

## DIVINE LOVE DEFINED

If we do not understand divine love we will not know how to move in it.

*1 Corinthians 13:4–8* gives a beautiful definition of love: *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, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things (or covers all things), believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails....*

We need to examine the measure and quality of our love. *1 John 4:19* says, *we love, because He first loved us*. This does not mean that God loved us and we responded by saying, “That’s nice. I think I will love God too.”

The love of God is creative; it works by impartation. When God loves us, that very love becomes a part of our being, it becomes a part of our spirit and we do not love Him back in response with a human love, but we love Him back with His very own love, the love He first put within us. It may not be the same quantity or depth of love, but it is the same kind of love. It is an identical love. It is a divine love, inspired and created within our heart, and with this we love God back again.

*Love is patient.* That means there is no time limit on love. We never say we will love our brother or sister until they reach a certain degree of evil in their life. Love is patient; it does not allow us to have a certain time when you say, “Now I have had enough. From now on, no more love.”

Divine love has no exasperation level because it is a patient love. It is the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, longsuffering (Galatians 5:22–23). Longsuffering is the endurance of love. It never grows tired though circumstances may be very provoking.

Divine love *is kind*. The reason it is kind is because love always focuses on the other person's need and circumstances, and not on us. Divine love is self-less. We are unkind only when we are relating a certain circumstance to ourselves. We are unkind because self gets offended. Someone else's action may be sarcastic, and if we are without divine love we respond with sarcasm. On the other hand, someone can be very sarcastic to us, but if we are concerned about them we realize that they have a problem (they may have a great big point to prove), so we respond with a kindness, which means the end of the battle. Love does not have that quality in it that retaliates in a like manner, because it is kind. This is something we must realize; we need to understand divine love. Divine love is focused on the well-being of the other person. It is objective and not subjective.

Human love is all about self, how this person makes me feel, how this person benefits my life.

The little things are what really count when we deal with love. It is in the little things that our kindness shows through. How much people stand or fall by the way you respond to them!

Whenever we meet any of the brethren in church or on the street, or even a stranger, we need to be careful to acknowledge them. Divine love needs to become natural to our nature; we do not want to be acting out of character to who we are in Christ. Nor do anything that will cause another person to stumble. We are not talking about

offenses that are deliberate, but of the things that come through negligence, because we are being thoughtless, or not concerned enough to be alert to the other person.

We must always be thinking about the other person, because love is kind. We could walk into a church absentmindedly and pass six or eight people who are looking at us. If we do not look at them, if we do not give them any recognition, we may be depriving them of the one thing they may need more than anything else.

Divine Love does not have to lay hands on a person, prophesy over them, or do some great miracle for them. Many times all the person needs is the deep, kind expression that love brings.

When you tell a husband and wife to love each other, it could mean a thousand things. But if you tell a husband and wife to be tenderhearted and kind one to another, then you have covered something that reaches down to the basic roots of what love is really all about.

Divine Love *is not jealous*. This means love does not selfishly possess, but it relates to another person with trust. Jealousy always takes away from the purity of love. When we are jealous, we selfishly try to possess another person. It may be because in our own insecurity we feel that our relationship to another person must be possessive; we think we are not being loved if we cannot possess the one we love. This is not true. We must relate with trust, the kind of trust that accepts the love of another person with faith. Even if there seems to be some slight reasonable cause to doubt that love, love has to reach through with a basic trust. Everyone seems to carry something in the image he or she presents to others that does not seem to be wholly trustworthy.

We cannot be jealous. Jealousy has too many roots and responses that are in the carnal mind and the human nature. We must love a person and therefore determine that we will not be jealous over them. Jealousy can be over a place. People can become concerned about their own place so much that they became jealous when another person has a ministry or place they do not have. Love must accept love, and it must give love; it cannot selfishly possess.

Divine love *does not brag* it does not boast. It does not talk about all the things we may have done, or all the things that we have. Love is not focused upon self.

In our relationships to one another we should give love unselfishly to each other. We do not have the idea that when someone serves us we are the greater. We do not have the idea that when love is given to us, we have made a conquest. When someone has the true attitude toward love they do not brag. With true love, everyone is a winner and no one is a loser, whether it is an expression between a husband and wife, or the divine love that is expressed within the Body of Christ. The greatest is the one who serves (Matthew 23:11).

Divine Love *is not arrogant*. Arrogance is that volcano boiling over with self-importance. An arrogant person feels when love is received that it is all their due: "I am worthy to be loved. I deserve this love and adoration that everyone is giving to me. I am worthy of worship. They love me and I receive that love." But the Word says that love *is not arrogant*. It means love is not to be related to self-idolatry.

