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# The Prominence and Priority of Love



**W**ITHOUT LOVE BEING CENTRAL TO your faith, your trajectory in office will be less than it could be otherwise. Your spouse, family members and colleagues must know in their heart of hearts that you are first and foremost a loving person for you to be influential. As Paul will state in the opening portions of this passage, “without love I am nothing.” What then are the defining aspects of love that both you and I need to be continually working on and growing in? This study will take a close look at that.

  
Ralph Drollinger

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**Weekly Bible Studies**

**CABINET:** 7:00 AM Wednesdays Mornings. Location Undisclosed. *Light Refreshments Served.*  
**SENATE:** 8:00 AM Tuesdays, Rotating Offices of Senators. *Hot Breakfast Served.*  
**HOUSE:** Capitol H324: Monday or Tuesday Evenings after First Votes Back. *Dinner Served.*





MINISTRY UPDATE

HEAR CM'S BIBLE STUDIES  
READ by RADIO PRO:

Frank Sontag  
The Voice of  
Capitol Ministries



FRANK SONTAG, THE HIGHLY-acclaimed host of a popular live, drive-time Los Angeles CA radio show, is the commanding voice behind the new audio version of Capitol Ministries' Bible studies.

Ralph Drollinger, President and Founder of Capitol Ministries, authors the studies and teaches them weekly to U.S. Cabinet Members, Senators, and Representatives in Washington, D.C.

Searchable by topic, the Bible studies are available for download on the Capitol Ministries website, capmin.org, in four languages. The audio version is only available in English. Many Congressmen requested an audio version so they may listen to the Bible studies during travel time.

"We are especially blessed that our good friend Frank Sontag has agreed to be the voice of Capitol Ministries" Drollinger said. "In addition to being a man of God and a dedicated student of the Word, Frank is a highly-skilled professional who brings the perfect blend of tone and inflection to his readings which makes for a powerful presentation."

Sontag became a supporter of Capitol Ministries after he invited

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I. INTRODUCTION

Contextually, chapter 13 of 1Corinthians is sandwiched between two chapters of instruction by Paul to the Church at Corinth whose members, in their carnality, emphasized the practice of certain spiritual gifts above the practice of Christian *love*. Paul instructs them that *love* is preeminent. Again, it's what ties people together.

Of special note are the *love*-defining verbs that follow under the second outline point: "The Elements of *Love*." All 15 are in the present continuous tense "denoting actions and attitudes which have become habitual, ingrained gradually by constant repetition."<sup>1</sup> Born from this, and worthy of saying again:

**THESE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE ARE WORTHY OF CONSTANT REVIEW AND PRACTICE, ESPECIALLY WITH OUR SPOUSES, FAMILY MEMBERS, OFFICE STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES; AND AGAIN, LOVE IS WHAT TIES US TOGETHER AND SUSTAINS OUR RELATIONSHIPS.**

Given that repetition is the key to learning and ingraining, I like to go over this study often. Akin to driving a car, these specific, measurable aspects of *love* should become habitual responses in our lives — even though they are more difficult and take much longer to cultivate than the rote habits of driving a car.

Before examining the fundamental aspects germane to objectifying *love*, Paul first emphasizes — and appropriately so — the superiority of *love*. So let's look at that first.

II. THE ESSENTIALITY OF LOVE  
1CORINTHIANS 13:1-3

*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all*

*faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.*

In these three opening verses, Paul makes three stark comparisons in order to underscore the incomparability of *love*. These introductory remarks exclaim the dominance of *love* as a virtue over all other character traits. It is important, motivational and insightful to note that the three respective comparisons *are related to qualities necessary from a human perspective for one to succeed in the Capitol Community!* One must possess speaking skills (13:1), leadership (13:2) and self-sacrifice (13:3). As critical as those are:

**LOVE — FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE — IS OF GREATER IMPORTANCE!**

As interesting a comparison as this is, let's elaborate on each. The first comparison in verse 1 is to a person's oratory abilities.

A. LOVE OVER ORATION  
1CORINTHIANS 13:1

*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

One's *love* for others is more important than his speaking abilities. The metaphorical meaning of *becoming a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal* relates to empty philosophizing. Someone who knows and exclaims all the right answers but has no *love* is akin to the Church of Ephesus as described in Revelation 2:1-7. That church had all the right doctrine but had lost their *love* for God. Proverbs 3:3 summarizes the necessary virtues a Public Servant needs to possess: both a herald of truth and a man or woman of *love*. . . . *Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.* Solomon's use of the word *neck* and *heart*



bespeak of both *love* (kindness) and *truth* as being a part of one's outward and inward adornment. The meaning of the Hebrew word for *heart* (*leb*) includes the aspects of one's intellect, emotion and will.

