

The Gracious Life, Part 8 | be loving

I. Love is Humble.

- I Corinthians 13:4b-5; Ephesians 4:1-2; I Peter 3:8
- **Love is not jealous.** The word translated “jealous” refers to earnestly seeking something. However, in a negative context, it deals with an envious seeking to have that which is not our own. Jealousy is prideful in that it believes it deserves something. It believes it deserves to be treated a certain way or have something or experience something. But humility isn’t thinking about ourselves. When we’re humble, we’re focusing on God and others, and so there is no envious jealousy because we’re not considering other people in the context of what we have or don’t have.
- **Love does not brag.** The word translated “brag” is just that. It’s has the idea of boasting about one’s self. I’m sure you can easily understand how boasting is not humble.
- **Love is not arrogant.** The word translated “arrogant” has to do with being puffed up. It’s an overinflated view of ourselves. Again, there is nothing humble about being delusionally obsessed with ourselves.
- **Love does not act unbecomingly.** To act unbecomingly is to behave in a way that doesn’t fit our identity and expectations in Christ. To decide how we should act is an arrogant notion which grows from the idea that we have any right to choose.
- **Love does not seek its own.** Of course it doesn’t seek its own; grace isn’t not thinking about what we want, it’s thinking about what’s in another’s best interest . . . and that is always love.
- **Love is not provoked.** To be provoked is to be roused to anger, but that will never happen if we’re not seeking our perceived own. How can we be angry when we’re focused on loving God and others with no thought to ourselves, trusting the Lord to only ever give us what is best?
- **Love does not take into a account a wrong suffered.** Only a prideful person would catalog the sins committed against them, but only a humble person would recognize that the sin against God is far greater and give no thought to how they were personally affected outside of recognizing the very real consequences of sin. But in so doing, that individual wouldn’t become bitter or angry or resentful. They would love regardless of how many times the person had sinned against them.

II. Love is Kind.

- I Corinthians 13:4; Luke 6:35
- This word is similar to the words we studied when we talked about kindness. Love is and does good. It is useful in that it only does what is in the other’s best interest.
- In fact, that is the most basic definition of love. **Love is wanting and working toward God’s best interest for the one loved whether they deserve it or not.**
- We don’t get to withhold kindness because someone is a terrible person.

III. Love is Compassionate.

- I Corinthians 13:5b; Ephesians 2:4; I Peter 3:8
- Remember that compassion and mercy are nearly identical concepts.
- God’s mercy is rooted in His love. He wouldn’t be merciful were He not loving, and neither will we.

IV. Love is Gentle.

- I Corinthians 4:21; Ephesians 4:1-2; I Timothy 6:11
- Love is not the unrestrained exercise of power. Love is Spirit-controlled power exercised for the best of the individual.
- Love can't be uncontrolled. It can't be sinfully harsh. It won't be hurtful in the sense that it will actually physically or spiritually damage someone. It may hurt in the same way that a surgeon's knife leaves a wound that must be healed, but that hurt only occurs because it's required to accomplish the greater good. Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

V. Love is Patient.

- I Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 4:1-2
- If you want to become more patient so that you can be more loving, push aside your prideful desires. It doesn't matter if you're being inconvenienced. It only matters what will glorify God and be in this person's best interest.
- Step outside of your natural fleshly response to protect yourself, and reflect on God's infinite patience. Respond as He would were He standing there.

VI. Love is Enduring.

- I Corinthians 13:7-8; I Timothy 6:11; Titus 2:2
- **Love bears all things.** Love endures under the weight of relationships.
- **Love believes all things.** Love doesn't believe a lie, but love does believe that God can be glorified in any situation. We can put it this way, love gives the benefit of the doubt. Love is willing to see the good instead of jumping right to the evil. Love won't delude itself, but the biblical reality is that anyone can respond correctly when they obey God.
- **Love hopes all things.** Love anticipates the best. It expects that which it believes can happen. If you've never spent much time in the book of Philemon, I encourage you to read it looking for Paul's confident expectation that both Philemon and Onesimus (two men who had a shattered relationship) could do right by God and each other and—in the end—have a more amazing relationship than they had before the sin.
- **Love endures all things.** Love stays behind. It waits. It perseveres. It's not going to make excuses for abandoning the individual or situation.
- **Love never fails.** True love endures. If it falls, if it fails, it wasn't true love . . . or it ceased to be true love. You can claim to love someone while giving up on them, but you're only lying to yourself and the other person.

VII. Love is Forgiving.

- I Corinthians 13:5b; I Peter 4:8; Nehemiah 9:17; Ephesians 1:7
- Love is too busy humbly desiring to forgive to be able to dwell on past grievances.
- The idea of covering sin has nothing to do with hiding it or ignoring it. It has everything to do with covering the offense with genuine forgiveness that chooses not to hold the sin against the person. I encourage you to search the idea of love covering a multitude of sin and study the truth on your own.
- Why is God ready to forgive? He's gracious and merciful. That means He doesn't give us what we deserve, He gives us what we most need. And why is He gracious and merciful? He is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.