



Uncommon Sense 1 Corinthians
Wk. 35 Love in Action: The Church's Pursuit of Agapē Love
By Pastor Jody May 02/01/2026

1 Corinthians 1:25 - For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Uncommon Sense - *"God's Wisdom over man's pride through a Flawed Church."*

[CALL TO HEAR]

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 ESV

⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Pastor - "People of God, this is the Word of God."

People - "Thanks be to God."

Pray

Illustration

In the words of one of our modern poets, **"How do you know when it's love? I can't tell you, but it lasts forever."** That's the dilemma of man, man wants love, man knows he needs love, man knows he should give love, but he has no idea how to generate such love. What he does know though, that if it's true love it never dies, it is eternal. You can survive an earthly existence without love, but you can never really thrive without it. Love is what makes life worth living, and your never really living until you find it.

What's interesting is that the author of this song, the thing in which he desires is unattainable **BUT** for **GOD**. As Pastor Onan pointed out last week there are several words in the Greek that describes love. You have *eros*, which is romantic desire and where we get our word "erotic." You have *philia* (fill-e a), which is brotherly affection, and what the city of Philadelphia is named after. And you have *storgē* (store-gay), which means familial



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attachment. All these loves though are based in physical limitations, among men, to be experienced only during one's earthly lifetime and always vacillates in degrees.

The point is, that modern day poet has experienced lesser loves, but he still longs for something more, he wants a love that goes past physical limitations, past a lifetime, past the boundaries of space and time, he doesn't know how to get it, but he knows it is there. That is what we call **general revelation**¹ folks, that is the ability to look out at creation, see its' timelessness, know that there had to be a creator behind it, and therefore that 'being' has an ability to do things you cannot. One of those things is to love someone beyond life, beyond constraints, beyond just a friendly or familial love, but to love deeply. That is called **Agapē love**; a self-generated, voluntary, sacrificial, and covenant love. (used 17 times in Chp 13)

Agapē love is not given because you gave first. **Agapē love** is set in motion by the giver/*self-generated*, it comes from and is generated from a source untainted and uncoerced by those seeking it. It is neither compelled by others, it is strictly *voluntary*, no bribery brings it forth, no pleading can cause its' birth, it must come from the free will of the originator. Because of the nature of giving first, without the recognition nor desire of another, it is always a *sacrifice* to do so. It will cost the giver to give it, not the recipient to receive, it comes without price tag although a price has been paid. Lastly, because of its' divine sourcing it is covenantal in nature, meaning the obligations to love like this is not based in the target of such affections, but the conditions to love are based solely in the giver. Therefore, **Agapē love** cannot be tainted, for it comes from a pure source and once found cannot be lost for it is not dependent upon the receiver, it is not dependent on you.

The problem, how do we know when it's Agapē love?
The Answer: You will be changed by it when it finds you.

What we want to discover today, is what does that change look like inside of you? Does your life reflect the **Agapē love** of God? How do you know if it has

¹General revelation and special revelation are the two ways God has chosen to reveal Himself to humanity. General revelation refers to the general truths that can be known about God through nature.



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found you? Because here is the reality that we learned last week from Pastor Onan if we fail to take this seriously: *"Without love, even the most impressive Christian gifts, sacrifices, and achievements amount to nothing."* Without love we produce nothing (1), without love, we are nothing (2), and without love, we gain nothing (3). In the end this teaches us the math found in those first 3 verses; *Life minus love equals NOTHING. Zero. Zilch. Nada.* And the only type of Love that fixes this is **Agapē love...**

What we will show from the text today is three different tests, or statements about love, to help us all ascertain if this love has truly found us. The first is **Agapē love thinks of others before self**. True **Agapē love** doesn't start with the thought "what am I getting out of this" but it starts with "what you need to get out of this". Secondly, **Love always praises good over evil**. That is easier said than done, but the fact is, no matter if it benefits you or not, no matter if it makes your life easy or not, true **Agapē love** rejoices when good triumphs over evil, even if that outcome works against your fleshly desires. Lastly, **Love hangs on when others bail out**. Family, we know that to be true huh? How many of us have been left stone cold when what we needed the most was someone to love us? Good news, when you discovered you have been loved that way you are ready to love others that way! This can all be summed up in this main point today of these passages.

