

Although many have attempted a description of love, none that compares with these masterful words that in the great love chapter of I Corinthians 13. **I Corinthians 13:4-7, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind, charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."** In all the annals of literature there is none that compares with these masterful words that came from the pen of the apostle Paul in the great love chapter of I Corinthians 13.

There are nine characteristics of love found in I Corinthians 13: patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, and sincerity.

Keep those characteristics in mind and examine your standards of acceptable expression. These nine characteristics are expressions of love communicated through one human being with another in terms that are meaningful to everyone, regardless of race or background.

No one will naturally express his love in all of these characteristics. Some people are patient and kind by nature, but lack humility, generosity, or confidence. Others are naturally sincere and courteous but lack good temper and are prone to impatience.

All Christian men and women need the power of the Holy Spirit to supply the kind of love God expects us to extend to our partner. The Holy Spirit gives the Christian the ability to express complete love. **Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"**

The love that God requires of a husband for his wife and wife for her husband is a supernatural love. Self-preservation is the first law of life, therefore, to love someone else as your own body demands a supernatural kind of love. It is just not possible for man to love this way of his own accord, I John 4:7.

God never commands us to do that which he will not enable us to do. We can call upon Him, the author of love, and know that he will supply us with that kind of supernatural love. Titus 2:4, "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children". This is the only time the wife is commanded to love her husband in the Bible. The husband is commanded at least three times to love his wife, Ephesians 5:25, 28, and 33. The reason is probably that women by nature have a greater capacity for love. There are key to successful marriage is two Spirit-controlled people. Many people try to apply Biblical principles and are not spirit-controlled. That just does not happen. That is something we need to remember. A good marriage is worked at, it doesn't just happen.

I want to give you four things to remember about love:

1. Love is Kind. One of the primary characteristics of love is kindness. Somehow, many of those having trouble in marriage have forgotten to show kindness to their mate. They want to receive kindness, but they forget to give it.

2. Love Shows Approval. Most people would agree that the basic needs of man are love and approval. The more we love someone, the more we naturally seek his approval. For that reason, if a person does not express his love by showing approval occasionally, he will have a dissatisfied mate. Folks, disapproval is a more vicious way of inflicting punishment upon another human being than physical abuse. The sad part is, the things people disapprove of in their partner is usually blown out of proportion, making the problem greater than it is. It is good to ask yourself, do I express approval of my partner? Most people respond better to communication than to condemnation.

3. Love Can Be Rekindled. Generally speaking, when people come for marriage counseling the woman many times says, "I don't love him anymore". Sometimes the man says that as well. I always take the couple to the area of when they first got married. I ask did you love him or her then? Generally the answer is yes. I then take them to the Bible and mention that God commands us to be Spirit controlled. Then I take them to the passages that tell us we are to love our husband or wife. God has commanded you and me to love our partners. If you find your love beginning to wane then go to your heavenly Father, the author of love, and He will give you a new love for your partner. While you are praying about it start being as nice and as kind as you can be to your partner. Learning how to communicate properly is his first step in rekindling love. (See www.fortheloveofthefamily.com). Yelling, screaming, and saying mean and inappropriate things will not help you rekindle love. It will only build a higher wall with emotions that say "I don't love him or her". Remember immature people and non-Spirit controlled people want to receive kindness but they don't want to give it. Ask God to help you be kind and give out kindness.

4. Women Respond to Love. I never cease to amaze at the endurance of a woman's love. Women have told me things about their husbands that could earn them the title, "the ugliest and meanest thing you ever saw", but they end by saying, "but I still love him". Men would never put up with some of the things that most women are forced to endure. It must be a carryover of a mother's love which we tend to think of as the greatest illustration of human love. Whatever the cause, I am convinced that a woman has a far greater capacity to love a man than a man has to love a woman. I have yet to see a woman who will not respond to real Biblical love. Folks, no man in his right mind would present himself as an authority on women. Most of us say they are complex creatures and they are.

Like other men, I don't claim to be an authority on feminine matters, but I have come to one basic conclusion, many Christians do not know how to make a woman happy. Men is not money, diamonds, furs, houses, or other things that make a woman happy, but just plain love. Not love making, but the treatment that produces love making-

kindness, thoughtfulness, understanding, acceptance, or approval, **and the recognition on the part of the husband that he is just not competitive without her.**

Happy is the wife whose husband knows and tells her that if given the chance to marry all over again, he would choose the same bride. When ever a man tells me, "my wife doesn't love me any more," I immediately know that he is a man who has "not loved his wife as his own body". If he had, she would return his love, which is just the nature of women.

I want to give you ten things that I believe will keep you and I to love and live in your marriage.

- 1. Compliment and Praise each other.** Anyone can criticize, but very few can compliment. Praise is a powerful magnet.
- 2. Spend time alone together.** Many couples do not spend enough or hardly any time alone together. The amount of time together is not so important as the quality of time together. You can communicate better; understand each other better, when you are alone. Time alone will not come automatically. You must plan it. Set time aside. Work at it. Folks, time alone is not sitting in front of a television set. Turn it off and take a walk together. Go sit in the porch swing. Drive down to the park and get out and walk around together.
- 3. Remember each other with gifts.** You know little gifts, it is the thought. My wife has always liked rock severs since she was a little girl. We have a Lapidary in our town. This is where they cut and polish rocks. I decided I wanted to get Kim an ice polished rock. I thought it would be an expensive gift. I asked the man, "Where are the most inexpensive ones?" He showed me some starting at \$150.00! I thought \$150.00 for a rock?! Then he showed me the holders which were another \$20.00! My, this is an expensive gift is now starting to really cost me money! Finally he dug around and found a real cheap one for \$110.00! Remember, it is the thought that counts. When I go to the store Kim was thrilled. It took her at least ten minutes to figure out where the new rock would go! Never take your wife or husband for granted.
- 4. Be courteous to each other.**
- 5. Be quick to assume the blame for actions.**
- 6. Concentrate on being the right partner rather than changing your partner.**
- 7. Be generous with your outward affection.** More than anything else, your mate needs your affection. If you do not show affection, someone else may likely do so.
- 8. Share little things with each other.** Poems, stories, Scripture, happenings, share these and more.
- 9. Encourage each other.** Everyone is a little tired, and a little discouraged. Your wife or husband needs encouragement. Say words of encouragement.
- 10. Pray for each other and with each other.** Prayer changes **your mate, it also changes you.** It is hard to hold grudges against the one you are praying for and with. Prayer is your greatest resource, use it.

A good marriage is something that is worked at, it just doesn't happen. It takes a spirit filled man to be the leader of his home and a spirit filled woman to respond to

a Spiritfilled man. The fruit of the Spirit is love and one of the keys of a successful marriage is love.

If you are reading this and you do not understand what I mean, explain, Ephesians 5:18-21. Every day we should stand between us and Him. When God shows us that John 1:9, and turn away from it. After we have asked Him to fill us that day with the Holy Spirit. Practice the fruits of the Spirit in our life, Galatians 5:22-23. Remember love is kind. Work on being kind, caring and thoughtful with your partner. Tell them how much you care for them. Seek to do kind things for them. Pray about the areas you struggle with and ask God to help you have the fruit of the Spirit in your life toward your partner.

What being a Spiritfilled person is, let us ask God to show us any sin that we need to confess that sin, I have asked God to forgive us for that sin, we need to seek to put into practice. Remember love is kind. Tell them how much you care for them. Pray about the areas you struggle with in your life toward your partner.

Men love your wives and ladies love your husbands.

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