

# FHL - Love

We have been in a series on the characteristics or values that matter most. We've looked at faith (believe and trust in Jesus) and hope (waiting for expectations, waiting on God).

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Hope comes by experience.

Faith accepts God's promise. Hope confidently expects/waits for the fulfillment of God's promise

Faith is the reason you start following Jesus. Hope keeps you going.

Paul said that faith, hope, and love remain but the greatest of these is love.

Consider how valuable faith is... You can't be saved without it. In Hebrews it says without faith it is impossible to please God.

Consider how valuable hope is... Without it you have nothing to look forward to and it seems pointless to keep fighting the good fight.

Yet Paul says LOVE is the greatest of these?

## **Matthew 22:35-40 (NKJV)**

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Paul restates this to the church in Galatia:

## **Galatians 5:14 (NKJV)**

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

It seems that love is the primary value that our lives should be built upon. Love is the value that God values most. Yet it might be the one we struggle with the most.

In the love chapter, Paul lists some pretty great things that we as followers of Jesus can do...but what are they without love?

## **1 Corinthians 13:1 (NKJV)**

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

So without love, whatever is coming out of your mouth is just noise. It's not impactful, it's probably just annoying no matter how good you think it sounds. You're wasting your breath!

**1 Corinthians 13:2 (NKJV)**

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Without love, it doesn't matter how much you know, how strongly you believe, you are a nobody. This shows that it's love that makes a man, not knowledge, not even faith...love.

**1 Corinthians 13:3 (NKJV)**

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Without love, you can be generous, you can give your life, and there will be no profit to you. These seem like a couple of selfless actions that you wouldn't expect to gain anything from, but the meaning here is that if you don't do these things with the right heart, the right attitude, they are not effective.

You can take it back to sowing and reaping. If you sow to the flesh you reap corruption of the flesh, if you sow to the Spirit you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. Sow in love...

Your life should reflect the faith you have in Jesus...that reflection is love!

And the reason you can wait with expectation for God to move, is because of the love He has for you!

**1 John 4:19 (NKJV)**

We love Him because He first loved us.

What makes love the greatest? Love is the very core of the image of God. It is love that brought about creation. It is love that gave us salvation even though we didn't deserve it. Think about it this way. By faith we receive from God all the blessings in Jesus. In hope we expect the eternal good that he has promised us called heaven. But living in love is how we resemble God.

Have you ever thought about the Israelites? How God could be faithful to these promises He made to them? How He could continue to deliver them, to even speak to them?

### **Deuteronomy 7:7-8 (NKJV)**

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Love originates from God's own character. He loves because He loves.

### **Jeremiah 31:3 (NKJV)**

The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying:  
"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love;  
Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

His love is everlasting...because He is everlasting and He is love!....His love has no end, no beginning

But love is not just a feeling, it's also an action

### **Deuteronomy 4:37 (NKJV)**

And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power,

God showed His love. He didn't just say it.

If Jesus had to act to show His love, if He had to actually do something to show it, to prove it...don't you think the same would be necessary for us?

### **Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (NKJV)**

"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good?"

This is how we show Jesus that we love Him...

- Fear Him (show Him respect and honor)
- Walk in all His ways (do what Jesus did)
- Serve Him with all your heart and soul (live for Him, do His work)
- Keep His commandments (observe and guard what He said)

### **John 15:10 (NKJV)**

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'

These are tied together, the second is like the first because you also show your love for God by how you treat the people around you.

**1 John 3:18 (NKJV)**

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

We imitate God's love by showing love for others so what does that look like? How should we act toward others?

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NKJV)**

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

**Suffers long (patient)** - Patience is making allowances for another person's faults because of our love for them. The reason patient love is something we struggle with (suffer long) is because it takes a lifetime to master.

But it's the kind of love God has for us...Jesus loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end (John 13:1)

**Kind** - To be kind to one another means that we care about others, forgiving them as God has forgiven us. So kindness means to act toward others like God acts toward us.

In the Greek the root words for kindness and Christ are very closely related and can even be confused for one another. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you (Ephesians 4:32)

**Does not envy** - Envy is what causes people to root against each other. It puts you in a place where you fear that someone's gain is your loss and it prevents us from loving them.

We need to love the person, not the objects. People are eternal, objects are temporary.

**Does not parade itself** - Love never says "look at me". It says I'm looking at you. This builds off of not envying...I'm not only rooting for you, I see you, I celebrate you and your victories.

**Not puffed up (proud)** - The animal of pride...pride and love do not coexist. When we find ourselves being prideful, ego gets in the way of the actions of love. We get puffed up. When you get puffed up... like cereal sitting in the milk too long...you're no good!

**Does not behave rudely** - The problem is we don't usually think we're rude...This actually means don't act unbecomingly meaning don't detract from one's appearance or character.

It's like the Snickers commercial. You're not you when you're hungry. You're not you when you're rude. But a Snickers may not fix it. Love does, what being rude takes away, love repairs and restores.

**Does not seek its own** - Love is not about getting mine, it's not about rights, it's not about getting ahead.

"If you teach somebody their rights, you'll have a revolution; if you teach them their responsibilities, you'll have a revival!" - Unknown

**Not provoked (easily angered)** - Love doesn't fly off the handle every time something doesn't go your way. A bad temper can not stay rooted in love.

**Thinks no evil (doesn't keep a record of wrongs)** - Love is not a collector of grudges, keeping score, making someone pay...

God is love. Jesus is God. Jesus didn't keep score and make you pay, He paid the price for you to be forgiven and free by faith in Him.

**Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth** - Love does not celebrate sin, not in your life, not in the lives of others. Instead it celebrates the truth, God's Word.

This is where we as Christians need to be MORE focused on what we are for than what we are against. Love celebrates what we're for.

If I only know what my wife hates, I just know what NOT to do. But if I know what she loves, I know what I should do more of!

**Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things** - Love doesn't quit, because love is a commitment.

This all sounds very doable right? Love sounds easy!

Not. At. All.

Love like this is not of this world. Love like this does not come from man's soul (mind, will, emotions). It comes from God's Spirit.

When Jesus said to love the Lord your God with your whole being, AND to love others as yourself, He KNEW the second without the first is impossible.

The only way we can love others and for that love to be selfless and long lasting is that it must be founded in a loving relationship with Jesus.

Loving Jesus is where the power comes from to love others! Knowing that He loves us with an unconditional love will give us the strength to love others in the same way!

This is something the Holy Spirit does THROUGH you. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. You don't produce it...you bear it (hold it up)...it's produced by being connected to the vine!

It's the Vine's fruit, you just hold it up, you display it

If you have trouble loving someone, instead of saying "Lord make me love them", maybe you should instead try "Lord, love them through me"

If you took a SOUR orange tree and grafted in a sweet orange branch, you can get sweet oranges!

So if you had a sour orange tree and wanted it to bear sweet oranges. What can you do?

You can prune it. Will that make it sweet? No!

You can transplant it. No!

You just moved the sour tree from one location to another. It's still sour.

You could rename it. You could tie sweet oranges on it.

**NO! THE NATURE MUST BE CHANGED – YOU NEED GOD'S NATURE GRAFTED INTO YOU!**

All those who know they need a new nature – you can be changed right now!

How many of you feel like a sour orange and you want to be changed into a sweet orange?

**LOVE NEVER FAILS**