

Examples of Biblical Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 shows the futility of trying to live the Christian life or do Christian service without love. Without love, we are "empty gongs", "nothing" and our work "profits nothing". There is no reward given for any work done without love. All labor done without love is done in vain.

Three times in the Sermon on the Mount (when you do a good deed and sound a trumpet, when you pray so that you can be seen, when you advertise the fact that you are fasting), Jesus said that those who do something for show have their reward. Any recognition on earth is all they get.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 tells of love that never fails - the love that does count with God.

Love suffers long - is patient - endures long - ABRAHAM

And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise (Hebrews 6:15).

Abraham left his homeland and followed God. It was 25 years after God promised a son from Sarah that Isaac was born. Patience is understanding God is in charge and His timing is perfect.

Love is kind: DAVID

Now David said, "Is there anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (2 Samuel 9:1)

What David did for Mephibosheth was done purely for the love of Jonathan. David was king. He did not need to bless Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth's grandfather tried to kill David. David's friendship with Jonathan was so strong that he could not rest until he had discovered if there was anyone in Saul's household that he might bless - simply because he loved Jonathan.

Love does not envy: CAIN, JOSEPH'S BROTHERS, ANDREW AND PETER

CAIN: And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry and his countenance fell... and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him (Genesis 4:4-8).

JOSEPH's brothers were an example of jealousy and envy. They sold him into slavery, broke their father's heart, lived with their sin for years until Joseph called them to Egypt and forgave them. That's what we have done to God. We break His heart with sin, but His love forgives.

These examples of envy and jealousy were of brothers. How easy it must be for a brother to be jealous of another - even in the family of God. Thankfully, we have the example of Andrew and Peter.

ANDREW AND SIMON PETER. Once Andrew met Jesus, he immediately went to get Peter to introduce him to the Lord. We hear little of Andrew after that. Peter is the brother we hear the most about. There was no hint of jealousy in Andrew's heart. He loved the Lord and he loved his brother.

Love does not parade itself - does not boast - is not puffed up - is not proud: THE TAX COLLECTOR

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men - extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all I possess.' And the

*tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, **this man** went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:10-14).*

... He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

Love does not behave rudely - does not dishonor others: JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly (Matthew 1:19). An humble and obedient man, Joseph believed God.

Love does not seek its own - is not self-seeking - does not insist on its own rights: JONATHAN

Jonathan was an example of someone who truly loved David. It was evident because he was not jealous of David nor did he envy his talents, his prestige, or his relationship with his father. His love for David was truly unselfish. Jonathan was the king's son but did not insist on his own rights.

Love is not provoked - easily angered - is not touchy, fretful or resentful: NEHEMIAH

When Nehemiah was told that the survivors ... left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The walls of Jerusalem [were] also broken down, and its gates... burned with fire (1:3), he wept, mourned, fasted and prayed. Nehemiah had a place of privilege with King Artaxerxes. For his own convenience, he could have stayed right where he was, but for the love of his God and his countrymen, he was compelled to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Not only would this be a tangible assignment; it would also give encouragement to those who had survived the captivity.

During the rebuilding of the wall, many tried to ridicule him, stop him, and told lies about him so that he would not accomplish this task. Nehemiah never gave in to those attempts. He remained focused, knowing that God would deal with those who were attempting to stop him.

Instead of being provoked, Nehemiah prayed, set guards around the work that was being done, and continued doing the work. Four times Nehemiah asked God to remember what he was doing and why. Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for its services! (Nehemiah 13:14).

Love thinks no evil - keeps no record of wrongs - takes no account of the evil done to it: JOB

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1) Job's "friends" angered God by the advice they gave to Job. Job did not hold that against them. And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before (Job 42:11).

As believers, Satan has lost the battle for our souls, but not for our influence. Satan wants believers to quit doing God's work God's way. Over time, as Satan tempts us to be discouraged, live a worldly life, or just take credit for what the Spirit is doing through us, he has succeeded in our good deeds being done in vain and even having a negative influence on others. Jesus' condemnation of the church in Ephesus was "You have left your first love". As we call on others to repent and trust Jesus, we must also repent if Christ is not our first love and our only reason for what we do.