

"How God's love differs from ours"

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 8a NASB

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. . ."

In 1929, the year of the Great Depression, song writer Cole Porter penned a hit tune called, "What is this thing called love?"

Could you define love in ten or fewer words?

Our first awareness of love occurs when we're maybe 7, 8, or 9 years old.

A little guy notices girl with a special look who sits near him in school.

He can't get her off his mind.

For girls, a new boy moves into the neighborhood who seems so cool.

She dreams about him being with her.

Do you recall when something along those lines happened to you?

That dreamboat gave you a butterfly feeling.

You walked around in a daze.

Couldn't think of anything else.

Admit it or not, I suspect that everyone has been there and remembers being there.

My dad used to call that "puppy love."

Do little boys and girls text each other now?

In that mysterious Old Testament book, *The Song of Songs*, the young girl begs:

"Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am sick with love."¹

Would she say today,

"Get me a Snicker bar, refresh me with Mountain Dew"?

"Love is an irresistible desire to be irresistibly desired," wrote Robert Frost.



"Love is the most ambiguous, delirious, illogical emotion there is."- Sylvester Stallone

• We've all been in love at least once.

Some of us many times.

Some few fall in love with their 1st love and never fall out of love.

Many become skeptical of love.

"Love is what happens to a man and a woman who don't know each other."

Somerset Maugham

¹ 2:5

"Love is the emotion that a woman feels always for a poodle dog, and sometimes for a man." George Jean Nathan

"I'm really not wealthy and I don't have a yacht and a convertible like Jerome Green:" apologized the suitor, "But darling, I love you." "And I love you, too," replied the girl, "but tell me more about Jerome."

"Love" covers a broad range of feelings. The Bible's definition includes love between boys and girls, men and women.

Yet it reaches into every human relationship.

I Corinthians chapter 13 tells love's priority over other human qualities.

Many people adore the chapter's eloquently poetic definition of love.

This text also helps us understand true love.

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

Some of those Corinthians thought they spoke so heavenly they expected everyone to stop and listen to them.

Many folks fall in love with a preacher because they consider the minister eloquent.

Some ministers think they are so eloquent they fall in love with themselves.

Those attitudes distort love.

One of the Hollywood families often hosted Sunday evening socials in their spacious home.

They welcomed everyone and we enjoyed memorable times.

One night they brought out a drum set and let me play on it a while.

I reveled in it so much they gave me my own set of drums including a cymbal.

That set stayed in our home only a few months before Norma gave it away.

As you can understand, that clanging cymbal was taking a toll on our marriage.

If I'm having fun, a little noise is beautiful; if someone else's fun clangs, it irritates the hell out of me.



If they're not from love, anyone's speeches amount to nothing more than irritating clangs.

"If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge . . ."

Some folks claim to predict the future.

They say they know what's going to happen even before it occurs.

The world prizes knowledge and intelligence.

The media honors those they consider brilliant and well-educated.

"He/she is the smartest person in the room."

They scoff at morality and revere intelligence.

Many years ago someone noted that you can take a hobo who is stealing from the railroad and educate him.

If you only educate the hobo and do nothing to help him change his morals, you've simply taught him how to steal the entire railroad.

The Bible says: IQ and knowledge are secondary. God checks our *Obedience* and *Love Test* results.

He requires us to check our hearts and actions:

the way we treat our enemies,
our classmates and teachers,
our neighbors, our parents,
our relatives and in-laws.

Knowing what's in your heart and your actions today, would you pass the Lord's love test?

"If I have a faith that can move mountains . . ."

Some people value great faith.

A few faith folks seem to tower over others.

But without love, faith folks gain nothing.

"If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames. . ."

I could even die as a martyr, but if I don't really love God and others, I won't gain heaven.

Charles Sattenfield told of a guy who went into a restaurant one morning and gave the waitress his special breakfast order.

He wanted coffee and rye toast, grits and sausage and two eggs, one fried, the other scrambled. She promptly brought the breakfast exactly as he ordered. He looked at it, turned up his nose and complained,



"You fried the wrong egg!"

God's Seal of Approval requires real love.

We must know love's content and we must practice genuine love, which is based on a choice you make to serve God.

His love requires courage and boldness, never weakness, fragility, or fear.

Now I must issue a disclaimer.

I'm hardly a love expert.

Someone described an expert as someone who is a thousand miles from home and His family doesn't rat on him.

Norma and each of our four children could relate endless instances of my weaknesses and faults.

We advertised learning of God's love today, yet in that department, I am a creaky old, cranky amateur, whose conscience often Reminds him of his errors.