MP:

**Love is a continual action that never surrenders
to the Devil, Darkness, nor Despair.**

Agapē love is a continual action that will never quit on you, and when you got it, you will never stop doing it.

1. Love thinks of others before self.

What you cannot see in these next three verses unless you look at the original languages, is that **Agapē love** every time is used as a VERB when Paul is speaking. That is Love displayed AS an ACTION. Ok let me perhaps clear up a misunderstanding of what love is. **First off Love is more than a feeling.** Love is identified by what it does and what it refuses to do.



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In our modern vernacular we have gotten very comfy looking at people in our everyday lives saying things like, "I love you man, brother, bruh, muchacho, girl, kitty, Dawgs, etc." In other words, it has become slang to mean, *I feel good when I am around you and I appreciate you making me smile*. Perhaps we can call that **philia love**, but that is not Agape. Personally, I try to refrain from saying it too much I would rather people know I really love them and that I mean something more than a friendly love, because to me love IS more than a feeling.

So, love is MORE than a Feeling because it is perceived as an action, and **what type of actions defines love?** Like, I love my wife, and while I can say it a hundred times to her, it doesn't mean much if I yell at her when she burns dinner! 😊 That action does not convey love even though my verbal language is saying something different. What conveys love is **when the things that are going on in the heart come out in how we act towards people**, that is how love takes shape in front of others. Love is displayed in actions from heart motives, it is more than words, and it is more than feelings, it is the living out of qualities of the heart, and the heart that has been changed by **Agapē love** will display **Agapē love** to others.

What type of things need to be displayed according to Paul?

⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

Patience, that is only possible to be displayed by the person that does not view their time as more important than others (**Phil 2:3 Count others as more significant**). **Kindness**, how you say a thing is just as important as saying the thing, harshness and bluntness are not Christian virtues to desire. It doesn't **envy or boast**, that goes directly against all that Corinthians have been doing up to this point. It doesn't elevate its' own positions over others, it understands that all it has, came from another freely. You can't **boast** on what you did not generate. Love is not **arrogant** nor is it **rude**, it doesn't exist to make you feel like you're better than others and it doesn't act in shameful ways directed at others (rude). True Agape love will actually cause conviction



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when you think less of others. Not to be **irritable or resentful** means that *love has a long fuse and a short memory*. Oh man is that so hard! Yeah, but doesn't that go back to the teaching where Jesus says to **forgive our brothers and sisters 70x7 (Mat 18:21-23)!**?

Why is this so important to get it right, right now? Because family if you can live this out, if you allow this to be a test of where you are at with God, it shows that you have already been loved in this way.

Romans 13:8-10 ESV

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**" ¹⁰Love **does no wrong** to a neighbor; therefore love is the **fulfilling** of the **law**.

Jesus says in the SoM ¹²"**So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.**" – Mat 7:12. When we love in action, it displays the action that was done for us. Perfect love shows your heart has been changed and now your heart can live out the law of God summed up in how we love others in deed and truth.

Love never surrenders to the Darkness in others, it never surrenders to the temptations of the Devil to act like your owed, and it never Despairs even if it seems not worth it. Love is not fueled by you, and it is not based on the one that receives it, **but it is dependent on the perfect love of Christ that was given as grace to us!** Do you know that love family, has it found you yet? Oh, what a church we could be if we loved each other in this way!

2. Love always praises good over evil.

⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.

Paul, I believe has some very specific occurrences in mind when he brings this up. There were certain things that he has already talked about in which



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the church folk at Corinth were rejoicing over. It was their ability to participate in worldly things, based on the **belief of not free, but cheap grace.**

There had been that incident where they were boasting over incest in 5:1-13 where a son was now with his father's wife, that's not even tolerated among the pagans (5:1)! Then there was the practice of selfish lawsuits in 6:1-11 which showed how Corinthians were entertained, that is using the courts for social notoriety, to hurt someone that offended you. BTW that was church member against church member, this was not a last resort but a first choice! Then there was of course sleeping with prostitutes in 6:12-20 enjoying what the Pagan temples offered because you were no longer concerned about being corrupted by other gods.

