

Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study [www.intothyword.org](http://www.intothyword.org)

**General Idea:** What is love? This aspect of love never gives up! When God tells us that love is patient, He means love endures a long time. Love helps us endure extreme hardships as we keep our eyes upon our Lord. It is longsuffering; with the focus on accommodating others and not ourselves so we can give others room to grow and time to accomplish the work that God is doing in them. When someone is abrupt with us or when someone treats us wrongly, we are called to be patient, because we cannot have everything our way all the time, every time. *We cannot allow ourselves to become angry when others fail to live up to the expectations that we set for them.* When our spouse or child, or boss, or coworker, or friend, or anyone else angers or disappoints us, we are not to give up on him/her. Because God is patient with us, He does not give up on you and me and God loves us; so, we are to show patience with others. We need not become angry, but be content, for this is love.

**Authentic Love endures, never giving up on God or others, because He does not give up on you!**

### Contexts and Background:

This church in Corinth was struggling with its people suing and retaliating against one another. Instead of loving one another, they were being hateful and awful (1 Cor. 6:8). This passage responds to the Corinthian concerns to show us that God is patient and gracious to us. This is the path and way for our Christian lives and walk, not vengeance and exulting conflict. As Christians, we are to imitate Christ, and work within His parameter, which is love. This passage is a character description of who Christ is, and it must be our character description—of our actions, and our behaving responsibly in all that we do.

### Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Love is/Charity.* The Greek word is *Agape*, which means “self giving” and “sacrificial,” that is more concerned with others than self. It was used in Classic Greek literature to refer to someone who was generously favored by a god. It conveys the idea of a person giving all his or her love, or favor, to someone else other than one's self. It is a love that is not earned; rather, it is relational and given freely. It also refers to parents giving all of their love to their child. In the New Testament, *agape* love is used to make a similar point, as God gives to each of us all of His love. It is a love that is bestowed without expectations of a response from the other. It takes the initiative, as Christ did with us, and fosters the Fruit of the Spirit and brotherly love. *Agape* love is also the most common word used both as a noun and a verb in the New Testament. The greatest example of *agape* love is what our Lord Jesus Christ did when He died for our sins. God showed His love by taking our place and the wrath and punishment for our sins. He kindly took our interests over His and paid that price through His sinless life and His sacrifice on our behalf. Consequently, God's *agape* love gave us His forbearance and rescue from the punishment that we deserved. Rather than receiving what we should have, we received His favor without earning it. The word *Charity*, used in the KJV and other translations, is a poor word rendering and does not reflect the sacrificial nature of the Greek word (Mark 12:28-31; John 3:16, Matt. 22:34-40; John 3:16; 13:1, 34-35; 14:1; 15:9; Rom. 1:31; 5:10; 12:10; 1 Cor. 13; Eph. 2:4-7; Phil. 2:2; Col. 1:1-6; 3:12-14; 1 Thess. 1:3; 2:8; 3:6; 12; 4:9-10; 5:8; 13; 2 Tim. 3:3; Heb. 10:24; 1 John 4:7-12).
- *Is.* The quintessential question we all must ask and ascertain whenever we face something new or something we assume is, *what is it?* This is the description for what is; what God says it is or what we think it is—who is right? God of course! He is telling us what it really is and means; we are to make it apply to our daily lives.

- *Patient/long-suffering/suffereth long.* This means to be passive and enduring and not retaliating or overly emotional, and that we are to be tempered in our dealings so we do not escalate one wrong for another wrong or allow our emotions to spiral out of control. Because real love has *patience*, it never gives up. This is our readiness to allow or bear with the flaws and faults of others, even accepting difficult situations so we can grow and even prosper through them. This kind of love helps us show tolerance and fortitude to loved ones who have wronged us and even to people whom we normally would not put up with without making demands or conditions. It is also waiting without bullying our will or control because we do not like what is going on or what may happen. This is not about allowing abuse or harm to occur by our action or inaction; rather, this is about having peace and direction from God so we can build positive, effectual relationships that last longer in our dealings and connections with others. This is about allowing God the room and time to work through us to others around us. The love that patience brings allows us to endure less than desirable situations so we can better be more useful and even optimistic and prudent. Hence, its other name is longsuffering. It allows us to put up with others who get on our nerves without losing other characteristics of love, fruit, and grace. When we do not have patience, we will become intolerant, be filled with worry, fear, and distrust people—the opposites of God’s call. We will not see our Lord at work, be a part of His work, or see what He wants us to see, that all things will work for His good in the end. When we grasp our trust in Christ, then the temporary things of life—those bothers and distractions—do not derail us from our purpose and call (Hos. 2:19-23; Psalm 33:20; Prov. 14:29; Matt. 27:14; Rom. 2:4; 5:3; 8:28; 12:12; Gal. 5:1; Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 1:11; 3:12-14; 1 Thess. 5:12-15; 1 Tim. 1:16; James 1:3-4,12; 3:17; 5:10-11 2 Pet. 3: 14-18).

