

THE WAY TO LOVE

Much has been written about the kind of love we as Christ-followers should have, especially of course, in the Bible. One favourite passage is 1 Corinthians 13. Here I quote how Eugene Petersonit in The Message:

If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate.

If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing.

If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

*Love never gives up.
Love cares more for others than for self.
Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.
Love doesn't strut,
Doesn't have a swelled head,
Doesn't force itself on others,
Isn't always "me first,"
Doesn't fly off the handle,
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
Doesn't revel when others grovel,
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
Puts up with anything,
Trusts God always,
Always looks for the best,
Never looks back,
But keeps going to the end.*

Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be cancelled.

When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.

*We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!.
But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.*

A QUESTION FOR YOU

- How can we learn to love “extravagantly?”

The next verse, 1 Corinthians 14:1 in the Message says: *“Go after a life of love as if your life depended on it – because it does. Give yourselves to the gifts God gives you.”*

In his book *The Divine Conspiracy* () Dallas Willard writes:

“But Paul is plainly saying – look at his words – that it is love that does these things, not us, [not as clear in the Message; check NIV] and that what we are to do is to ‘pursue love.’ As we ‘catch’ love, we then find that these things are actually being done by us. These things, these godly actions and behaviours, are the result of dwelling in love....Paul’s message is exactly the same as Jesus’ message.”

What can we do to “catch” this kind of love?

What I have found in my life, is that a prayer request that God loves to answer is: *“Please God, fill me with your love and help me share that love with others.”* And when you pray that prayer with all sincerity, you will find yourself loving others, without even trying. It’s not our doing; it’s God’s.