That's why Paul had to make the clarifying statement right in the middle of Chp 6:

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 ESV

⁹Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

People who do not love with an **Agapē love** will not be those who inherit the Kingdom of God. But people who actually have received **Agapē love** have been changed by it, and they no longer seek after their own lusts and desires, but it has them seeking something else.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 ESV

²³"All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. ²⁴Let no one seek his own good, but the **good of his neighbor.**

Love does not rejoice in what the world allows it to do because **everything the world says that is ok to do does not make it the righteous thing to do.** This is the dilemma of the church in Corinth, they had mistaken God's gift of Grace for a license to do whatever they wanted. Then to add to the problem



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instead of going to the Word for clarification on how to love someone they went to culture. Here's what I have learned about human hearts and human desires over the years, **people will do a lot of evil if the consensus of culture say's it's ok to do.**

Poison/Kill/Obstruct Ice Officers just think of them as Nazis.
Release private information of political figures.
Shoot judges in their home/murder CEOs in the street.
Harbor fugitives away from federal officers.
Lie about how taxpayer money is spent.
Mutilate children in the name of sexual preferences.
Charge into churches and threaten congregants.
And of course, just make up the news don't report it, to get the ratings you want.

All these things, people make a case that it is the right thing to do because of the cultural so-called norm consensus of your affiliations, but the reality is they are ALL WRONG, SINFUL, and HURTFUL and will require JUSTICE according to God's Word. The people who make things like this their norm in life will be people with no inheritance of eternal life. Love never rejoices in these things, someone with the love of God never agrees to these things, and true **Agapē love** will make it known in your heart when you do.

And many in the church right now are having the same types of problems. No default divorce has taught the church that is ok to leave your spouse everyone else is doing it. Accepting the homosexual lifestyle is ok because it is loving when according to 1 Cor 10 it is damming. And Abortion is ok unless it is late term. No, abortion is an abomination and needs to be abolished and yes women and men need to be held responsible for unborn babies are the true victims. All these things culture says do it, they have been ok'd by culture, go ahead everyone else is doing it.

When in reality **Agapē love** looks out for one's neighbor, even when you don't agree with them. It prays for their president even when you don't like them. It supports the rule of law even when it doesn't congeal with your world view. It will look at both sides of the political aisle and call a foul a foul. It even



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rejoices over hard choices to rebuild the most difficult of marriages, to speak against the alternate lifestyle when threatened, and to stand up for the unborn against the majority, because **Agapē love ALWAYS REJOICES** over the **TRUTH!**

Love is an unconditional action that **NEVER SURRENDERS** to the Devil, Darkness nor Despair. I pray you have it HCC, for we will be pursuing it, nurturing it, and displaying it until Jesus' return.

3. Love hangs on when others bail.

⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Just in case you were thinking that **Agapē love** is an impossible task I want to speak to that first. Yes, if you have not been saved by the **Agapē love** of a Savior you cannot love as prescribed by Paul in vs.4-6. It is impossible to live in a way that elevates the priorities of others if the only love in your heart is a desire to elevate yourself. That's what you have unless your heart has been rescued by the Glorious Godman, Jesus. Unless you have witnessed by faith, through the testimony of the HS, that He lived a victoriously perfect life for you, died as you should have died on a cross in public shame, and rose from a grave so that you could rise again someday, unless you believe that, accepted that, have been changed by that, you CANNOT practice **Agapē love**.

You may be in here today though, and the Spirit is using this message of the Gospel in Corinth to generate the thought, *what if I could break away from this world? What if I could be free from its' taint, what if I could live differently for someone who is worthy to live for?* Then v. 7 is the verse for you! This is also for you, if you get overwhelmed just thinking about the task itself. Perhaps you have **Agapē love** in your heart, and you are ready to try, but living like Christ is daunting, it's a hard call, in front of a cruel world. Then this last verse is for you too!

There are three things in v.7 that are promises to you, three things that proclaim the Gospel beauty of **Agapē love**, and the fact that this type of love will never fail you, it will never leave you, even when the world flees, this love



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never dies! There are three Gospel promises that I want to give to you from Chp 7.

First, *What the Gospel declares: **Agapē love believes all things!***

The word 'all' is repeated multiple times, and it is Paul's way of saying that **Agapē love** embraces **ALL** that the Gospel is because **Agapē love** is the 'root' in the Gospel. **Agapē love** always embraces ALL the Gospel truth, for **Agapē love** comes not from you but from the never-ending fountain of God. When all else fails you, **Agapē love** never will, and all will be as it should be, because God loves you more than you love yourself.

