

Fil-Am Community Church
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The Power of Patience Building Great Relationships

Good morning Fil-Am, it is so good to see you here this morning, as you could have went many places, and yet you chose to be here, and for that we are very thankful.

So for time's sake let us get into the Word of God, more importantly let us get the Word of God into you!

Today we are going to continue with part 2 of the Series, Building Great Relationships, specifically dealing with verse 4 of **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**.

*⁴ “Love is **patient**, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”*

Amazon.com is a site on the internet that sells thousands of books (more than you can find in any bookstore).

One of the advantages of this site is that you can look up books by “topic”. So, someone did just that. They searched for certain topics and were intrigued by what they found. For example, they sought how many books were on Amazon that dealt with

- Heaven, and they found 2,652 book titles
- Money had 10,304 listings
- There were 16,765 for “Sex,”
- 18,818 for “God,”
- BUT there were 30,066 for “Love.”

Definition of love from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (may have to explain)

- a feeling of strong or constant affection for a person
- attraction that includes sexual desire
- the strong affection felt by people who have a romantic relationship
- a person you love in a romantic way

One preacher said he looked up the definition of love in his Compton's encyclopedia, (hopefully some of you may know what an encyclopedia is) and he found that there was not one single article on love.

It only referred him to emotions and sex. So, he looked up the word "emotion" in his encyclopedia and, in the entire three-page article, love was only mentioned in one sentence.

Then he looked up the word "SEX." And under the subject of sex, he found 12 different articles. Sad to say that in those 12 different articles, he found the word "LOVE" in only one paragraph.

With the above information I think it would be safe to assume that there are a lot of people that are confused about what love is really all about.

Even back in the church at Corinth there were people who were confused about it, the Corinthian congregation was filled with people who had become Christians because they had responded to the idea that God actually loved them and sent His only begotten Son.

As the Apostle John wrote:

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." **1 John 4:10**

So these Christians at Corinth knew what love was because God had loved them first. However, after they'd been Christians for a while, they'd forgotten what love was all about.

And so, Paul dedicated an entire section of letter to them to describe what love meant to God, it is the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians.

This chapter is so poetic and eloquent and precise that it's one of the best known sections of the Bible. And it's become so popular that it's often used in wedding ceremonies.

One of the reasons so many people love this chapter is because it does such a powerful job of answering the question: what is love?

Seemingly everyone who's ever read these words agrees:

YES... THAT IS WHAT LOVE IS ALL ABOUT!

One person even went so far as to say:

"I Corinthians 13 ... is a portrait for which Christ Himself has sat." C. H. Dodd

So... what IS love? Well, Paul tells us: "Love is Patient and love is Kind"

Now 1 Corinthians 13 tells us love a great deal more about love, however for today we are just dealing with the first part found in verse 4, "***Love is patient and love is kind.***"

What I found interesting was the order of these two words. Paul could have said Love is KIND... and... PATIENT, but that's not the way the Spirit led him to write it down.

Love is **FIRST** patient... then it is kind.

Patience comes first.

The KJV doesn't use the word "patient" here. Instead it uses the phrase: "suffers long".

The Greek word in this passage is actually a compound word made up of two different terms that literally translated says: "long" and "wrath" (or "anger").

Now if I didn't know any better I might think that a person who loved the way they should would be a person who would be angry for a long period of time. But that's not what it means.

The Greek word is intended to imply that it takes a LOT to make this person angry.

You have to drag them a LOOOOONG way down the road before they get mad. They suffer a lot before they ever blow up.

Now, if you love someone, there's going to be a time or two when they're going to make you upset. Isn't that true?

Now don't go looking at the person next to you, but you know it's true. In fact, it's often the people you care about who can make you upset the most. They know exactly where your pressure points are, what buttons to push to really set you off.

But when people annoy us, when they irritate us enough, we're tempted to get more than just a little upset. On occasion our temptation will be to get really mad at them.

Saints remember God says the mark of true love is to not let that happen.

The mark of true love is to be patient when this person might irritate you. The mark of true love is **LONG SUFFERING**.

