Paul says that love does not brag and is not arrogant. The two are very often tied together.

(1 Cor 13:4) “Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,”

Brag means to speak boastfully. Boastful means to speak with pride or vanity. It means to be proud in the possession of. Love does not speak boastfully. It does not try and let everyone know how great you are and what wonderful things you have or have done. Love is not trying to build yourself up. Love tries to build up and edify another. Proverbs says that a stranger should praise you and that your own lips should not do it.

(Pr 27:2) "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips."

If I brag, I am not walking in love. If someone is always bragging to you, that person is not walking in love. Love does not boast. I have found that some people who boast are not arrogant, but feel insecure. They boast to try and build themselves up. They really need to know who they are in Christ, and find their security and confidence in Christ.

g. Love does not act unbecomingly (1 Cor 13:5)

Love does not act unbecoming. The Greek word is *aschemoneo* (Strong's G807), which means to behave in an unseemly or unbecoming manner. Godly love is attractive, and love does not do things which will detract from the impression that one should have for the person. Poor table manners are not attractive. Love would not do things that are going to take away from the appearance and look of Christ in our lives.

(1 Cor 13:5) “does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,”

Do my actions make me more becoming and attractive or less becoming? Do your actions make others want to be around you, or to avoid you? People like to be around people full of joy. People like to be around encouragers. People like to be around kind people. People like to be around gentle and humble people. Again, the characteristic of becoming or unbecoming is to help us identify love.

h. Love does not seek its own (1 Cor 13:5)

Love does not seek its own. The Greek word is *zeteo* (Strong's G2212), which means to seek or to plot. The word can be used in a positive or negative way. We are to seek God and His righteousness. However, we are not to seek the things of the world. We are not to seek our own. This does not mean that we do not look out for our own good. We should take care of ourselves, eat healthy, exercise, and live our lives in ways that are beneficial to us. Seeking our own is referring to a life focused on ourselves, a selfish life, that has no regard for others.

(1 Cor 13:5) “does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,”

In my younger life, before coming to Christ, there would be two characteristics that I would use to describe my life. I was selfish and foolish. Everything that I did was centered around my desires and goals. I was not concerned at all about the lives of those around me, which is the heart of selfishness. God had to deal with me about my selfishness. My life is now characterized by serving others, and not seeking my own. My life is a testimony of God's sanctification in my life.

In Luke 10, Jesus gave a parable about loving our neighbor. He had been telling a lawyer about the two greatest commands, to love God and to love your neighbor. The lawyer asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” So, Jesus taught him the story of the good Samaritan. There was a man on the road to Jericho who was mugged and left half-dead. A priest approached and walked by on the other side of the road. A Levite came, and he too went on the other side of the road and passed by. A Samaritan came by and he did not seek his own. He stopped, attended to the man's wounds, brought him to an inn and paid for his stay. The priest and Levite had no regard for anyone else; they were only concerned about their own lives. The Samaritan showed love by not seeking his own.

(Luke 10:29–37) “But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” {30} Jesus replied and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. {31} And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. {32} Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. {33} But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, {34} and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. {35} On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.’ {36} Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?” {37} And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”

Selfishness is one of the biggest hindrances in relationships. It destroys relationships. We must learn to consider others more important than ourselves. We must learn to look out for the interests of others, not merely our own interests. For others to identify us as being people who love one another, we must be a people that do not seek our own. We must be an unselfish people. Others will know our love when they see us acting unselfishly.

(Philippians 2:3-7) "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; {4} do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. {5} Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, {6} who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, {7} but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."

Jesus is the perfect example of every attribute and action of love. Jesus did not come to seek His own; He came to serve us and to give His life as a ransom for others. He told the Father as He was getting ready to die, “not My will, but Thine.” He did not seek His own, but kept the interests of others in mind.

(Mark 10:45) ""For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.""

(Luke 22:42) "saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.""

i. **Love does not take into account a wrong suffered** (1 Cor 13:5)

Love does not take into account a wrong suffered. If you have forgiven someone, you should not take into account a wrong suffered. If you are taking into account a wrong, ask God to help you. You will know if you have love by whether you take into accounts a wrong suffered.

(1 Cor 13:5) “does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,”

Love covers a multitude of sins. Peter tells us to keep fervent in our love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. A fervent love does not take into account a wrong suffered, but keeps covering sins. Again, this is a way for us to know love.

(1 Pet 4:8) "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."

Peter asked the Lord the question about forgiveness in Matthew 18. He wanted to know how many times he had to forgive his brother. Jesus said to forgive his brother up to seventy times seven, meaning without number. Love does not take into account a wrong suffered. Love forgives. Peter asked the Lord, how many times he needed to forgive his brother. Jesus tells him 70 times 7 or infinitely. The word 7 signifies perfectly or completely.

