

Wisdom Unlocked: The Ways of God

S#4 Episode #11 1 Corinthians 13 Isn't Just for Weddings



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You're familiar with 1 Corinthians 13: Love is patient, love is kind, yada, yada, yada. But often, familiarity leads us to skip or gloss over important Scriptures. In the days we are living, it is very important that we understand what love is and what it is not.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - 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 is patient. King James version says "Love suffereth long." It's not referring to patience with circumstances but patience with people. It's a decision — "I will not give up on you." Love is willing to play the long game because love is patient.

Love is kind. Kind doesn't just mean nice. It means doing something useful for another person. If patience is the posture, then kindness is the action. Love leverages power and position for the sake of others — to bless, to serve, to show mercy and grace.

"Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love." - Martin Luther King Jr.

Love does not envy. There are two kinds of envy. The first is when I want what you have. The other is more insidious. It's not wanting you to have what you have because I can't have it.

Love does not boast. Love is not proud. Love is not puffed up. It's not inflated like a balloon. Love doesn't operate out of insecurity or arrogance. It doesn't seek to assign value based on comparison. Dr. Dick Fouth talks about two kinds of people. When most of us walk into a room, our posture and body language and presence declares "Here I am!" But there are a handful of people who walk into a room and declare with every fiber of their being, "There you are!"

Love does not dishonor others. Love doesn't deflate others. It isn't rude or impolite or discourteous. Love practices good manners because it shows honor and respect. Sometimes we get way out of line here. We think we are standing on our convictions but we are really just being a jerk. We think we are being prophetic but we are really just making a scene. We think we are defending our faith but we are really just making

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a lot of noise. Love disagrees without devaluing. Love fights fairly. Love doesn't hear and react. Love listens and responds.

Love is not self-seeking. Love is about actively choosing someone else's highest good. Sometimes that means making decisions against yourself.

Book ["Have You Filled A Bucket Today?"](#) Everyone has a bucket. You fill it with courtesy, kindness, your words, attentiveness, time and your actions. But you can also deplete buckets with your words, your inattentiveness, your lack of time and your actions. Love is more about filling someone else's bucket than filling its own.

Love is not easily angered. It's not touchy, not easily triggered.

Love keeps no record of wrongs. This is an accounting term, and it's about keeping a list for accountability purposes. When Paul shares his three exhaustive lists of the wrongs done to him (1 Corinthians 4, 2 Corinthians 6, 2 Corinthians 11), he is trying to encourage his readers and give them a sense of purpose in suffering. It's a show of solidarity. That's different than keeping a list of wrongs in order to drag it out for a moment of grudge or to throw it back into someone's face.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. Love doesn't relish the mistakes of others. Love doesn't share a prayer request just to let everyone else in on the dirt in someone's life. Love doesn't find joy when someone messes up.

Love always protects. The story of Joseph and Mary. Joseph protected her at the expense of his own reputation. He chose to deal with the matter privately. What little we know of him, he always protected his family. He always chose the highest good of others.

Love always trusts. This is Mary being told by the angel that she is pregnant. Facing an unplanned pregnancy, facing a life of shame, facing a future of whispers and disdainful looks, Mary made a courageous and difficult decision against herself because she trusted the goodness of God.

Love always hopes. In Luke 2 we encounter Simeon and Anna in the temple. A righteous man who longed for the coming Messiah. A widow and a prophet who prayed in the temple continuously for the coming of Messiah. They walked in hope. Seeing a better future by faith.

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Love always perseveres. Perseverance is a kind of patience. The language here is different. This is the patience that endures suffering. It's about keeping calm and carrying on in the midst of adversity and chaos. The patience at the beginning of the passage is the patience of the powerful. This is the patience of the powerless, of the vulnerable.

Application Question - In the midst of circumstances that are hard to navigate, problems we can't solve, people we can't understand, expectations we can't meet, what does love require of me?

Learn more about the qualities of love in chapter 2 of [A Discipleship Journey](#), which you can buy along with a subscription to teaching videos.

Pastor Heather Zempel serves at [National Community Church](#). Her book *Amazed and Confused: When God's Actions Collide with Our Expectations* is available [here](#).

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