Divine Love *does not act unbecomingly*. This means when real love from God exists in people's hearts they do not embarrass or degrade the person they love, nor do they degrade themselves by some unbecoming act. We would not act unbecomingly in such a way that it would hurt others or injure them. We do not do anything that would bring a disgrace upon our mate, our children, or our grandchildren. It is not some self-righteous attitude; it is because we love them that we do not act unbecomingly. We do not act ungraciously.

Divine love, will always honor the place and the esteem the other person gives us, because love has to be with a measure of respect. We cannot accept another person's love, which means their respect, without acting accordingly. You will not act unbecomingly.

Divine love *does not seek its own*. Love does not have self-goals. It does not use another person's love to secure a place or to secure things for themselves. It does not prostitute itself. How many believers find themselves using other people's love in order to get their own way?

Divine love should be in our heart, so that we are not seeking our own. We do not love because there will be a certain exchange and we will get it back. Love does not keep records. We cannot say we have done so much; therefore, we expect so much.

Divine love *is not provoked*. Anger rises up in a person in the midst of circumstances. We often hear people say, "They can't do that to me." The anger rises up, and they are provoked. This definitely limits, or negates completely, the love they profess to have. Love does not rise up in anger over an injury, but love grieves over the offenses of another person. It weeps over them.

Someone could hurt us in the church, and we could flare up for the moment and say, “How could they do that to me, after I have tried to help them so much and have loved them so much?” But after that dies down, one thing stays in our heart: a grieving for the brother or sister. Love does not want to give up.

Divine Love *does not take into account a wrong suffered*; it forgets, it never focuses on it. We cannot say, “Well, I will forgive it, but I won’t forget it”, because love makes no account of a wrong suffered. Only the love of God can do that, but it is something we have to learn how to tune into, so that it is flowing in our hearts, this is what heals us.

Divine love *does not rejoice in unrighteousness*.... Are we glad when our enemy stumbles and falls? David had been a fugitive, fleeing from Saul and living in caves, living as a vagabond and an outlaw because of the king’s anger. Yet when he found out Saul was dead, he lifted up his voice and wept for Saul (II Samuel 1).

When Samuel turned away from King Saul, and Saul grabbed the prophet’s coat and it rent, Samuel said, “God has rent the kingdom from you and has given it to another” (I Samuel 15:28). Yet a long time after that God said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, seeing I have rejected him? Take your horn of oil and go to Bethlehem, where I will show you a boy you shall anoint to be king” (I Samuel 16:1–3). Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Whenever we are glad over another person’s exposure, or can open our mouth to gossip about another person’s fault or sin, we are showing no love at all.

Divine love *rejoices with the truth*. We need the truth that is spoken in love (Ephesians 4:15). Galatians 6:2 says, *Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ*. But it does not say to bear

down on one another's burdens. The truth is always expressed through love, with faith to help. That is the kind of love that rejoices in the truth.

Divine love *bears (covers) all things*. I Peter 4:8 says ...*love covers a multitude of sins*. If we find a person with a sin, we pray with them we help them. When Proverbs 28:13 says, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper*, it is talking about something else. Exposure is not the goal of love.

Divine love *believes all things*. Love has a faith that goes beyond appearances. When God gives a revelation, a word of wisdom, or a word of knowledge, about someone but there is still a fault in them, we do not abandon them. We have a faith to believe with them.

Divine Love does not only believe all things, but it *hopes all things*. Love is very slow to despair. It has an enduring quality and does not give up. Abraham in hope against hope believed in the promises of God (Romans 4:18). Many times we may be ready to give up, but something will keep us believing. If we have the love of God in our heart, we are an incurable believer. We will be like Jeremiah. His word was a reproach and a derision to him, and he said, "I am not going to speak anymore in His name." Then he said, *But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay*. Jeremiah 20:9. Something within us does not die. Even when we think our life is full of ashes, God blows upon it and the embers come to life again. It hopes all things.

Divine Love *endures all things*. It refuses to give up.

Divine Love *never fails....* Jesus *...having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.* John 13:1. Divine love never fails, but that does not mean there will never be storms. The Scripture does not say love always has the best judgment in the world; it says love never really fails.

Divine Love will never let disappointments or bitterness come in to choke it out. The final determining factor is not what happens to us, but it is the fact that we love the Lord. People lose out with God because they do not love Him enough. There are some people you could not drive out of the church. They will not take offense because they love the Lord so much. Other people run off, eager to take offense if someone raises an eyebrow against them. There is only one reason: no love. Love never fails. Ultimately it comes through.

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