

# Learning How To Love

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**B. Kirkland**

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## Paul’s Very Special Friends:

### Philippians 4:1-3,

*“I My brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown...true yokefellow...my fellowlabourers...”*

## They Needed To Learn How To Love:

Paul’s prayer for them was that their love would *“abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.”*

- **Knowledge**, *“The accumulation of information about love.”*
- **Judgment**, *“The ability to judge correctly concerning love.”*

## Love Must Be Cultivated:

Loving one another will not happen automatically. That is why the commandment to *“love one another”* is repeated so many times in the Word of God.

- **John 13:34**, *“...love one another.”*
- **John 15:12**, *“...love one another.”*
- **John 15:17**, *“...love one another.”*
- **Romans 13:8**, *“...love one another.”*
- **First Peter 1:22**, *“...love one another.”*
- **First John 3:11**, *“...love one another.”*
- **First John 3:23**, *“...love one another.”*
- **First John 4:7**, *“...love one another.”*
- **First John 4:11**, *“...love one another.”*
- **First John 4:12**, *“...love one another.”*
- **Second John 1:5**, *“...love one another.”*
- **First Thessalonians 4:9**, *“...love one another.”*

Love one  
♥ ANOTHER ♥  
as I have  
LOVED  
you  
-JOHN 15:12

## Paul Focused On The Importance of Christians

### Learning To Love:

- **Romans 12:9**, “*Let love be without dissimulation.*”
- **Romans 12:10**, “*...with brotherly love.*”
- **Romans 13:8**, “*...love one another.*”
- **Galatians 5:22**, “*...the fruit of the Spirit is love.*”
- **Ephesians 3:19**, “*...know the love of Christ.*”
- **Ephesians 4:2**, “*...forbearing one another in love.*”
- **Ephesians 5:25**, “*Husbands, love your wives.*”
- **Hebrews 10:24**, “*...provoke one another unto love.*”
- **Hebrews 13:1**, “*Let brotherly love continue.*”
- **Titus 2:4**, “*...teach the young women...to love their children.*”

## The Lord’s Message Was About Understanding

### Love:

#### John 15:17,

*“These things I command you, that ye love one another.”*

Christ did not say, **I command us to love one another.** It is not possible to love on command. Love is much deeper than that. Jesus said, “*These things I command you that (in order that) ye love one another.*”

## Love Is A Byproduct of Doing “These Things”

#### John 13:17,

*““If ye know (cherish, pay attention to) these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”*

The “*things*” that Jesus was talking about in John begin in chapter thirteen. The little word “*if*” is used in various ways in the Scriptures. Here it is used in the same sense as **John 7:17** where Jesus said, “*If any man will do his will, he shall know (come to learn) of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*” God opens the understanding of those who do His will.

## **Studying The Things:**

A careful study of the “***things***” Jesus spoke about, with a purpose in making those “***things***” the most important part of our being, will result in us loving one another. Jesus said, “*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love*” (John 15:10).

## **The Love of Christ:**

### **John 13:1,**

*“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, **he loved them unto the end.**”*

The Greek word translated “*end*” in this verse has been translated “*uttermost.*” Jesus had recently told them that He was going to be crucified (Mark 9:31). Their response was to argue as to who would be the greatest in the kingdom they thought was about to be set up. (Mark 9:31).

## **Love In Action:**

### **John 13:4-5,**

*“He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.”*

### **John 13:12-17,**

*“So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, ***Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.***”*

*For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”*

## **Loving “In Knowledge And In Judgment”**

The word “love” in this verse is *agape*. It refers to an *undeserved* love. Jesus said, “*For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*” (Matthew 5:46).

### **First Corinthians 13:1,**

*“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”*

### **“Though I Speak”**

As pastors, we “*speak*.” With our speaking, we can move people *emotionally* and sometimes even make them cry. We can move people *mentally* to get them to change their *wills* and do things we want them to do; however, only *agapē* love will change a persons’ *spirit* and Christians are to be “*...renewed in the spirit of your mind*” (Ephesians 4:23).



Preaching is not the key; love is the key that leads Christians to be renewed in their *spirit*. Paul said we are to be “*...rooted and grounded in love*” (Ephesians 3:17). Following that, we read of being “*...renewed in the spirit of your mind,*” (Verse 23). To change a persons’ will is not the answer. People are to be “*...renewed in the spirit.*” The Bible way is to do it through love.

- **Ephesians 1:15,** “*...love unto all the saints.*”
- **Ephesians 4:2,** “*...forbearing one another in love.*”

- **Ephesians 4:15**, “...speaking the truth in love.”
- **Ephesians 4:16**, “...edifying of itself in love.”
- **Ephesians 5:2**, “...walk in love.”
- **Ephesians 5:25**, “...love your wives.”
- **Ephesians 6:23**, “...love with faith.”

*Agape* was used in the Greek language, yet no unsaved writer used it. Perhaps it was for this reason the Holy Spirit chose this word for a genuine Christian love. It is free of the sensual overtones common to other Greek words. “*Agape*” is one of the greatest words used in the New Testament.

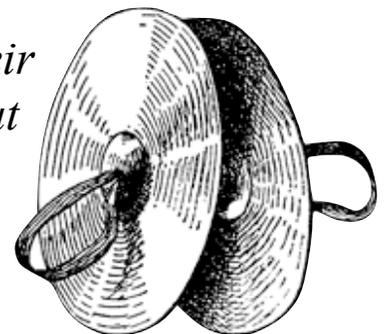
## **Why The Word “Charity” Is Used:**

A “*charity*,” such as the Red Cross Society, does something with the money they collect and they do it for people who do not earn it or have done something to deserve it. They do it expecting nothing in return. That is called charity.