As Peter wrote: "*Love covers over a multitude of sins.*" **1 Peter 4:8**

Or another way of putting it is:

- Love covers a multitude of irritations
- Love covers a multitude of annoyances
- Love overlooks many things that would otherwise make us behave badly.

And that's what you expect from Christians... because that's what you expect from God.

The story's told of an actor who was playing the part of Jesus in a passion play. As he was carrying his cross up the hill a heckler in the crowd made fun of him and said terrible things to him. The actor threw down the cross, walked over and punched the guy in the mouth.

The director took him aside and told him "I know he was a pest, but I can't condone what you did. Besides, you're playing the part of Jesus, & Jesus never retaliated. So don't do anything like that again."

Well, the man promised he wouldn't. But the next day the heckler was back worse than before, & finally the actor exploded and punched him again.

This time the director said "That's it. I have to fire you. We just can't have you behaving this way while playing the part of Jesus."

The actor begged, "Please give me one more chance. I really need this job, and I can handle it if it happens again." So the director decided to give him another chance.

The next day he was carrying his cross up the street. Sure enough, the heckler was there again. You could tell that the actor was really trying to control himself, but it was about to get the best of him. He was clinching his fists and grinding his teeth.

Finally, he looked at the heckler and said, "I'll meet you after the **Resurrection!**"

Now that strikes us as funny because we know that actor wasn't being Christ-like.

We know that actor wasn't being "**long suffering**" like Jesus would have been. We know that actor wasn't showing love.

True love covers a multitude of sins. It looks the other way a lot of times when it might get angry, true love "suffers long".

But Godly love is long suffering... AND it's kind.

Godly love doesn't just sit back and suffer... it does something about it.

Godly love reaches across to the person who's offending you and says "I'm sorry, I care for you, I LOVE you."

Paul Harvey once told the story of man named Coleman whose car was damaged by a woman who had passed him too closely on the highway and sideswiped his car.

When they'd pulled over to the side of the road to wait for the police, the woman broke into tears. It was her fault, she admitted. BUT it was a new car less than 2 days from the showroom?

How was she ever going to face her husband?

Mr. Coleman was sympathetic but explained they had to exchange information about their license numbers and automobile registrations.

She reached into the glove compartment to retrieve the documents in an envelope, and on the first paper to tumble out, in a heavy masculine scrawl were these words:

"In case of accident, remember, Honey, it's you I love, not the car."

Now, that note tells me two things:

- This husband knew his wife wasn't a good driver
- He loved her so much that when the inevitable accident occurred and he wanted her to know that it was her she loved and not the car

He wasn't just willing to suffer long with her poor driving skills. He placed a note in her car that said she mattered to him even if she damaged their car.

I. Why is Patience so Important in a Relationship

1. We MUST realize that everyone is different:

And because of that there will be conflict, misunderstandings, compromise.

1 Corinthians 12:6, *"There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons."*

2. We MUST realize that our differences create misunderstandings:

1 Corinthians 2:11, *“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.”*

Almost all misunderstandings are caused by false assumptions.

3. Assumptions

Below are just a few common false assumptions that help lead toward misunderstanding!

a. That words mean the same thing to different people

A search was done of the 500 most used words in the English language, and it determined that of the 500 words there were over 14,000 different definitions for those words and some of them had as many as 100 meanings. This can definitely lead to misunderstandings.

Take the word Sorry for an example, in my mind the word Sorry meant that I was sorry for what I did or did not do, it meant I was owning up to the fact that I let you down and that was not my intention.

However, Shirley’s definition of Sorry for the first few years of our marriage was not lined up with my definition, hers was more like I bow down to you, I forfeit my rights and I agree it was all my fault.

Do you think this led to any misunderstandings?

b. There is only one way to see things, my Way...

This never, works out, let me repeat that this NEVER works out, you must remain open minded and understand others see the same thing you do a little different at times.

A perfect example is IMPACT class, if you happen to come to class, (at 1000-1045 in classroom 117) you will see that we see things a little differently a lot of times. As Elvin and I look at the same verse and see it from different

perspectives. This does not cause any tension at all, it stimulates adult conversations and allows everyone to see that there is more than one way of looking at something.