**THE MATURE BELIEVER  
POSSESSES LOVE AND TRUTH  
SIMULTANEOUSLY IN  
FULL MEASURE.**

The loving Public Servant, because his or her priorities are straight, is neither inwardly nor outwardly *a noisy gong or clanging cymbal* — even when he or she heralds the truth on the floor, such speech should be couched in words of *love*.

**How To Become A  
Marginalized Public Servant**

In my 12 years of ministry in the California State Capitol, and the 7 years in the U.S. Capitol, I have observed certain members who become marginalized, ineffective and discarded by others because they double down on truth at the expense of love. I beg you not to follow in their footsteps. It is essential that you are as loving as you are truthful!

**B. LOVE OVER LEADING  
13:2**

*If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*

It is not a stretch to interpret the second verse of chapter 13 to be a statement of the primacy of *love* over leadership. A Public Servant who knows the Word of God and who is acutely *knowledgeable* of all the policy issues and possesses *faith* — visionary leadership for his or her personal and party's future — who possesses not a genuine, heart-felt *love* for people, Scripture states emphatically herein, amounts to *nothing*.

The phrase *so as to remove mountains* is Pauline hyperbole<sup>2</sup> (also seen in verse 7) intended to emphasize the conveyable meaning “to make what seems impossible possible.”<sup>3</sup> You may be a great leader or an up-and-coming great leader in American government — one who may be able to achieve what others deem impossible, a man or woman of great *faith* — but never forget that it is more important to *love* people, especially those who have nothing to do with helping you to accomplish your leadership objectives. Don't kid yourself into thinking that people don't pick up on self-centeredness.

**C. LOVE OVER SELF-  
SACRIFICE 13:3**

*And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.*

For sure, one who gives sacrificially of time, talent and treasure is to be exalted above the those who do not. But in comparison to *love*, sacrificial qualities are of lesser significance. In fact, a life of personal sacrifice for whatever objectives wanes in comparison to a life of loving others. One who lacks *love* is woefully deficient.

**“LOVE IS THE INDISPENSIBLE  
ADDITION WHICH ALONE  
GIVES WORTH TO ALL OTHER  
CHRISTIAN GIFTS.”<sup>4</sup>**

Lord, help us to get this — to work on being more loving! Life in the Capitol, in the community, or in the home without *love* is *nothing* (*oudeis*) meaning “nothing at all.” How are you doing as a preeminently loving person — a *lover* of people and especially your mate if you are married? What follows the essentiality of *love* in the inspired mind of the Apostle Paul are the biblically-objective indications of *love*; they should help to answer the question “am I a loving person?” This supersedes analyzing subjective feelings that may or may not accurately reflect one's real *love* quotient.

♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

**1Corinthians 13**

*Read 1Corinthians 13.*



*May you conscientiously and regularly cultivate the habitual traits of Christ's unending love in your personhood!*

*Continued from page 2*

Drollinger to be a guest on his show nearly two years ago. Since then Drollinger has made several appearances.

“The name of my show is misleading,” Sontag said. “Even though we talk about issues and news and struggles of faith, and even though we have guests, the program is only about one — it's all about Jesus Christ.

“Jesus is the answer to everything.

“We try to focus listeners to the cross of Christ as we navigate through issues, but ultimately Jesus is the only answer and that is what the show is about.”

The Frank Sontag show is broadcast live from 4-6 p.m. (Pacific Time Zone) Monday through Friday on KKLA 99.5 FM in Los Angeles CA, or can be heard on podcast at [kkla.com](http://kkla.com).

Through Drollinger's on-air appearances, Sontag learned more about Capitol Ministries and its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ in the political arena of the world, and quickly became

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John Randolph of Roanoke



“I am at last reconciled to my God and have assurance of His pardon through faith in Christ, against which the very gates of hell cannot prevail. Fear hath been driven out by perfect love.”

— John Randolph of Roanoke, Congressman under Presidents John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson; U.S. Senator; diplomat.

