



AND BE THANKFUL

PART 2: CONSCIOUS OF THE BENEFIT RECEIVED—THE LOVE OF GOD

Identifying this love as the love of God.

- (1 Corinthians 13:1–3 ESV) If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, **but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.** 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing.** 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, **but have not love, I gain nothing.**

We are able to successfully identify this love as the love of God because only the love of God satisfies the criteria.

SEVEN OBSERVATIONS ...

1. It should be obvious to us that from its stated influence that this love is a very specific love and not just any love in general.
2. This love is so important and influential that if absent even the most lofty degree of communication among humans and angels is said to be merely noise.
3. This love is so important and influential that if absent declares the person who hypothetically could have prophetic powers, an ability to understand all mysteries and knowledge and faith so great as to be able to remove mountains to be as nothing.
4. This love is so important and influential that if absent even the person who is the epitome of generosity and self-sacrifice is regarded as having gained nothing.
5. There is only one love that holds this lofty position and meets these criteria—the love of God.
6. Loving God is the greatest, most important commandment.
 - (Matthew 22:35–38 ESV) And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 “Teacher, **which is the great commandment in the Law?**” 37 And he said to him, “**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.** 38 **This is the great and first commandment.**

- (Deuteronomy 6:4–5 ESV) Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 **You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**

7. Conclusion: The love of God is the only love that could possibly hold this lofty position or meet these criteria.

2 Discovering proof of the love of God in our lives.

- (1 Corinthians 13:4–7 ESV) Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

FOUR OBSERVATIONS ...

1. This list gives us practical, identifiable characteristics of the love of God that will prove or disprove the presence and activity of the love of God in our lives.
 - **Prove means to demonstrate the truth or existence of (something) by evidence or argument.**
2. Finding these practical, identifiable characteristics in our lives also proves or disproves whether or not we are living by the Spirit of God.
 - (Galatians 5:16 ESV) But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
 - (Galatians 5:25 ESV) If we **live by the Spirit**, let us also **keep in step with the Spirit.**
 - (Ezekiel 36:27 ESV) And I will put my Spirit within you, **and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**
 - (Galatians 5:22 ESV) **But the fruit of the Spirit is love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.

3. So ultimately this list helps us to know our true relationship with God because the love of God is neither doable nor knowable unless a person is in a saving relationship with God.
4. The person who discovers proof of the love of God in his life should then be passionate about modeling his love according to the biblical pattern.

3 Destroying or affirming our opinions of love by taking them captive and submitting them to Scripture for evaluation.

- (1 Corinthians 13:4–7 ESV) Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- (2 Corinthians 10:5 ESV) **We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God**, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

SIX OBSERVATIONS ...

1. We must destroy our arguments and lofty opinions—specifically here our ideas of love—that stand against the knowledge of God.
2. We destroy our opinions of love by scrutinizing them in view of the biblical criteria—we take them captive to obey Christ.
3. Holding to any view of the love of God that is not consistent with the biblical instruction is willful disobedience.
4. The willfully disobedient person needs to repent (change their mind about love) and confess (say the same thing that God says about love).
5. In his arrogance this person has decided that his opinion of love is on the same level as the knowledge of God.
6. The person who submits his thoughts to the biblical criteria loves as God calls us to love and lives in the love of God.

4 Loving as God says to love is an earthly preview of the eternal love of God.

- (1 Corinthians 13:8–13 ESV) **Love never ends**. As for **prophecies, they will pass away**; as for

tongues, they will cease; as for **knowledge, it will pass away**. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 **but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away**. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13 **So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love**.

5 Loving as God calls us to love gives us glimpses of perfection and our role as sons of our Father in heaven.

- (Matthew 5:43–48 ESV) You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 **so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven**. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 **You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect**.

6 Loving as God calls us to love through suffering initiates the pouring of the love of God into our hearts.

- (Romans 5:1–5 ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and **we rejoice in hope of the glory of God**. 3 **Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings**, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, **because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us**.