

Love Is Patient and Kind

I Corinthians 13:4

Love is the mark of Christianity and without it, *I say nothing, I am nothing, I profit nothing* (verses 1-3). Love is also the most misunderstood in the English language. Most Americans equate love with desire, but truth is, all it takes for *eros* is “two consonants, two vowels and two fools.” The love that Christians have, and the love God grants and gives, is agape love! Love is a verb of action, not a noun of emotion.

I. Love’s first characteristic is the ability to be patient (to suffer long).

The Greek word translated “patience” is a compound word meaning long-suffering. You can’t really display the love of God until you suffer. More pointedly, you don’t really display the love of Christ until you suffer-long. This is the dark side of the moon; rarely seen or discussed. We all experience deceit, broken promises, slander, disrespect, anger, rejection, and all other kinds of real injuries.

A. Love endures injuries without revenge and with a remarkable calmness.

“You may have the duty to reprove, but it will be done without impoliteness, and without that severity that can tend to only exacerbate” Jonathan Edwards. Can I receive ridicule this way?

B. Love endures injuries without an interruption of affectionate feelings.

Love produces a calm exterior when injured for it arises from internal affection. Christians can keep a serenity of mind during suffering because of who God is. “Even while we were sinners...”

C. Love endures injuries for not just a few times, but for many times.

This does not mean that there never comes a time for self-defense, but even in those cases it is never done to bring harm to the person who has wronged you. Love is always patient with others.

II. Love’s ability to suffer long sometimes fades in selfish moments.

My life filled with progressive transformation, not perfection. What compels me to climb into love?

A. Remember that long-suffering is a characteristic of our heavenly Father.

“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, and gracious and longsuffering” (Ex. 34:5). We are His kids.

B. Live in gratitude for His long-suffering by showing it to others.

Have you noticed that the kind of one’s treatment of others reveals his or her view of God?

C. Recognize that long-suffering is the mark of true greatness in the soul.

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty” (Proverbs 16:32) said the wise man Solomon.

D. When we think your injuries too intolerable, then think of Christ.

In reflection of your own grievous sins, praise Christ for this quality of longsuffering toward you.

III. Love’s second characteristic is *being kind* while suffering long.

Some might think love is simply “grinning and bearing it.” No, it’s patient and kind. This word kindness carries with it the idea of “doing good.” We believers are taught: “Do not repay evil for evil to anyone; but always do good to all” (Rom. 12:17, 21). The most conclusive evidence you have that you manifest this desire to do good is that you actually do it! It’s not “saying” that you love; it’s “showing” that you love. You may say, “But I don’t feel like loving.” Put your name in I Cor. 13: 4-8.

Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own benefit; it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong suffered, it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; it keeps every confidence, it believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

Patient and kind. Kindness and patience. LOVE is a verb of action, not an adjective of emotion!