Hugh A. Garland, *The Life of John Randolph of Roanoke* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1853), Vol. II, p. 99, to Francis Scott Key on September 7, 1818.

### III. THE ELEMENTS OF LOVE

#### A. FROM 1CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

*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, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

After first stating for openers what *love* is: *love is patient* and *kind*, Paul describes the characteristic elements of *love’s* non-existence; the following seven descriptors on this inspired-by-God passage list what *love is not*. Sometimes the best way to describe what something is, is to state what it’s not.

After briefly examining and defining all of these virtues in 1Corinthians 13 we will review Colossians 3:12-14 for additional insights relative to the emotional aspects of *love* in order to round out the study. (Because *love* is emotive as well — but let’s be careful not to get the cart before the horse.)

**KEEP IN MIND THAT EMOTIONS, BOTH GOOD AND BAD, ALWAYS STEM FROM ONE’S THINKING, EITHER PROPER OR IMPROPER, RESPECTIVELY.**

Given our cultural misunderstanding of *love*, it is essential for both you and me to approach and teach on *love* in this order: 1Corinthians 13 before Colossians 3.

##### 1. *Love is patient* (*makrothumeo*)

Literally “suffers long.” This first characteristic is the ability to be taken advantage of by a person many times and not be upset. The root word means “to persevere.” James uses this same Greek word in describing the attitudinal response of the prophets of old whose words went unheeded by their peers

(cf. Ja. 5:8ff.). Program your mind with Philippians 1:6:

*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

The truth of this passage will help you to sober to the fact that God is not through sanctifying the other person — nor am I perfect either! So be *patient*, not condemning and judgmental! Remember too that since Christ forgave your sins — past, present and future, that you must find room in your heart to forgive others who have wronged you. To be longsuffering, *patient* with another’s shortcomings is to be categorically loving!

##### 2. *Love is kind* (*chresteuomai*)

The counterpart to *patience*, is *kindness*. The Greek word means “to show one’s self mild.” This characteristic is a willingness to give to another, including one’s enemies, to be gentle and slow in avenging. The Greek root means “one desires and works for another’s welfare.” It is the idea of good will, generous responses and actions, in contradistinction to holding onto past bad memories and thence being bothered by another in the future (aka “he or she gets on my nerves”).

##### 3. *Love is not jealous* (*zeloo*)

Literally the root means “earnestly desire.” Contextually, *jealousy* is similar to covetousness as it is used here, carrying the idea of envy. It is a desire to have what another possesses as well as fearing someone take what you have. To the contrary:

**SCRIPTURE COMMANDS US TO NOT WANT WHAT ANOTHER POSSESSES, AND TO GIVE TO OTHERS WHAT YOU POSSESS.**

We are to *rejoice with those who rejoice* (Rom. 12:15). Choose to be glad for those who have — be they more talented, successful, popular or beautiful — versus jealous or envious.



Are you the biggest cheerleader of your mate, children, grandchildren and colleagues?

**4. Love does not brag**  
(*perpereuomai*)

Literally “to talk conceitedly.” The mature in Christ have forgotten about self-importance. Center on others, not self. Proverbs 27:2 states:

*Let another praise you and not your own mouth, a stranger and not your own lips.*

Further, be characterized by asking another sincere questions (cultivate personal curiosity), talking little about self. Don’t be quick to add your personal stories to every conversation; in the crowds in which you circulate, everyone already gets the point; they don’t need to hear your long-winded illustration that includes individuals they know nothing about. It is better to spend your time asking questions of others and giving short answers when asked a question. *Love does not brag.*

**THINK WHEN APPROACHING A CONVERSATION, “WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS PERSON?” VERSUS “WHAT CAN I TELL THEM ABOUT ME?”**

**5. Love is not arrogant**  
(*phusioo*)

Literally, “to puff or blow up.” William Carey who translated the Bible into 34 languages was once put down in a banquet. An arrogant man said to him, “Mr. Carey, I understand that you were once a shoemaker.” Carey replied, “I was not a shoemaker, only a shoe repairman!” Strive to be big-hearted, not big-headed. Make it a habit to play-down self in the presence of others. Proverbs 16:18 states:

*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.*

Reciprocally, keep in mind James 4:6:

*God . . . gives grace to the humble.*

**6. Love does not act unbecomingly** (*aschemoneo*)

This is the characteristic of someone who cares so little for others around him that he acts without proper decorum for the occasion. It is to act rudely or impolitely, maybe even crudely. Work always on sensitivity for others. Always display respect for another regardless of their position or ability to assist in your objectives.