Charity (*agape* love) is not just a feeling for people or just telling people you love them. The Bible says, “***Though I speak...and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.***” The Word of God says, “***My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth***” (First John 3:18).

Speaking without “*proving the sincerity*” of our love (Second Corinthians 8:8) is as useless as an annoying noise! It is like someone playing a solo on cymbals. Christ said in Matthew 15:8,

*“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”*



## **The Pastor Left His Love:**

### **Revelation 2:4,**

*“I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”*

### **Two important things about the seven letters in the Revelation.**

1. They were all addressed to the pastor. It was the pastor who had left his first love.
2. He left his first love he did not lose his first love.

To lose something might be excusable; however, to leave something is to make a conscious decision. The word “*left*” here means to “*depart from one place or position to go to another.*” The Ephesian church failed because the pastor purposely “*left*” his first love. He made a conscious decision. The problem here was not the *people*, nor was it the *program*; it was the *pastor*.

## **The Pastor Was Serving:**

Christ knew all about the pastors’ service concerning the ministry. (“works”). He knew about the pastors’ efforts in the ministry. (“labour”).

## **The Pastor Was Separated:**

The pastor at Ephesus did not “...*bear them which are evil.*” He faithfully “...*tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.*” The pastor at Ephesus, unlike many fundamentalists of our day, was faithful in keeping the church pure.

## **The Pastor Was Stable:**

He was not the kind of pastor who would cooperate with those who promote the heresy of Calvinism or the damnable heresy that promotes salvation without repentance.

Verse three says the pastor had “...borne (not abandoned truth), and hast patience (Tribulation worketh patience - Any pastor who dares to be faithful concerning ecclesiastical separation will know some persecution), and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.” (not grown weary and shut down).

## **The Pastor's Shortcoming:**

Christ rebuked His pastor saying, “*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, (pastor) because thou hast left thy first (agape) love.*”

### **Love is a relationship.**

As previously mentioned, there are several words in the original Scriptures that refer to different kinds of love. There is a “low-level” type of love that says, “*I will love you if you do things my way.*” It is a conditional love based upon our expectations. It is a love that says, “*You must earn my love.*”

### **The love mentioned in our text is an unconditional love.**

Love is a relationship, but with whom did the pastors’ relationship change? We all have specific relationships, such as *husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children*, etc. As Christians, our first love should be our love for Christ. **First John 4:19** says we should, “...*love him, because he first loved us.*”

### **The Husband' First Love:**

The husband’s first responsibility is to love his wife. Ephesians 5:25 says, “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*”

### **The Wife's First Love:**

The first love of a wife is to love her husband. Titus 2:4,5 says wives are to “...*love their husbands, to love their children...that the word of God be not blasphemed.*”

## **As Pastors Our First Responsibility Is To Love The Church Family.**

The pastors' main responsibility is not to be a great public speaker. His main God-given responsibility as a pastor is to love his people with an unconditional love.

### **The Good Shepherd:**

- **John 10:3**, “...*the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*”
- **Verse 4**, “...*he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*”
- **Verse 11**, “*I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*”

The pastor at Ephesus was *servicing*; he was *separated*; and he was *stable*; however, Jesus said, “**Nevertheless** I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast *left* thy first love.” He was rebuked because as a pastor, he had made a choice to focus on a *program* at the expense of loving the *people*. Notice again, he did not lose his first love. He “*left*” it. It was not by accident; it was by choice.

When I was first starting out in the ministry, I met with a very well-known pastor who travelled every week to preach in conferences. I asked him if he was just starting out as a pastor of a church, as I was, what would he do differently. He immediately answered, “*I would*

*stay home and take care of the sheep God has given me.*” He continued, “*The wolves are devouring the sheep while I fly around the country every week, preaching to others.*”



## More Than The Spectacular:

First Corinthians 13:2 speaks of having some fantastic abilities!

- “...*the gift of prophecy.*”
- “...*understand all mysteries.*”
- “...*all knowledge,*”
- “...*have all faith,*”
- “...*could remove mountains,*”
- “...*I have not love,*” (*agape*)
- **“I am nothing.”**

**These attention-getting abilities would make a pastor very popular.** Everyone would want to be his friend. He would be famous and he would be rich. He would be able to tell the future, understand all mysteries, have all the knowledge in the world, have the faith to move mountains and yet Christ said if he had all those attention-getting abilities and did not have Agape love, he would be **“NOTHING!”**

## More Than A Sacrifice:

The Word of God says even if “*I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity,* (*agape*) *It profiteth me nothing.*” It would be a great sacrifice if we gave “*all our goods*” to feed the poor or even gave up our life in the process of helping the cause; however, God says without agape love it profits “*nothing.*”



## **All Love Begins Somewhere:**

As previously mentioned there are three Greek words translated “love” in our King James Bible.

- **Eros** refers to an erotic love or a sexual lust that begins in *the mind*.
- **Phileo** is an affection ranging from infatuation to a deeper love that also begins in *the mind*.
- **Agape** is a very different love that originates not in our mind, but in our *spirit* and *the Holy Spirit* is the Author of this love.

**Romans 8:16** tells us that the **Holy Spirit** “...*beareth witness with our spirit.*” The Holy Spirit always works using the Word of God. As we determine to let the Holy Spirit have His way as we study, “*these things,*” the Holy Spirit will do His work in our lives and we will find that “...*the fruit of the Spirit is love*” (Galatians 5:22).

“*If ye know these things,  
happy are ye if ye do them.*”

(John 13:17)

“*These things I command you,  
that ye love one another.*”

(John 15:17)



*“These things I command you,  
that ye love one another.”* (John 15:17)

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