

**1 Corinthians 13:4, 5a NRSV**  
**"On what does your love insist?"**

**"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful, or arrogant or rude. It does insist on its own way. . ."**

**I first preached on this special love subject June 1969 at the Church of Christ in Hollywood.**

A week or so before, I was driving the transition ramp from the Harbor to the Hollywood Freeway in Los Angeles.

A truck came alongside me in a lane that would merge with mine. My first reaction; "punch the pedal" and get ahead of that truck.

Then I remembered I was preparing a sermon on love;

**"What if I know that truck driver?"**

I looked up at the truck and realized I did know the guy at the wheel.

**He and his wife came to my church office several times for counselling; I officiated at their wedding.**

Whether we're driving, standing in a check-out line, or other circumstances, we're tempted *to insist on our way.*



**In an immense, impersonal society, we easily dismiss selfish actions thinking: "What does it matter? I'll never see that person again."**

**In Northwest Iowa, where the population is far less dense, it's likely we'll know that other driver or person in the check-out line.**

**It scares me that virtually every day, people I do not recognize call me by my first name.**

**If I ever start doing that at home, no one will likely see me again in public.**

**Love expresses itself in multiple ways.**

**Courtesy and considering others come under that vast topic.**

**Check the phrase: "it does not insist on its own way," in other translations, you'll find a variety of wordings:**

**American Standard: "Seeks not its own."**

**J.B. Philips: Does not pursue selfish advantage."**

**NASB: "It does not seek its own."**

**New English Bible: "Never selfish."**

**NIV: It is not self-seeking.**

**TEV: It is not selfish."**

**The Message states it in everyday speech:**

**"Isn't always "me first."**

**The Apostle Paul wrote the two Corinthian letters to the church folks in Corinth, Greece.**

Though new in Christ, they had become a clannish and cliquish country-club-style group.

**You might call it a "bring your own bread and punch for lunch bunch."**

**They thought that "freedom in Christ" meant that we all do as we please.**

**Each thought mostly of himself or herself.**

**Earlier in 1 Corinthians (10:24), Paul used this same expression: "Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor."**

**Lest we forget who our neighbors are, we should recall Jesus' Good Samaritan story (Luke 10: 30-37).**

**In those times, most Jews and Samaritans despised the other.**



Jesus told of a Jewish traveler on a mountain road that thieves beat, robbed, and left to die.

A couple of Jewish religious bigwigs,

probably on their way to an important conference, saw the guy bleeding and dying.

**They looked the other way and went on.**

**A Samaritan stopped to help.**

He gave roadside emergency treatment, took the victim to the nearest hotel and paid his lodging.

**He told the owner: "If this isn't enough,**

**I'll pay the rest on my next trip."**

**Jesus taught that everyone is a "neighbor."**

**"Forget the Bible!" many say, "it's outdated, old fashioned and full of myths."**

**The world leads people in the opposite direction.**

Some brashly promote bitter resentment.

Hostility and division seem on the increase.

**Influential folks want schools to teach that certain races are systemically evil.**

**Many others busily seek their own pleasures and can't be bothered with anyone else's problems.**

**Let me remind you of evidence the Bible isn't old fashioned, but is centuries ahead of any human scientist, educator, politician, or philosopher.**

**In the *Book of Revelation*, chapters 4, 5, the Apostle received an invitation to check things out in heaven.**

**"Come up here John, and we'll show you a few things."**

**John saw God the Creator of the Universe in indescribable glory.**

God held a book in His right hand, likely a large scroll, with writing front and back.

**God held a book locked with seven seals.**

**John knew the scroll contained vital life info, but no one could open those seals.**

Those seals represented the fact that *Revelation's* info was written in symbolic language.

An outspoken newspaper editor who attended one of my LA Bible studies said: **"Bob, I think the Apostle John was smoking something."**

Yet people who knew the Bible and loved Jesus could understand *Revelation's* symbols.

**To everyone else, *Revelation* seemed silly nonsense.**

I can sometimes figure out short mathematical equations, but most lengthy ones leave me clueless. As a former math teacher, our friend Kathy could likely comprehend most equations because she understands the symbols involved.

**People familiar with the Bible increase their chances of understanding *Revelation*, because nearly all its symbols come from Scripture.**

**We'll check out a few symbols in chapter five, which has some forward-looking stuff.**



**It's far ahead of folks who are trying to shape the world's social agenda right now. So John saw the Creator of the Universe and he saw the sealed scroll in God's right hand.**

No one in heaven or earth could unseal the book.

**One of the heavenly beings directed John's attention to a lamb--no ordinary young sheep that goes baa, baa.**

**You easily read the Lamb symbol.**

Recall that John the Baptist revealed Jesus as the innocent Lamb of God, who takes away the world's sin (e.g. John 1:29).

**The Lamb in Revelation looked as if it had been slain.**

You know that the Lamb slain represents Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection.

