**What is Love**?

I have been struggling to understand the theory versus the reality of love for a long time. I have examined myself and my environment, and I feel confident in saying that we are not, by ourselves, capable of loving each other as described in 1 Corinthian 13:3-8.

The apostle Paul identifies characteristics of love, however, let’s be clear, the love Paul is taking about is from God. In 1 John 4:7, the Bible says, “Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God and anyone that loves is born of God and knows God.” Verse 20 tells us if a man says he loves God and hates brother, he is a liar. In a world ruled by selfishness and sin loving is a challenge. To meet the challenge, we need the Holy Spirit to have the love of God living in us.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to love biblically. Some characteristics of this love are:

**Love is kind.** God’s kindness is unconditional. He gives blessings with absolutely no expectation of reciprocation. Isaiah 54:8, and 63:7, tell us of God’s everlasting kindness towards us, and that we should be kind to one another.

**Love is Patient**. Patience has no timeframe or limit. The Lord God is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but wanting everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9.) He is still waiting.

**Love Protects**. God’s love is the only security you need. Psalm 91 reassures us that the Lord is our refuge and our fortress.

**Love Trusts**. The Bible says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5-6.) Don’t become devastated to the point that our hearts turn away from the Lord. Jeremiah 17:5 says, “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord.” Our Trust should be in the Lord God who loves us.

**Love Hopes**. God’s hope for us expresses more than just a desire or a wish. God’s hope is faith – a brave confident belief in the unseen. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. (Hebrews 11:1.) We are hopeful when we feel loved, and that hope fuels and strengthen our faith.

**Love Perseveres**. 1 Corinthians 13:7 says love, “endures all things.” Enduring means to bear things bravely, without giving up. Love will not let us get tired of doing good. It will not seek rewards. Love seeks only the benefit of others.

John 3:16, tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only son to die for all of us. This was, and is, the greatest example of love. If we each seek to give, no one will go without provisions. If we give sacrificially, others will be touched by God’s love. Therefore, let’s pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so we can really love one another.

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