

The Body of Christ, Spiritual Gifts, and Spiritual Maturity, Part 13
“Love is not Provoked”
1 Corinthians 13:5

The Apostle’s Teaching on the Characteristics of Love – vv. 4-7 Overview:

1. Everything in these verses is behavioral.
2. Paul is interested to apply these things especially in relationships in the body of Christ.
3. Paul begins his portrait of love as it shows itself amidst the sins and offenses of a fallen world.
4. “Love” – Gk. AGAPE
5. These things are impossible to the flesh! cf. Gal. 5:16-26

Love is not provoked; it is focused upon the blessing of the one loved!

1. Love is not Provoked

“love...is not provoked”

(1) Defined:

- Gk: PAROXUNETAI → PAROXUNO - to be irritable or to be greatly upset

- Not quick-tempered
- Not easily angered

- ESV: “is not irritable”
- KJV: “is not easily provoked”

The vb only here and Acts 17:16 *“Paul(s)...spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.”*

- cf. the noun PAROXUSMOS Act 15:39 - A sharp contention.

cf. our word: “paroxysm” - a fit, an attack; a sudden violent emotion or action, an outburst, eruption

- Assumes a fleshly or sinful action which comes against me;
some action or behavior which might justifiably exasperate.

(2) When one is easily provoked, irritable, what is operating?

- 1- I am preoccupied with my own interests, my own agenda;
I am busied with “seeking my own things” (Note the flow of thought here!)

-2- I am self-centered, rather than Christ-centered.

- Then I will view any offense against me as a major issue!
- I will find it impossible to forbear and impossible to truly forgive.

2. Love is Characterized by a Disposition to Bless!

What is it about love that makes it “unprovokable?”

(1) Love is not taken up with “self-agenda” but with Jesus’ agenda.

It is focused upon, intent upon the blessing of the one loved; that is the priority!
It is taken up with the eternal interests of my brother or sister.

(2) Love is selfless.

It is therefore not “primed” to defend its own interests.
It is therefore *not* easily offended.

- Offenses are viewed in a proper perspective!

- There is a disposition to forgive and to forget.

**(3) Love is possessed of kind thoughts toward a brother.
The desire for my brother’s blessing is the dominant desire.**

- Thus I am regularly praying for God’s blessing upon my brother.
- Thus my actions indicate my desire for blessing upon my brother.

(4) For these reasons, love appreciates the nature of the church and *body life*:

Love is not looking for a church in which there are no sinners!
Love *sees Christ* in one’s brothers and sisters! Love sees what my brother can be, will be!

Further Application