**7. Love does not seek its own**  
(*zeteo heautou*)

Jesus *did not come to be served, but to serve* (Mt. 20:28). Be occupied with others’ needs, not yours. Philippians 2:3 states:

*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.*

Herein is boilerplate Christianity! Are your mate’s or colleagues objectives more important to you than your own?

**WHAT WILL YOU DO BY WAY OF TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE FOR YOUR MATE OR COLLEAGUE THAT WILL SPELL OUT TO HER OR HIM IN NO UNMISTAKABLE ACTIONS THAT YOU CHERISH HIM OR HER ABOVE YOURSELF?**

One of the measurable aspects of *love* is not seeking your self-interests all the time. Coach Wooden used to stress the habit of doing a kind deed on a daily basis for someone who in no way could repay you. That is an excellent habit because it keeps reminding us of this truth: *Love does not seek its own.*

**8. Love is not provoked**  
(*paroxuno*)

Literally “to irritate, arouse to anger.” *Love* guards against being upset, irritated or angered. Remember, *love* is kind. A person who is intent on having his or her own way is easily *provoked* when he or she is denied what they want.<sup>5</sup>

*Continued from page 3*  
a supporter.

“One of the greatest lies of the enemy is that Christians should stay out of politics,” Sontag said. “Even though Scripture clearly dictates that believers are to be involved politically, a number of men and women in Christ still don’t know that.

“These times are troubling to people of faith when you look at some political policies and how the secular mindset is dominating our culture. It is important that people on the grass roots level, men and women who love the Lord, not only seek out political office, but are mentored in the Lord too.

“We desperately need Capitol Ministries and its mission to reach political leaders in these turbulent times.”

Sontag’s radio career has spanned 32 years, and the majority of it was spent hosting shows that promoted the new age movement.

“I raged against God in every way, shape and form,” Sontag said. “I led scores of people away from Christ. I used to mock Him.”

Sontag made a commitment to follow Jesus Christ at the age of 52 after a pastor friend challenged him to consider whether he was right with God if he died on that day.

Excited by living a life for Christ, Sontag began to learn more about God and his Word. At the invitation of a professor he knew, Sontag audited graduate classes in Christian Apologetics at Biola, a private evangelical Christian University. He has made a lifelong commitment to Bible study.

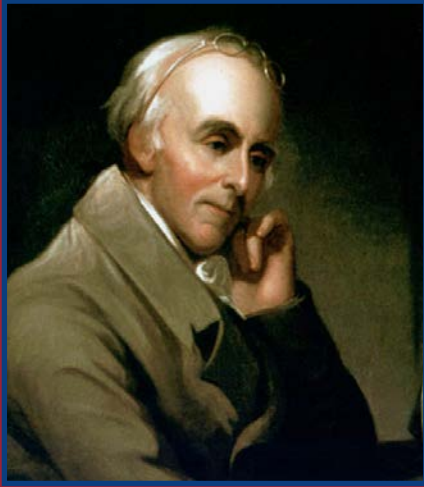
At the prompting of a friend, author Lee Strobel, Sontag wrote his own book *Light the Way Home: My Incredible Ride from New Age to New Life*. A major motion picture has been made of Strobel’s book, *The Case for Christ: A Journalist’s Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*, and will be released this spring.

Sontag finds it poignant that he will be the voice of Capitol Ministries’ Bible studies.

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Benjamin Rush



“The Gospel of Jesus Christ prescribes the wisest rules for just conduct in every situation of life. Happy they who are enabled to obey them in all situations! . . . My only hope of salvation is in the infinite transcendent love of God manifested to the world by the death of His Son upon the Cross. Nothing but His blood will wash away my sins [Acts 22:16]. I rely exclusively upon it. Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly! [Revelation 22:20].”

— Benjamin Rush, Signer of the Declaration of Independence; Surgeon General of the Continental Army; ratifier of the U.S. Constitution; ‘Father of American Medicine’; Treasurer of the U.S. Mint; ‘Father of Public Schools Under the Constitution.’

Benjamin Rush, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush*, George W. Corner, editor (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), pp. 165-166.

