

# Break Free...

*A Thought for the Week From Patrick Kemper at  
No Strongholds Ministries*

*Week #3*

## Love... On a Scale From 1-5

*1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV)*

*<sup>1</sup> If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.*

*<sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

*<sup>3</sup> If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

As I continue to examine the way I respond to circumstances, situations and, more specifically, *people* (particularly my kids and the things they do - or don't do), God has brought some things to my attention.

I always like to compare various versions of the Bible to see what other perspectives might be offered for any given passage of scripture I'm reading. I Corinthians chapter 13 is familiar to many because of what the Apostle Paul wrote concerning love.

Below I have written out the various ways "love" is described throughout some of the versions I tend to read most often – The Living Bible, New International Version, Message Paraphrase, King James, New Century Version and the Amplified Version. Even if you're familiar with this passage, I want to encourage you to read through all of them, slowly, and decide how each may (or may not) exemplify the way you respond to the people in your life.

The focus of this passage is people - how we treat them if we *really* love them. There's a final thought if you will endure all the way through to the end.

# LOVE...

Is patient  
Is kind  
Does not envy  
Does not boast  
Is not proud  
Never gives up  
Cares for others more than self  
Doesn't want what it does not have  
Doesn't strut  
Doesn't have a swelled head  
Is never jealous  
Is not envious  
Does not brag  
Is not vainglorious  
Does not display itself haughtily  
Is not rude  
Is not self-seeking  
Is not easily angered  
Keeps no record of wrongs  
Doesn't force itself on others  
Isn't always "me first"  
Doesn't fly off the handle  
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others  
Does not demand its own way  
Isn't irritable or touchy  
Does not hold grudges  
Will hardly even notice when others do it wrong  
Does not get upset with others  
Does not count the wrongs that have been done  
Is not conceited  
Is not arrogant and inflated with pride  
Is not unmannerly  
Does not insist on its own rights  
Is not fretful  
Is not resentful  
Takes no account of the evil done to it  
Does not delight in evil  
Rejoices in the truth  
Doesn't revel when others grovel  
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth  
Is never glad about injustice

Celebrates when right and truth prevail  
Always protects  
Always trusts  
Always hopes  
Always perseveres  
Puts up with everything  
Always looks for the best  
Never looks back  
Keeps going until the end  
Is loyal no matter what the cost  
Always expects the best from others  
Always remains strong  
Has fadeless hope under all circumstances  
Endures everything without weakening

## *Application*

The list seems repetitive, agonizingly long and seemingly impossible. Don't view it as a list against which you must measure yourself, and thus determine failure or success, but rather, accept it in its vastness and understand... it's the way God views (and endures) you.

Now go back and read the list again, from the perspective that these are the things God *does* and *is* when He looks at the choices you make, the life you live and the person you are.

Get a red pen and, as you go through the list, mark each one on a scale of 1-5 (1 requiring little to no effort, 5 being the most difficult for you to replicate). After you have marked them all, begin with the first three (of the highest numbers on your list) and determine, this week, you are going to be more aware of the times these happen and resolve, by the end of the week, you will have made some different choices regarding the way you personify love. When those three are at a more acceptable number, move to three new ones.

Don't bite off more than you can chew.

Make your goal achievable... with some effort. If there is one type of resistance you encounter with regularity, start with that one and keep track of how many times you experienced it – and how many times you were able to respond the way authentic love does.

No goal, no plan, no tracking... no chance of success.

# Homework for the Week...

1.) Were you surprised at how you ranked after going through the list? Did you even bother, or was it just a silly exercise? If you read the list, does it impact you that God shows you this kind of grace? Does it convict your heart and move you to want to make these examples of love more prevalent in your daily life? Count, and write down, the attitudes in which you ranked a 3 or higher. Is that acceptable to you? Will you be humble enough to begin working to make some changes? Ask God to give you opportunities to begin making some permanent changes in the way you respond in love to those with whom you interact. Who can you contact to help you? What methods will you use to begin accomplishing this? Be specific.

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2.) Mid-week check. List the opportunities you have had and how you responded (this is your obedience indicator). If you are still posting a doughnut, more than likely you weren't all that truthful when you asked God for chances to respond and improve. Check your heart; be authentic. Ask God to show you the way through what is blocking you from submitting in obedience.

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3.) How are you doing compared to the way you started the week? If you still need improvement, refuse to move on to the next session. Stay here, submit, and choose to be obedient no matter what it takes. Explain how you have improved, or make a commitment to continue working. When you are operating in obedience in this area of your life... turn the page and move to the next session.

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