

The Body of Christ, Spiritual Gifts, and Spiritual Maturity, Part 12
“Love does not Seek Its Own”
1 Corinthians 13:5

The Apostle’s Teaching on the Characteristics of Love – 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 does not seek its own; love seeks the good and the interests of others!

1. Love does not Seek Its Own

“love...does not seek its own”

(1) Defined:

- Literally: “does not seek its own things” - ESV: “does not insist on its own way”
- **Not busied, preoccupied with one’s own interests**
- **Not striving for one’s own interest or advantage**
- **It is not selfish; it is not self-absorbed**

Note: There *is* a proper “self-interest,” but it is a self-interest subdued and reined in by the gospel and by the lordship of Christ and the glory of Christ.

- **A parallel reference:** 1 Cor. 10:24 *“Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.”*
- **Context: Paul counsels against an abuse of Christian liberty**
 - Engaging in an activity concerning which I have liberty of conscience, but offending my brother who is of a weaker conscience.
 - An activity may be lawful for me according to my conscience, but not helpful or edifying to my brother!

(2) Fleshed out:

- 1- **When I am preoccupied with my own interests, I am *not able* to think on the interests or the good of others!**

- 2- **When I am preoccupied and busied with my own interests, I am *not serving myself*, not Jesus!**

- 3- **When I am preoccupied and busied with my own interests, in some significant measure I will be oblivious to, disinterested in body life.**

That one who is pre-occupied with his or her own interests always stays in *relative* isolation. Not vitally involved with the Body of Christ.

- **A common form: One who gravitates to “cliques”**

- **In its extreme: The spiritual “loner”**

2. Love seeks the Good, the Interests of Others!

The Corresponding Positive Operation of Love:

- (1) Love is careful to “*think on the things of others,*” **not** taken up with one’s own things.

- (2) Love *serves and cares for* the needs and interests of other brothers or sisters:

- (3) Love actively seeks the good, the well-being of other brothers and sisters.

- (4) **For these reasons, love is *attuned to body life:***

Love sees every member as vital!
Love is interested in others in the Body of Christ; wants to bring encouragement to others!
Love is never a “loner,” a “maverick.” The “loner” really cares only about his own things.

Further Application