### **Devotional Thoughts and Applications:**

Keep in mind that this passage is also a character description of how God deals with us! God is patient—as in long-suffering—in exercising judgment so that people may have the time and chance to come to faith and repentance (Luke 13:6-9; Rom. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). He is slow to lose patience with us. So, shall we do the same with others? *Does He use you in this way?* Because God is patient with us, we have the full advantage of a God who is there and who cares; thus, we can have hope and assurance for all aspects of our lives. Christ is personal and trustworthy in His love for you, His child, so we all can be faith-worthy in our love back to Him and toward others. The understanding and then application of this love will help produce real change in our perceptions and behaviors, in our will and our actions, and in our thinking and our wellbeing. This love is synergized by the faith we have and that we do have an anchor for our souls, as Jesus binds us to Him and leads us to the safe harbor of His company and connection now and into eternity. We have hope and life in Christ and thus He sufficiently supplies our every need! This enduring love is secured by God’s oath and promise that we respond to by faith as in all the aspects of love and Fruit of the Spirit. Thus, our conviction and trust in what He has for us endure, as we look to Christ our Lord.

The challenge of this love is that life is complicated and difficult and people will always disappoint us. Also, we will always be disappointing to those around us, but God’s enduring love will never disappoint us because God does not retaliate back to us when we deserve it. Therefore, when we endure by and with love, we can be restrained and not retaliate when life and people are difficult. Keep in mind that Jesus gives as much time and patience as possible, because He wants us to live a life that bears His fruit. When we do, our lives will be marked with endurance and patience. The key to this is our indebtedness and thankfulness for who He is and what He has done: Christ’s love for me (Gen. 12:1-4; 17:2; 18:10; 22:1-22:12; Rom. 4:13-17; Col. 1:11; 3:12; Heb. 6:13-20; James 5:7-11).

In midst of our difficulties, we pray, we get in the Bible, we trust Christ, we think it through with His precepts, and then we are better able to accept and stand with others, believing in the best in others. We can swallow our anger and bitterness that some relationships can bring us by coating them with the sugar of patient love. Remember the song, “A Spoonfull of Sugar Makes the Medicine

Go Down?” Our medicine is love! So, we should trust in God’s timing and providence. It is because of God’s patience that He has the will to save us, for we tempt His patience all of the time (Gen. 6). We are *just* in God’s sight; we are *just* because He declares us so!

The characteristic that *Love is Patient*, is what will greatly help us to be tolerant, good, understanding, and forgiving to others in our families and in our church. This love will be the fruit that helps us encourage, build one another up, restore relationships, build His Church, reach out to the community, and seek the best in all we do. It is God using us to be excellence in action! This love is what builds a great church and a good culture and its absence causes those same societies to collapse in corruption or apathy!

**The Essential Inductive Questions** (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

**Read these two passages again in different translations (1 Corinthians 13:1-8; 1 John 4: 7-12)**

1. Discuss your thoughts on this aspect of love.
2. Give a positive example.
3. Give a negative example.
4. How is this type of love working in you?
5. Why is this love not working in you?
6. What blocks this love from being exhibited in you?
7. What would it take to get this love working in you?
8. What are you willing to do about it?

**Additional Questions:**

1. Who or what tests your patience? What pushes your “buttons” and gets you mad? How do you feel then?
2. How can love help you endure intense hardships? How would keeping your eyes upon our Lord help?
3. When someone is abrupt with you or treats you wrongly, you\_\_\_\_\_? How can these moments be opportunities to be patient? How can you realize that you cannot have everything your way all the time, every time?
4. How does it make you feel that God is patient with you? Since He does not give up on you, then, how does this help you to show more patience with others?
5. How is this passage a character description of who Christ is? How and why should this love be our character description of our actions, and of our behaving responsibly in all that we do?
6. God is the source of love. So, how can this help you with the proper building of relationships?
7. Where do you fail at understanding and practicing love? Do you understand God, and who we are in Him? Why is this important?
8. How can the application of this love help produce real change in your perceptions and behaviors? How does the fact that Christ is personal and trustworthy show He loves you?
9. How can you better help others have room to grow and time to accomplish the work God is doing in them?
10. What happens when we allow ourselves to become angry when others fail to live up to our expectations? What do we need to do to change that?