9. *Love does not take into account a wrong suffered (logizomai)*

The Greek has the idea of not “ledgering” of the *wrongs* someone has done and keeping a log. To the contrary:

**AN IMPORTANT EARLY CHURCH FATHER, CHRYSOSTOM, REMARKED THAT A WRONG DONE AGAINST LOVE IS LIKE A SPARK THAT FALLS INTO THE SEA AND IS EXTINGUISHED FOREVER.**

The famous saying, “Don’t get mad, get even” illustrates the opposite idea being conveyed here. If you are a Christian, your response must be to forgive and forget. Blatantly lacking in euphemistic prose, I call this concept “flushing the toilet.” Do not engender in one’s self a memory akin to an elephant. Praise God He takes not into consideration our past sin! Clasp onto the virtue of Christ’s forgiveness enables one to forsake the bondage of bitterness. Don’t keep a **log** — it is not *loving*. Paul, who was more ill-treated than you will ever be, said, *forgetting what lies behind* (Phil 3:13). Can the same be said of you? Do you instead *press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (Phil. 3:14)?

10. *Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness (adikia)*

Isaiah warns, *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil* (5:20). It is not loving to sacrifice *truth*. One should not applaud the presence of sin in another. For sure the biblical concept of *love* is not emotional sentimentality devoid of truth.

11. *Love rejoices with the truth (aletheia)*

*Love* cares that what another believes is *truthful*. It is not *loving* to allow another to be hurt by lies, since what one believes (and then acts upon) is determinative to person-

al, familial and national destinies. It follows that *love* does not *rejoice* with erroneous thinking.<sup>6</sup>

The following remaining four elements of *love* are stated in a literary device known as hyperbole, exaggeration in order to make a strong point. (See endnote No. 2). The repetition of *all things* therefore relates to *all things* within the confines of God’s righteousness, will and tolerance.

12. *Love bears all things (stego)*

Literally “to cover.” *Love covers a multitude of sins* (cf. Prov. 10:12; 1Peter 4:8).

**YOU CAN MEASURE YOUR LOVE FOR ANOTHER AS TO HOW QUICKLY YOU ARE WILLING AND APT TO FORGIVE AND FORGET, TO MOVE ON RELATIVE TO ANOTHER’S FAULTS.**

God’s nature, and hopefully the believer’s actions must emulate God’s revealed character in Psalm 103:12:

*As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

It follows that in order for us to be as loving as Jesus expects us to be that we be forgiving and forgetful.

13. *Love believes all things (pisteuo)*

*Love* trusts, it is confident; it isn’t suspicious or cynical. *Love* trusts even after past hurts for having trusted. It is better to trust and be hurt again than to end up living life alone and bitter. Keep taking risks in your relationships!

14. *Love hopes all things (elpizo)*

Literally “to anticipate with pleasure.” Jesus did not take Peter’s failure as final. The believer continues to *hope* that sinners will someday turn from their sin and that believers will some-



day mature in Christ-likeness, for to lose *hope* is equivalent to losing *love*. Again, and similar to the virtue of *patience*, *I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus*, stated Paul in Philippians 1:6. Remember, as long as God's grace remains operational in this world, human failure is never final. People do learn from their mistakes; *hope* for the best in a person relative to his or her future. To carry in you such an optimistic attitude toward others is to be *loving!*

#### 15. *Love endures all things* (*hupomeno*)

This Greek word was used of an army that held its position no matter what the cost. *Love* holds fast to the one it *loves*. It will stand against all opposition. *Love* remains loyal even when the object of *love* is less than perfect.

**THESE FIFTEEN VIRTUES MAY SEEM SOMEWHAT MECHANICAL. THEY WILL HOWEVER PRODUCE THE EMOTIONS OF LOVE THAT ARE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO EVERY HUMAN BEING AND NECESSARY TO TYING US TOGETHER FOR THE LONG RUN!**

Keep in mind, theologically speaking, all of these attributes of *love* already and completely exist in the life of the child of God per Colossians 2:10a. The believer is made positionally perfect before God at the point of salvation. How obedient one is to his new God-given, loving positional perfection in his everyday practice is a matter of obedience. All that to say this: No believer can reason, "I am just not a very loving person." All believers are perfect in their *love*: How obedient are you to your new nature in Christ? is the more appropriate self-analysis.

#### IV. THE EXUBERANCE OF LOVE

Colossians 3:12-14 speaks to the passions of *love*:

*So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;*

*bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*

In light of all the perfect and sacrificial *love* Jesus Christ has displayed to and for the world (John 3:16) God expects nothing less in response from His followers.

