

Love in All Relationships

The bride and groom stood at the altar during their wedding. A family member read the familiar scripture verse: *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).* Most of us can recite, or at least paraphrase this beautiful passage that describes a loving relationship.



It may surprise you to know that the writer, Paul, didn't pen these words for a wedding ceremony. He wrote them to the church at Corinth because relationships in that congregation lacked love. Love is not intended to be reserved only for a bride, but for all people we meet, including our enemies. It is a benchmark message for all Christians.

What if we substituted the word "I" for love, and then applied it as a plan of action for all of our interactions with people? Now it would say:

- I am patient.
- I am kind.
- I will not envy, I will not boast, and I will not be proud.
- I will not dishonor others.
- I will not be self-seeking.
- I will not be easily angered.
- I will not keep a record of wrongs.
- I will not delight in evil but rejoice in the truth.
- I will always protect, always trust, always hope and always persevere.

Wouldn't following this plan of action make a difference in the kind of person you are and your relationships with everyone?

What if you intentionally used these words as a guide to how you respond to others, including before every meeting and interaction with others? Everything about you would be changed. Isn't that exactly what Jesus wanted for us – to change us to become Godly people? Jesus came to this earth to change the world. He came to bring love to our relationships. All of them.

Question: Can you refocus your interactions to apply love in all relationships, even with those with whom you disagree?

Scripture: *You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:43-48).*

Prayer: Dear Lord, Jesus came to earth to show us how to love. He loved even those who sought to discredit him and eventually take his earthly life. Yet because of His love for us, He conquered evil and gave us a path to Heaven. Amen.