

Love Does Not Seek Its Own
I Corinthians 13:5

Many know I Corinthians 13 from it being read as part of wedding ceremonies. It should be obvious to those who have been a part of this study that this chapter is far more important than marital poetry. Love, described in this chapter, **is the trademark of a Jesus follower** (John 13:35). A trademark is a symbol that allows easy and accurate identification of the manufacturer. In the English language love has been so overused it now means little more than, “having fond feelings” as in “I love summer” or “I love ice cream,” but it means so much more.

I. When Jesus gets hold of you, He charts a new course or new direction.

Before Christ, everything about life was “self-centered.” It was all about demanding rights, getting what I am due, what I deserve, and forging my way ahead. But Jesus performs an inner change. He changes the direction of our inner compass. “Love does not seek its own.” “Love is not self-seeking.” There is a greater purpose. “No man is a Christian who lives for himself alone; or who makes it his main business to promote his own happiness and salvation. No man is a Christian who does not deny himself; or no one who is not willing to sacrifice his own comfort, time, wealth, and ease, to advance the welfare of mankind” Albert Barnes. Eric Liddell, after winning his gold medal, headed to China to invest the remainder of his life in loving the Chinese people and his fellow missionaries. Even while he was being held in a Japanese prison camp (where he eventually died), his love showed through when he would wake up early to pray for his Japanese captors.

II. Love of self, regardless of its manifestation, is a sign of living without Christ.

Paul warned Timothy that the “last days” culture would have sordid, dehumanizing attributes. At the head of the list: “men shall be lovers of their own selves” (2 Timothy 3:2). “Lovers of their own selves” is one word in the Greek text—*philautos*. *Phileo* is Greek for affection and *auto* is Greek for self. The world is in love with self. According to the Bible, self-love is the most degrading thing about us—and the very thing that destroys relationships. It’s easy to spot in others, hard to identify in myself. Let’s look at three examples of self-love.

- A. The person who wants peace at all costs** – loves the self-comfort that peace brings and avoids conflict.
- B. The person who wants to be pleasing to all** – loves the feelings of being liked and has no core principles.
- C. The person who wants no more pain** – loves the idea of self being safe even if it means others suffer.

III. Laying down self-interests for the good of others will never, in the end, fail you.

Think of that for which you are fighting right now in your life. Is it important? There is nothing wrong fighting for the rights of the downtrodden or the oppressed. John Newton fought his entire adult life to reverse the evils of slavery - for others! There is something noble, something honorable, about standing up for the weak. But what is it that you are fighting to obtain for self? Are you scared of being hurt? Are you afraid of being used? Are you wanting to prove your abilities to others? Lay it down. Don’t seek self. You will find that God exalts those who are debased. “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12). These words of Jesus are a promise, but they are problematic. It’s unnatural.

Questions to Ask Yourself:

1. Do I *think* more of others than I do myself? “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).
2. Am I willing to acknowledge *selfishness* and turn from it? See it and share to slay it.
3. Do I realize that *recovery from selfishness* is as freeing as recovery from any external addiction?