Regarding knowledge of God's love, verse 12 of 1 Corinthians 13, King James Version reads:

"For now we see through a glass, darkly . . ."

Suppose you go for a drive in the country today and come across a massive building.



There's no sign showing ownership.

The Pentagon covers about 34 acres, I think.

In comparison with the building you find, the Pentagon looks like a child's toy.

This building covers an entire section, all 640 acres.

It reaches into the clouds; you can't even see the top.

You want to know what's in this mammoth structure, but you see only one window of dark colored glass.

A pinhole sized corner of the glass allows you to eyeball inside, where you see marvelously complex things that only hint of greater complexity.

You can't take in all its complicated immensity.

You barely understand what you do see.

In a way, that building symbolizes our difficulty to comprehend God, his Creation and His love. Our society glorifies science, yet experience with Covid19 illustrates that scientists don't always agree.

Folks often advise us to "follow the science," yet it's also wise to follow the money that goes into the pockets of some scientists.

That aside, Norma and I have been trying to follow recommendation that we hear and have begun taking stronger regimens of pills: B-12, C, D₃, Zinc, Elderberry, etc.

We eat our breakfast; then start taking our pills, which we call our "second breakfast."

It recently occurred to me to wonder:

How does a stomach recognize all those different vitamins, minerals and utilize them?

Your internal organs process and send those ingredients to different organs that need them.

The minerals, elements, proteins, starches, sugars, etc. you consume have to be broken down; sometimes stored for later use or immediately gotten into your blood stream and go to muscles, ligaments, brain cells, eyes, ears, bones.

Your heart keeps pumping night and day without stopping and your lungs continue working to provide oxygen even while you sleep.

Not one doctor or scientist alive fully understands how all of this happens.

Even more amazing, when your parents got together to start that life process which you are, virtually every physical thing about you and the programming necessary for you to have all your body parts and for them to work as they do— all was encoded there in that tiny fertilized egg.



We’ve not even touched the complexity of your eyes, ears, and taste abilities, and the fantastic system of nerves with which you came equipped.

To conclude that this came about apart from a powerful Grand Designer is arrogant nonsense.

And for us not daily to thank our Creator and praise Him for this is boorish ingratitude.

What percentage of this country’s population, do you suppose, began today acknowledging and thanking God for life and asking His wisdom?

Our Creator sent his Son here to live in a body a just like ours to show us how to live gratefully, unselfishly, and lovingly.

You know how his contemporaries treated Jesus. They so envied him and hated him for his loving example, they killed him.

Even while he suffered on the cross, they mocked him.

“If you’re the Son of God, come down from there!” He died forgiving their spite.

Those hateful people didn’t recognize God’s power or his love.



Some began to recognize that power and love, when Jesus came back from death.

Life came from God originally.

Only he in his forgiving love can bring us back from the death we all face

God demonstrated mighty power in Creation.

One night this week step away from the town and farm lights and look up and reflect on the immensity God spoke into existence.

He’s the loving power our friends and neighbors neglect to honor and thank.

Only God's love can cure this hate pandemic we and the world now suffer.

Next week, God willing, we'll see how God's love can transform even hateful people.

We'll share some amazing examples of his cure.

Stephen Brown related a story about a young couple that gets to the heart of God's great news:

She was eighteen and he was nineteen when they met. They fell in love, and one year later they were married. Some six years and three children later, she decided while standing before the kitchen sink with a pile of dirty dishes and with a pile of dirty diapers on the floor, that she just couldn't stand it anymore. She took off her apron and just walked out the door.

Sometimes she'd call home to check on the children, and on those occasions he would tell her how much he loved her, and he would ask her to come home. Each time she refused.



After a number of days, he hired a private detective to find his wife. The report said she was living in a second-class hotel in Des Moines.

He packed his bags, placed the children under the care of a neighbor, and took a bus to Des Moines. He found the hotel and made his

way to her room. When he knocked on the door, his hand trembled because he didn't know the kind of reception he would receive. His wife opened the door, stood for a moment looking at him in shocked silence, and then fell apart in his arms.

Later, at home, when the children were in bed, he asked her a question that had long troubled him: **'Why wouldn't you tell me where you were when you called? You knew I loved you. Why didn't you come home?'**

''Before, your love was just words. Now I know how much you love me because you came,' she replied.

**2 Corinthians 5:19,
"God was in Christ
reconciling the world to himself."**

We know how much God loved us because he came here and lived among hateful people.

We invite you join us in honoring God and learning more about His love.

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