

100 BIBLE LESSONS

These lessons were originally given at Manila, Philippines, in 1958 and 1959 by former missionary to China, Alban Douglas. Give these lessons to people you visit, youth groups, hospital patients, church visitors and new members. Use them in Sunday School, bus ministry, jail services, nursing homes, Christian schools, small discussion groups and many other places. God's Word will answer your questions and help solve your problems.

LESSON 11 – LOVE

INTRODUCTION

Notes taken from D. M. Panton's article, "Paul's Hymn of Love," on 1 Cor. 13. This message was first given at the Youth Gospel Center, Winter Conference in Baguio, December, 1958.

We are acquainted with human love. We revel in the human love of parents. We delight in the love of classmates, friends and relatives. But their love is fickle and falls far short of the standards of love as set for in 1 Cor. 13, the love chapter of the Bible.

1 Cor. 13:1-13 is an exposition defining the love of Christ. The richest, highest possible attainments in a church are useless without true Christian love. 1 Cor. 13:1, *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity (love), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.* The oratory of men is useless in a church or life without true love.

Mr. Beaton's story of two preachers in Wiseton, Canada. One preacher was an orator, beautiful language, exquisite illustrations, but was cold, without love. The other man was a poor speaker but abounded in love. The people chose the second man as their pastor. Therefore love is desirable in:

1. Me as the one giving this message.
2. You as the one that will go out and live the Christ constrained love life.

I. LOVE IS ESSENTIAL – 1 Cor. 13:2, *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love), I am nothing.*

1. Love is more essential than prophecy. The Bible is full of prophecies but combined they are not as great as love. Prophecy covers the whole range of eternity from creation to the end of Revelation. Prophecy is excellent, but it is useless without love.

2. Love is more essential than mysteries. This includes the whole range of the unknown: Trinity, Incarnation, Election, etc. A knowledge so great that could understand all these is useless without love.

3. Love is more essential than knowledge. This includes the whole range of possible learning: schools, universities and college degrees. These are all wonderful IF they are accompanied by love, the dynamic of life.

4. Love is more essential than faith – the whole range of the inward devotional life of a man. Faith as a grain of mustard seed would be wonderful, but useless without love. Without love, man is nothing. He is a nonentity, a nobody, a minus quantity. **Story:** A missionary in North West China never learned to speak Chinese very well, but was deeply appreciated because he loved the people. The people knew it and said he smiled and spoke the language of love. And they loved him, too.

II. LOVE IS GENEROUS – 1 Cor. 13:3, *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (love), it profiteth me nothing.*

Giving without love is useless. To give with a harsh spirit is useless. God manifested His love by giving. The gift of Christ to man was bathed in love. Christmas gifts may be without love – just as a matter of courtesy.

1. Utmost possible sacrifices of property are useless if the action is not governed and immersed in love.
2. Utmost possible sacrifices of one's person (martyrdom) is useless without being impregnated with HIS love, divine love, the love of God.

III. LOVE IS ABLE TO SUFFER – 1 Cor. 13:4a, *Charity (love) suffereth long...*

This I believe is the most outstanding quality of love. Lovelorn columns in the daily papers are full of stories of offended lovers. Feelings are hurt and they think that they are no longer in love. True love says, I love you and will go through fire, sorrow and trouble for you. True love is able to endure suffering and yet remain sweet and kind. The Christian pathway is one of suffering, yet the Christian learns to love. Love that turns to hate overnight was mere human love or perhaps only infatuation. This is well illustrated in the story in 2 Sam. 13:15.

True love involved a Calvary. God loved us so much that His great love could find expression in nothing less than the suffering of Calvary.

IV. LOVE IS NOT – 1 Cor. 13:4b-6a

1. Envious. "Love envieth not" True love does not envy success, gifts, talents and possessions of others.
2. Boastful. "Vaunteth not itself." It does not show off. It maintains humility.
3. Conceited. "Is not puffed up." True love always prefers the other one to self.
4. Rude. "Doeth not behave itself unseemly." It is never coarse or offensive. True love is courteous at all times. (Lovers, remember this at ALL times).
5. Selfish. "Seeketh not her own." Love sacrifices and gives generously.
6. Irritable. "Is not easily provoked." True love is not touchy. It absorbs much.
7. Censorious. "Thinketh no evil." It is not critical, reproving, carping, nagging, suspicious or blaming.

8. Sin loving. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity." True love hates and abominates sin.

V. LOVE IS – 1 Cor 13:6b-8a

1. Truthful. "Rejoiceth in the truth." Love delights to tell the truth. Lovers are not afraid to confide their weaknesses to their partners for mutual benefit.
2. Sustaining. "Beareth all things." True love does not collapse under strain, emotional, mental or physical.
3. Trusting. "Believeth all things." True love thinks good motives (not suspicious).
4. Hopeful. "Hopeth all things." True love always expects the best.
5. Enduring. "Endureth all things." It endures through time, deception and even death.
6. Successful. "Love never faileth." This is true because Romans 8:28 is true.

VI. LOVE IS ETERNAL – 1 Cor. 13:8b-12

1. Love will outlive prophecy. Prophecies will fail.
2. Love will outlive tongues. Tongues too will cease one day.
3. Love will outlive knowledge. Knowledge will vanish away.

God is LOVE. 1 John 4:16. Love is an attribute of the Almighty. Heaven and earth may pass away but love will abide. Love is eternal. When manhood comes, verses 9-12, we put away childish things for the adult things. We put away the fleeting things of youth for the mature knowledge of adulthood.

VII. LOVE IS SUPREME – 1 Cor. 13:13

1. Love is greater than faith. Salvation is wrapped up in faith, yet love is far superior. Love was the motive and power undergirding salvation.
2. Love is greater than hope. Rom. 8:24, *For we are saved by hope*. Heaven is so different from earth for it is controlled by love. Christ, the One who indwells us desires that daily we should manifest this love. The world is dying for a little bit of love. Let us share His love with others.

CONCLUSION

A story illustrating the fact of 1 Cor. 13:13.

A mother loved her wayward son who was charged with a horrible murder.

1. Her faith was shaken when he frankly confessed the gruesome details.
2. Hope remained to the last for a pardon for her son.
3. After the execution her faith and hope were gone, but love remained. He was still her boy and she loved him just the same. This is the love of Christ that constrains us to serve Him day by day.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the main difference between human and divine love?
2. Of all the gifts or talents that one could choose, which is the highest? Why?

3. List 4 things that love is more essential than.
4. What is the greatest demonstration of love that the world has ever known?
5. What in your opinion is the most outstanding characteristic of love? Explain.
6. What characteristic distinguishes true and false love?
7. From 1 Cor. 13:4-6, list the 7 negative aspects of love.
8. From 1 Cor. 13: 6-8, list the 6 positive aspects of love.
9. When a man is converted, what 2 wonderful things does he then possess?
10. Illustrate how love can be greater than faith or hope.