(Mat 18:21-22) "Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" {22} Jesus said^ to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

I have found that many marriages and relationships suffer because they take into account the wrongs that they have suffered. Instead of forgiving their spouse or friend, they store the offense in a closet, and when there is a disagreement, they bring out those offenses and bring them up. God tells us in Proverbs 17:9 that "he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends." God did not say that he who brings up a matter, but he who repeats a matter. We need to have a conversation about the offenses, and we need to ask forgiveness or give forgiveness. Once we have dealt with the matter, we should not be bringing it up again or repeating the matter. Love does not take into account a wrong that is suffered.

(Pr 17:9) "He who conceals a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends."

j. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness (1 Cor 13:6)

Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness. The Greek word is *adikia* (Strong's G94), which means injustice, moral wrongfulness, iniquity, or unrighteousness.

(1 Cor 13:6) "does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth."

One of the issues today is the removal of God's moral standards. When men determine what is righteous and what is not righteous, we get a perverted moral standard. Today, there are many who are rejoicing in unrighteousness, whether it is sexual immorality or injustice for the unborn. Love rejoices in righteousness. Do you rejoice in doing things that are unrighteousness. We know love by this, that we rejoice in righteous things, not unrighteousness.

(Pr 8:13) "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate."

One of the things that I pray for leaders is a fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil and love good. We need to love the things that God loves and hate the things that He hates. God rejoices in righteousness, and hates unrighteousness. Throughout God's word we find out the things that He loves and the things He hates. For example, in Proverbs 6, God tells us that there are six things He hates, and seven which are an abomination to Him. He hates haughtiness and a lying tongue. He hates the shedding of innocent blood, which would include abortion. In Isaiah 61:8, the Lord tells us that He loves justice and hates robbery in the burnt offering. We need to use the word of God to calibrate our moral standards so that we hate the things that He hates and love the things that He loves. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness.

(Pr 6:16–19) “There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: {17} haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, {18} a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, {19} a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.”

(Is 61:8) “For I, the LORD, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; and I will faithfully give them their recompense and make an everlasting covenant with them.”

Conclusion and Applications

All fifteen of these characteristics of love are given to help us identify and know if we have love or if someone else has love. God wants us to know His love. God wants us to know if we are walking in that love for one another. It is by our love that all men will know that we are Christians. It is to be the earmark of the church. Therefore, it is important that we have an understanding of love. We need to know what it is, and its attributes. We need to know how love should and should not respond. Love is not some feel-good emotion or a sensual feeling towards someone. Love has character. Love has commitment. Love is patient and kind. Love is not arrogant and does not brag. Love forgives and does not take into account a wrong suffered. Love rejoices with truth and righteousness. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

Prayer

Father God, thank You for loving us. Jesus, thank You for Your perfect example and demonstration of love to us. Thank You for giving us the ability to love with the same agape love that You have for us. Father, help us to love You with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Help us to love one another. Help us to be a witness of Your love to those around us. May each and everyone of these characteristics and actions be evident in our lives. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Defining Love

Introduction (Matt 22:37–40, John 13:35, 1 John 3:16, 1 Cor 13:4-7)

1. Understanding Agape (John 21:17, Rom 12:10, John 15:13, Rom 5:8, John 3:16, 1 John 4:7–10)

2. Understanding Attributes of Love

a. **Love is Patient** (1 Cor 13:4, 2 Pet 3:9)

b. **Love is Kind** (1 Cor 13:4, Rom 2:4, 2 Sam 9:6-7)

c. **Love is not jealous** (1 Cor 13:4, 12:31, Ex 34:14)

d. **Love is not arrogant** (1 Cor 13:4, 8:1)

e. **Love is not provoked** (1 Cor 13:5)

3. Understanding Actions of Love

a. **Love rejoices in the truth** (1 Cor 13:6)

b. **Love bears all things** (1 Cor 13:7, Gal 6:2)

c. **Love believes all things** (1 Cor 13:7)

d. **Love hopes all things** (1 Cor 13:7, 13:13, Rom 15:13)

e. **Love endures all things** (1 Cor 13:7, Heb 12:2-3, James 5:11)

f. **Love does not brag** (1 Cor 13:4, Pr 27:2)

g. **Love does not act unbecomingly** (1 Cor 13:5)

h. **Love does not seek its own** (1 Cor 13:5, Luke 10:29–37, Mark 10:45, Luke 22:42, Phil 2:3-7)

i. **Love does not take into account a wrong suffered** (1 Cor 13:5, 1 Pet 4:8, Matt 18:21-22, Pr 17:9)

j. **Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness** (1 Cor 13:6, Pr 8:13, Pr 6:16–19, Is 61:8)

Conclusion and Applications