

## R12.2 August 2024 Blog What Does Love Have To Do With It?

*1 John 4:8 The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

*1 John 4:16 God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.*

Love is mentioned 133 times in the Old Testament, and 215 times in the New Testament. That's 348 times! So, love is a big deal. If God is love, then it is a worthy pursuit to understand the very nature of God through an understanding of what love is.

1 Corinthians 13 provides a definition. Here is a summary of that wonderful chapter:

What Love Is	What Love is Not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patient</li><li>• Kind</li><li>• Forgiving</li><li>• Rejoices with the truth</li><li>• Keeps every confidence</li><li>• Believes all things</li><li>• Hopes all things</li><li>• Endures all things</li><li>• Never fails</li><li>• Complete</li><li>• Leads to maturity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jealous</li><li>• Boastful</li><li>• Arrogant</li><li>• Disgraceful</li><li>• Self-Seeking</li><li>• Provoked</li><li>• Keeping Score</li><li>• Rejoicing in Unrighteousness</li></ul>

Many of these qualities show up in Galatians 5:19-23 where the deeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are outlined, and in Colossians 3 when Paul urges us to put on the new self. In verse 14 he specifically tells us to “put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”

Without love I'm a noisy gong, I'm ineffective, I'm useless. It seems to me that I need to immerse myself into the love chapter and to live there. It is the nature of Jesus and needs to be my nature. Where love is, God is. He that dwells in love dwells in God (1 John 4:16). That's where I want to be.

However, to love this way is difficult. Henry Drummond in his book on Love says “The world is not a playground; it is a schoolroom. Life is not a holiday, but an education. And the one eternal lesson for us all is how better we can love.” He goes on to say that “Love is the Christlike nature in its fullest development. And the constituents of this great character are only to be built up by ceaseless practice. For the withholding of love is the negation of the Spirit of Christ, the proof that we never knew Him, that for us He lived in vain. It means that he suggested nothing in all our thoughts, that He inspired nothing in our lives, that we were not once near enough to Him, to be seized with the spell of His compassion for the world. It means that I lived for myself, I thought for myself, and none beside. Just as if Jesus had never lived, as if He never died.”

Consider the words of C. S. Lewis... “Love as distinct from “being in love” is not merely a feeling. It is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit.”

All scripture references in this blog are NASB20 unless otherwise noted.

The end of the love chapter tells us “But now faith, hope, and love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Let’s put on love and make it the filter of how we do life in our relationship with Jesus and others.

### **Application and Self-Awareness**

1. Which of the characteristics of love do I excel at? Which do I need to work on?
2. How would my wife and children rate me? Do I need to seek forgiveness in any area?
3. Have I prayed to the Lord to reveal to me how I should love others?
4. What idols do I have that are getting in the way of loving like Jesus?
5. How will I practice the characteristics of love going forward?