

#6 PROPERTIES OF LOVE: IS NOT PROVOKED, THINKS NO EVIL (1 Cor13:4-7)

- A. We've considered 3 reasons that validate spending so much time studying love.
1. God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). Love covers a multitude of sins (Prov 10:12; 17:9; Jas 5:20; 1 Pet 4:8). Love is the sign of true discipleship (John 13:34-35).
- B. A fourth reason would be that unity is impossible without love (e.g., Corinth).

Phil 2:2 – fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same *love*, being of *one accord*, of *one mind*. Col 3:14 – But above all these things put on *love*, which is the *bond of perfection* [perfect bond of unity (NASU) – binds them all together in perfect unity (NIV).]

1. See the relationship between love & the ability to have unity of mind & purpose – so we should strive for unity in the church.

2. In fact, if the church is not unified it does NOT have a message.

John 17:20-23 – I do not pray for these alone [His immediate disciples], but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, & I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, & You in Me; **that they may be made perfect in one** [“complete unity”, NIV], **that the world may know that You have sent Me**, & have loved them as You have loved Me.

3. It's important that we strive for unity, & that's why it's important that we study love, because love is the foundation of unity.

- C. The two aspects of love we are going to look have played significant roles in creating division when they are absent.

1. It's also significant that these two manifestations of love are more reactions than they are actions: love is not provoked (easily angered, NIV) & thinks no evil (keeps no record of wrongs, NIV).

2. All Christians are going to make mistakes, & all churches are going to have problems, but often-times division occurs not because people have made mistakes, but because they tried to handle those mistakes without love!

[What do you do when you get your feelings hurt? Paul says, “Love is not provoked (easily angered), & love thinks no evil (keeps no records of wrong).”]

I. LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED (EASILY ANGERED)

A. **Definition.** An English word from this Greek word *paroxuno* (par-ox-oo'-no) is *paroxysm* (par-ox-siz-em), which is a term that describes *a sudden attack, a violent outburst, or an intense convulsion.*

1. In Paul's day it meant an eruption of passion. So Paul is saying is that love doesn't suddenly burst out in anger. Love does not get easily provoked by wrongs. Love does not get upset quickly. Love is not always ready to fight.

2 Cor 12:20 – For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, & you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, **outbursts of anger**, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance & disorder.

B. **Exception.** Paul entered the city of Athens & as he looked around the same word “provoked” is used to describe how he felt. “*Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.*” (Acts 17:16). Paul's emotions erupted within him when he saw such a city full of idols. He was angry because idolatry is an affront & an insult to God.

1. What did he do? Did he start raking people over the coals on the street corner? No. In one of the most passionate appeals in the book of Acts he teaches the philosophers about Jesus Christ.
2. So it is good when strong passion erupts within us when God's character & kingdom is being maligned. But that should motivate us to lovingly communicate the truth rather than to explode with anger.

3. However, that's not what's behind most of our eruptions of anger, is it? It's not because God's kingdom is being violated, it's because mine is!

4. Anger is most often just a form of selfishness. When we are easily provoked, it shows a mindset of being more concerned about what a person is doing to me, than with being concerned for what I should be doing for that person.

5. Paul would boldly defend the righteousness of God, but at the same time Paul never cursed the people who stoned him. He never despised the Jews who threw him into prison. He never hated the soldiers who took him to Rome.

3. Paul was not advocating keeping anger in, & letting the resentment build till it explodes. No, he's saying love doesn't even let the anger start. It deals with it quickly so that it doesn't explode!

C. **Negative Example.** Let me show you an example when this kind of love wasn't exercised.

Acts 15:37-39 – Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark.³⁸ But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, & had not gone with them to the work.³⁹ Then **the contention became so sharp** [same word as 1 Cor 13:5, a sudden attack, a violent outburst, or an intense convulsion] that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark & sailed to Cyprus.

1. The sad thing is that they both men were correct to a degree, they both had valid reasons. But, both men were wrong in how they dealt with the disagreement.