**The Lamb's seven horns and seven eyes symbolize Jesus' Divine power and full possession of God's Spirit.**

**Revelation Chapter 5 tells us some exciting things I wish we had time to discuss.**

**Briefly here's what we need to know.**

**Jesus the Lamb took the book from God's right hand; then every being knelt to praise Jesus and they sang a new beautiful song.**

**This isn't an angry, rap song.**

The lyrics of this new song tell delightful news:  
Praising the Lamb, the multitude sings:

**"Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood folks from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."**

**Jesus made it possible for  
all human beings to gain eternal life."  
God chooses no favorites.**

**Does that mean that everyone will go to heaven?  
Absolutely not.**

**Here's where we need to pay serious attention.**

**"In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man (*Jesus*) he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead." Acts 17:30, 31 NIV.**

**God hold us all responsible for our actions,  
and we'll have to give an accounting to Him.**

**We might think we're quality intelligence,  
accomplishments, and faith.**

**If we lack love and insist on doing things  
our way, we're huffing and puffing, but  
we'll never see heaven's gates open.**

**We honor God, not money, pleasure, or self.**

**We humbly praise God, our Creator and His Son.**

**We do things according to God's plan."<sup>1</sup>**

**This present life resembles a "qualifying period."  
My first real clues in this direction came from  
Jewish author name Eliyahu Dessler in a book  
titled *Strive for Truth.*<sup>2</sup>**

**From *Matthew to Revelation*, the New  
Testament confirms the reality of this idea.**

**I regret that I haven't more consistently taught it.  
This truth undergirds everything in the Bible:  
our present life isn't the whole deal.**

**Imagine finding yourself inside the lobby of a  
vast building—a structure so big,  
its length and breadth measure in  
miles not feet.**

**We stay only in the entryway.**

**We never enter the main building.**

**To gain full entry, we must pass a series of tests.  
Life is a test 65-90 year test period before  
we're allowed into the main edifice.**



**After 9/11, we got acquainted with this concept.**

**Recall how authorities kept us from entering  
buildings until we proved our identity and they  
knew we carried no weapons?**

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 1:11 TEV

<sup>2</sup> I think Dessler probably got the idea from reading the Old and New Testament.

**Once on our way back from Sioux Falls, SD, Norma wanted to stop in a small city known for its antique stores.**

As we drove into town, she saw a shop.

**"Perfect," I said "I'll go across the street to the court house and use a public restroom while you browse."**

But to use the restroom, armed deputies told me I had to go through airport-type security.

Just to use the restroom right off the foyer!

**We spend a few decades proving ourselves in eternity's foyer.**

**God created us and meant us to reflect His goodness and love.**

**Here God tests our hearts for believing and obedience to him with appropriate acts.**

**Using Jesus as the standard, He judges fairly and according to our ability.**

**The Old Testament tells how God tested Israel as he led them to the Promised Land and 99% didn't pass the His tests.**

God flunked those who didn't honor Him.

He flunked the ungrateful ones.

He flunked complainers.

He flunked immoral people.

He eliminated liars.

He put some boastful people on probation.

**He didn't do all this just because he didn't like certain people.**

He patiently waited for them to change behavior.

**Many pigheadedly, doggedly refused to change.<sup>3</sup>**



**When we encounter tough times, we best recall the Bible's truths about testing.**

**When Jesus went to the cross,**

**God proved His love for us.**

**God continually tests our faith and love.**

**In parable after parable, Jesus taught how God now tests us.**

**Will we fail because we complain?**

**Or become ungrateful?**

**Or don't tell the truth?**

**Or put money and pleasure before God?**

**In our area, only a minority of folks even praise God now on Sunday mornings.**

**Will we fail because we don't model Jesus' love and devotion to God?**

**Three summary thoughts from God's Word:**

<sup>3</sup> Old Testament from Exodus through Malachi support the above. The New Testament books: Acts, 1 Corinthians, and Hebrews and the Gospels also verify it.

When Jesus died on the cross, he made it possible for folks of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation to enter heaven's "big building."

**1. He favors no one group of people.**

He expects his people to love and respect others.

**He alone can fairly judge.**

**2. & 3.**

Two important Bible words appear frequently in *Revelation*.

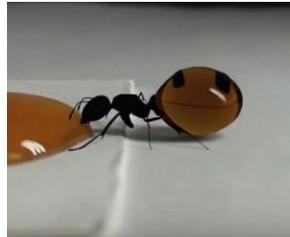
**Pleroma** – We find this word in Colossians 2:9

**"God's fullness was in Christ.**

**Jesus is our model for serving God.**

God expects us to fill ourselves with His goodness and do our best.

**Zoologists call a worker honey pot ant that has an abdomen full of food it's carrying back to the nest a plerergate.**



**Bottom line, God expects quality from us.**

**Telos- God wants us to serve till the end—to the finish—complete the course.**

**When the Lord opens the doors to the grand edifice, some folks won't get past security:**

If you are going to be in a place for eternity, skin color or family background won't matter.

**But other factors are vital.**

**That's why, regardless of race, language, family or skin shade, the following folks won't make it:**

*Revelation 21:8* NASB: "For the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

**You don't want neighbors who lie, cheat, riot, steal, threaten, try to break up the sanctity of your home, and insist on their own way.**

According to Colossians 3:5, idolatry is putting money and ambition before God.

The lake of fire is designed for the devil.

**God wants you to enjoy a peace-filled loving eternity.**

**Will you do what is appropriate to join others who want to enter that joy-filled place?**

**God bless you as you lovingly dedicate yourself to God in Christ!**

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