I know this would never happen in our church, but you see kids say things like I don't like her anymore because the way she looked at me, or I don't like the way he didn't say thank you. Very Childish, and we know that none of us adults get caught up in this silly misunderstandings....

Because it says in **1 Corinthians 13:11**, *“When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.”*

c. The feeling that I can figure out your motives.

This is super challenging, because people are motivated differently.

An example is some people play checkers, which is very strait forward, if you have a jump you have to take it, there is still strategy but the game boils down to the jumps you take, whereas some people play chess, which is more strategy, they think or plan 3-4 steps ahead, meaning if I sacrifice this pawn, they will or might do this then I would do that, and then they would do this so on and so forth.

It would be very challenging to try and figure out what their motives are if you don't even understanding what game they are playing. It just leads to wrong assumptions and ultimately misunderstandings!

1 Thessalonians 5:14, *“We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”*

Ok with all that we have talked about so far this morning, the million dollar question is how can I be more patient with otter people?

II. How to be more patient with each other

1. Remember God is patient with me

1 Timothy 1:16, “Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.”

Romans 15:7, “Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.”

Men this next one is going to be extremely hard, so bear with me but here it goes...

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

2. Learn by Listening

Proverbs 19:11, “A man’s discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression.”

Proverbs 14:29, “He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.”

Understanding is the key to patience!

How can I better understand the people in my life? By listening to them not just hearing them, there is a huge difference.

Proverbs 18:13, “He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.”

3. We MUST Make allowances for others

Ephesians 4:2, “With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,”

Proverbs 12:16, “A fool’s anger is known at once, but a prudent man conceals dishonor.”

The Merriam-Webster definition of Patience;

Patience / noun

- d. The quality of being patient: such as
- e. The ability to wait for a long time without becoming annoyed or
- f. I don't have the patience to wait in line for hours just to buy a ticket
- g. Investors need to have patience. The economy will improve soon.
- h. Aren't you finished yet? Have patience (with me). I'll be done soon."

[+] more examples

- The ability to remain calm and not become annoyed when dealing with problems or with difficult people

4. We MUST treat others the way you want to be treated

Matthew 7:12, *"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."*

Philippians 2:4-5, *⁴Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,"*

Pay attention to the needs of others.

Here is a self-test: Could you name the 4 greatest interest of each member of your family?

If you care, you would be aware!

Paul was telling the Corinthian Christians... this is how God loves you.

- He is long suffering when you fail
- He shows you kindness when He forgives you
- And so... you need to learn how to love each other that same way.

That kind of love can change people's lives

A youth Pastor told a story of chaperoning 30 teenagers in an all-night "lock-in" at church.

Early in the evening he was playing a game of table tennis in the fellowship hall. The game quickly grew into a heated competition, as a small crowd gathered to watch them battle it out.

“With the score tied and only three points to go before the end of the game, Tracy, a {14-year-old} eighth-grader, grabbed the ball and tried to play keep-away.

His first impulse was irritation. But then a Scripture passage that was read that afternoon came streaking across his mind: *“Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked”* (1 Corinthians 13:4-5).

“He politely asked Tracy to return the ball, and then the other player and he eventually joked with her until she finally tossed the ball back onto the table. He thanked her and finished the game.”

Hours later, after an evangelistic film, here came Tracy down the aisle with a group of 6 others to accept Jesus as their Savior. Later that night, when we gathered for testimonies, Tracy told her story: “I grew up in a family where nobody goes to church. I’ve learned to get attention by making people mad at me. But earlier this evening I saw something different.”

“When I stole the ball from those guys,” Tracy said, pointing to us, “they didn’t get mad at me. They didn’t fight back. I saw something different in those guys, and I decided right then that I wanted whatever it was they have.”

Saints, the challenge of patience is that it is not natural to be patient with everyone all the time.

It takes God’s power in your life, it is only with Jesus in your life that you will be able to treat people with patience.

Let us Pray!