2. Paul did exactly what he commanded us not to do.

Love is much too pure & holy,
Friendship is too sacred far,
For a moment's reckless folly,
Thus to desolate & mar.

Angry words are lightly spoken,
Bitter thoughts are rashly stirred,
Brightest links of life are broken,
By a single angry word.

D. **Positive Example.** We find a positive example of how love is not provoked in the Lord (1 Pet 2:19-24).

1. Jesus was continually the target of men's attacks, & yet His response was so uncharacteristic to man's –That's love.

[Is that how you respond to provocation?]

II. LOVE THINKS NO EVIL (IS NOT RESENTFUL)

A. **Definition.** The word “*thinks*” is *logizomai* (log-id'-zom-ahee); to take an inventory, i.e. estimate. The phrase here literally means, “*Love keeps no record of wrongs*” (NIV). “*Does not take into account a wrong suffered*” (NASU).

1. The phrase has to do with accounting principles. Paul is saying that “Love does not keep books on offenses.”

2. Sometimes we don't blow up when provoked; we just keep it inside & become resentful (angry, bitter, offended). We act like we didn't notice, but inside we are boiling & seething. And Paul said, “Love is not like that.”

B. **Model—God's Accounting.** In Romans 4:7-8, there is a quote from one of David's psalms where the same word is used that Paul used in 1 Cor. 13:5.

Rom 4:7-8 – Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, & whose sins are covered; 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall ***not impute sin*** [whose sin the Lord will never count against him].

2 Cor 5:18-19 – Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, & has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, ***not imputing their trespasses*** to them, & has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

1. What is on God's ledger for His faithful children?
In one word, “righteousness.”

Rom 4:5-6 – But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his ***faith is accounted for righteousness***, 6 just as David also describes ***the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness*** apart from works (cf. Eph 2:8-9)

2. This is not to say that we cannot fall from the state of righteousness, or fall from God's grace through disobedience ([Gal 5:4](#); [2 Pet 2:20-22](#)).
3. God imputes righteousness to those who live by faith, & faith is the obedient response to God's commands.

Jas 2:21-24 – Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 **And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."** And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

4. However, the passages in Romans & 2 Corinthians show us that if you are in Christ, & you are faithful to His charge, (including seeking His forgiveness when you sin, [1 John 1:6-9](#)) then God does not put your sin on His ledger. That's good news!

C. **Following God's Example.** Now that we know how God handles our offenses, how are we going to handle those times when we get offended?"

1. Satan has done more harm in the church through the people who were offended & harbored their bitterness than through the people who actually committed the offense, because that's where factions & divisions originate.
2. One author wrote, "Those who say they forgive & will not forget, simply bury the hatchet & leave the handle out for immediate use."
3. There is a tribe of warriors in the Polynesian Islands (South Pacific) who suspend from the roofs of their homes articles that remind them of their hatred for their enemies.
4. We can do something similar by hanging on to memories of things said & done that hurt us.

Eph 4:32 – Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just **as God in Christ forgave you.**

Col 3:13 – Bearing with one another, & forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as Christ forgave you** so you must also do.

1. How did God forgive us? Did He keep a book of all of our wrongs? No. He completely removed our offenses from His mind (**Heb 8:12**). And that is how we are to love one another

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson gave President Lincoln this great eulogy, *“His heart was as great at the world, but there was no room in it to remember an injury... to hold the memory of a wrong.”*

2. A man who once asked a blind girl to define forgiveness. She said, “Forgiveness is the odor the flowers give when they are trampled on.”

[Love does not strike back or retaliate. LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED. Love does not harbor bitterness; it only gives love in return when it's offended. LOVE THINKS NO EVIL, IT TAKES NO RECORD OF WRONG.]

Psalms 133 – A Song of Ascents Of David – ***Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*** 2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing — Life forevermore.

How sweet, how heavenly, is the sight,
When those who love the Lord
In one another's peace delight,
And so fulfill the word.

When, free from envy, scorn & pride,
Our wishes all above,
Each can his brother's failings hide,
And show a brother's love.

Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above;
And he's an heir of heaven who finds
His bosom glow with love.

CLOSING