

# THE MEANING OF LOVE

## Lesson #6

Love - perhaps the most misunderstood word in the English Language. People most often list love as highest on their list of virtues but then are hard-pressed to put their finger on exactly what it means. The world has many definitions of love, many of them appropriate to human relationships. It is our purpose in this study, however, to look at the Biblical definition of love. The love of believers in Christ should transcend any worldly expectations because their source of love is God Himself. In fact, if viewed properly, it becomes apparent that unbelievers are not even capable of godly love, regardless of their commitment to, and self-sacrifice towards one another! As you complete this study, ask the Lord to give you an understanding of the difference between human love and Godly love. Pray that He will change your heart to learn to love in His manner, not your own.

Describe what you mean when you say you “I love you” to someone.

### **Read 1 John 4:7-10**

What is true of everyone who loves (Biblical love)?

What is true if we do not love?

How was God's love manifested to us?

### **Read 1 John 4:11-12**

How will the world be shown the nature of God?

Explain the meaning of the phrase, “His love is perfected in us”.

### **Read 1 John 4:13-21**

What is the only way we can be sure we have the capacity to love?

Why does perfect love cast out fear?

How does your above answer apply to your relationships in the church?

*The question still remains, "how do we exercise godly love?" Read on!*

**Read 1 John 5:1-4**

The first requirement of godly love is to be born of God. How can we know that we love others (the children of God)?

How can we be assured that we actually love God?

How is it possible to obey God's commands without loving Him?

Is it possible to love God without obeying His commands? Explain

*The overall requirement of true love (both of God and others) is that we are in obedience to the commands of God as given in His word. There are many commands in the Bible, let us take a look at some which specifically relate to the act of love itself.*

**Read 1 John 2:15-17**

List the three aspects of loving the world and give a definition of each. (vs. 16)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In what specific ways would loving the world destroy your love for God?

**Read Ephesians 3:17-19**

When we are rooted and grounded in love (godly love) what is the result?

**Read Philippians 1:9-11**

How should our love abound? (vs. 9) Explain what this means to you.

What are the results of our love abounding in this way? (vs. 10, 11)

What is the “fruit of righteousness” and how will it affect your relationship to others?

**Read Galatians 5:13-15**

In Christ we are given the freedom to love, a freedom which the world does not have. What should be the result of this freedom? (vs. 13)

What happens when this freedom is abused? (vs. 15)

How might this abuse manifest itself in the church? (Be specific!)

**Read Colossians 3:13-14**

What does the phrase “beyond all these things put on love” mean?

What is unity?

Why is love the perfect bond of unity?

**Read 1 Peter 4:8**

Explain the phrase, “love covers a multitude of sins”.

How would this work itself out in one’s relationships to others?

Finally, the passage you’ve been waiting for, 1 Corinthians 13. Please understand that this passage describes qualities produced by love, they do not make up the definition of love itself (we have already seen the definition of godly love - obedience to the commands of God). Thus each of these actions (kindness, patience, etc.) must be carried out in view of a proper understanding of all the other commandments of God. The qualities listed in this passage must be used to draw others into a right relationship with Jesus Christ; otherwise they are ultimately self-serving, dead and ineffective! These qualities are important and never forget that they are to be demonstrated by believers to others!

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8**

List each of the qualities of love described in this passage and one specific way you can demonstrate this quality to others.

<b>Characteristic of Love</b>	<b>Specific Demonstration</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	