

What does love mean?

Selection from the New testament: 1 Corinthians 13.

In English, the word love has to cover all the different shades of meaning that can be found in love.

In New Testament Greek, we have three words which help us to understand different types of love.

- 1: eros, (erotic) giving us all shades of physical love.
- 2: Philia: (philanthropic) all shades of friendship love.
- 3: agape: the word used for God's love.

Understanding these words, and how their meanings differ to each other, can give us certainty about what and how we are loving.

Paul gives fifteen characteristics that grow out of Christian love. The ones selected from that 15 are:

- (1) love is patient: specifically with people.
- (2) love is kind: it thinks positively about others.
- (3) love does not insist on its own rights: that's love that thinks of its responsibilities, not its privileges.
- (4) Love does not store up the memory of any wrong it has received: this love learns how to forget.
- (5) love rejoices with the truth: it is glad when truth is revealed.
- (6) love can endure everything: it endures all insults and injury just like Jesus did.
- (7) love never ceases to hope: God never gives up on us.

About God's love, (1) Paul (who wrote the letter to Corinth) stresses its absolute permanency, and (2) stresses its absolute completeness, and (3) stresses its absolute supremacy. Great as faith and hope are, love is still greater.

These are the main points of a sermon preached by Rex Chamberlain on 30th Sept 2018 at the Elms.

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