*Heart of compassion* (*splagchnon oiktirmos*) speaks of the seat of emotions. These elements that follow in this passage are very similar to the ones previously listed in 1Corinthians 13, but are listed here in the context of having a heart of compassion.

#### **GOD'S EXUBERANT, SUPERNATURAL LOVE IS POURED OUT VIA THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER.**

Again, and importantly, all of the elements of *love* presently exist in the believer's heart (cf. Eph. 1:3; Col. 2:10; 2Pe. 1:3-4). It isn't a matter of gaining them; it is a matter of taking ownership and using them!

The *essential*, *elemental* and *exuberant* aspects of *love*, as listed in Corinthians and Colossians, are all characteristic ingredients of the truly redeemed, and they should naturally flow forth in and from the life of every Spirit-filled follower of Christ!

#### V. THE ETERNITY OF LOVE

Now let us return to the closing passages on *love* as found in 1Corinthians 13.

##### A. *LOVE NEVER FAILS*

**LOVE IS PERMANENT. IT IS AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD, WHICH MEANS IT NEVER WITHERS OR DECAYS. IT IS NOT AS IF LOVE IS IMPORTANT TO ONE GENERATION AND NOT ANOTHER.**

*Continued from page 5*

It was only six months ago that he signed up on the Capitol Ministries website to receive Drollinger's Bible studies via email.

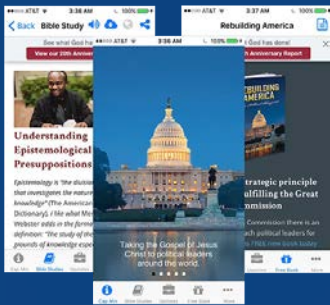
"They are very powerful," Sontag said. "We all need to study the Word and Ralph is particularly gifted in teaching.

"Without a doubt his Bible studies have enriched my life. I feel like I am back in class when I read them. And often, I go back and re-read and re-read and re-read them."

"I am grateful to be a part of Capitol Ministries and the work being done for the Kingdom. These are turbulent times, and yet, before us is a new horizon for our country and the Church. I am excited and hopeful and looking forward to seeing God move and being a part of that." **cm**



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The believer should view this as a communicable attribute from God. Love is to be present and active in the life of every believer at all times and in every generation. Likened to Jesus we need possess eternal, unfailing, ever-present love! Agape love is part of the believer's very nature! May these virtues be increasingly unfolding in your life! May you conscientiously and regularly cultivate the habitual traits of Christ's unending love in your personhood!

The 1Corinthian 13 passages go on to contrast the importance of love with the spiritual gifts in the body of Christ (which is another study with a great deal of complexity).

May God help you to put on the very nature every believer already possesses: the essential, elemental, exuberant and eternal aspects of love. Amen! cm

(ENDNOTES)

- 1 Prior, David The Message of 1 Corinthians (Nottingham, England: Inter Varsity Press, 1985) p. 229-30
2 In the literary genre of Scripture, as in the best of writing today, various figurative devices are inculcated to communicate both effectively and artfully. These devices would include (among many) the use of simile, allegory, ellipsis, metaphor, paradox, irony, euphemisms, etc. The figurative device used by Paul in 1 Cor. 13:2 & 7 is hyperbole. The people of the Middle East in ancient time used intensified exaggerated expressions to convey a thought with more force. An additional example would be what the Apostle John states in his Gospel about the life of Christ, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (21:25). (cf. E.W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible [London: Messrs, Eyre, and Spottis-woods, 1889], pp. 171ff.) Such insights defy a wooden literalistic approach (of which Evangelicals are often falsely accused) to biblical interpretation/hermeneutics.
3 H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, 1922-1928. As quoted in Barrett, C.K. The First Epistle To The Corinthians, Blacks New Testament Commentary Series (London: Hendrickson Publishers, 1968) p. 301
4 Ibid, p. 303. This quote in its tightest context relates to the point of chapter 13 in comparison to chapters 12 and 14. The application of the quote is nonetheless an appropriate capstone as used in the placement of these notes.
5 The exception to being not provocative is if another is maligning or contradicting God's Word. Being provoked over such is akin to righteous indignation.
6 Herein biblical Christianity conflicts with Postmodernism in that the Christian faith is based upon perspicuous moral absolutes as explicated in and through propositional truth, i.e. infallible and inerrant biblical revelation.

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