

LOVE: A PARAPHRASE OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13

If I talk a lot about God and the Bible and the Church, but I fail to ask about your needs and then help you, I'm simply making a lot of empty religious noise.

If I graduate from theological seminary and know all the answers to questions you'll never even think of asking, and if I have all the degrees to prove it and if I say I believe in God with all my heart, and soul and strength, and claim to have incredible answers to my prayers to show it, but I fail to take the time to find out where you're at and what makes you laugh and why you cry, I'm nothing.

If I sell an extra car and some of my books to raise money for some poor starving kids somewhere, and if I give my life for God's service and burn out after pouring everything I have into the work, but do it all without ever once thinking about the people, the real hurting people--the mums and dads and sons and daughters and orphans and widows and the lonely and hurting--if I pour my life into the Kingdom but forget to make it relevant to those here on earth, my energy is wasted, and so is my life.

Here is what love is like--genuine love. God's kind of love. It's patient. It can wait. It helps others, even if they never find out who did it. Love doesn't look for greener pastures or dream of how things could be better if I just got rid of all my current commitments. Love doesn't boast. It doesn't try to build itself up to be something it isn't. Love doesn't act in a loose, immoral way. It doesn't seek to take, but it willingly gives. Love doesn't lose its cool. It doesn't turn on and off. Love doesn't think about how bad the other person is, and certainly doesn't think of how it could get back at someone. Love is grieved deeply (as God is) over the evil in this world, but it rejoices over truth.

Love comes and sits with you when you're feeling down and finds out what is wrong. It empathizes with you and believes in you. Love knows you'll come through just as God planned, and love sticks right beside you all the way. Love doesn't give up, or quit, or diminish or go home. Love keeps on keeping on, even when everything goes wrong and the feelings leave and the other person doesn't seem as special anymore. Love succeeds 100 percent of the time. That, my friend, is what real love is!