The Gospel declares to us, that **Agapē love** believes all things. Yeah, but what if I can't fix my marriage, what if my kid leaves the church, what if I get fired this week, what if that thing I did years ago comes back to haunt me, what if, what if, what if! Family it's not a '**what if**', if you are going to try and live practicing **Agapē love** you will have hard days because the world WILL come against you BUT Paul's answer for that, since **Agapē love is the root of the Gospel then you have to accept ALL that the Gospel is!**

Isaiah 54:17 ESV

*⁷ no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed,
and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment.
This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord
and their vindication from me, declares the Lord."*

Romans 8:28 ESV

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Philippians 4:13 ESV

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Those promises, those declarations, those truths are all yours family, if **Agapē love** dwells in your heart. You will survive any attack from the enemy (**Is 54:17**) for that which the world can throw at you cannot take your most



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valuable possession your soul, that is hidden with God. You will survive tragedy when it comes in **Rom 8:28**, because God uses that too for your good to make you like His Son. You will do the things that God has called you to do of **Phil 4:13**, for you will have discovered through the process of sanctification that Christ is in you, and you are doing things through Him not your own strength! Love will always be yours when all others Bail, because of God's NEW Covenant, you CANNOT fail!

Second, *What the Gospel promises: **Agapē love** hopes all things!*

Hebrews 11:1 ESV

Now faith is the assurance of things **hoped** for, the conviction of things not seen.

When **Agapē love** resides in you, when you are saved by a **gift of faith**, it gives you a new perspective on life. **Agapē love** doesn't place its' pleasure, it's focus, and its' desire on the things of this life now, it places them on the completion of God's work with a final consummation, in a glorious yet unexperienced future. You can't take hope away from the person who has **Agapē love** because it is not yours to take, it is God's. The World can't crush what it cannot taint, touch, nor trash. Scripture says, your treasure resides in heaven under Jesus' watch, *where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.* (Mat 6:20). Where in the end He will grant you your crown, your future home, and future life with Him. Love Hopes in the things that cannot be taken away from man.

Lastly, *What the Gospel gives: **Agapē love** endures all things!*

Romans 5:3-4 ESV

³Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because **God's love** has been **poured** into our **hearts** through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Agapē love when it is poured into your heart is what makes you hold on even in your darkest of moments. **Agapē love**, is not a generated strength from



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inside of you but a divinely given fortitude, a belief in a commitment made to you, by an unyielding strength, that cannot drop you. Whatever bad news comes your way, the Christian can and will endure it for the love of God resides within, and that is something you cannot lose, God gave it, and He promises not to remove it.

Agapē love always hangs on even when the world will bail, for what God puts in you no man can take. It truly can never surrender to the Devil, Darkness, nor Despair for light cannot be overcome by darkness.

[CALL TO OBEY]

Prefer others in "action" this week. (Remember: **Agapē love** is a verb and DOES for others before self) - Repent: Confess a specific way you have insisted on your own way, been irritable, or kept a record of wrongs and share that with family or friend. (vv. 5). - Replace: Do one concrete, inconvenient kindness for the very person you've struggled with—serve, give, or speak encouragement (vv. 4-5). - Rejoice: Publicly thank God for a brother or sister's gifts; name them before your family or small group to slay envy and boasting (v. 4).

Rejoice with the truth and refuse enjoyment with evil. (Love praises good over evil) - Repent: Renounce any practice or media/voices that make you laugh at, excuse, or celebrate sin (v. 6). - Replace: This week, uphold truth in love—correct gently where needed, **defend someone being maligned**, and choose righteousness over convenience (v. 6). - Rejoice: Share one testimony next Lord's Day of where obedience to truth brought peace or reconciliation (v. 6).

Persevere even when it costs you. (Love hangs on when others bail) - Bear: **Shoulder a burden with someone—pray with them, give time or resources, and check back midweek** (v. 7). - Believe/Hope: Speak gospel hope into a hard case; refuse cynicism. **Pray Philippians 4:13 and Romans 8:28** over them by name (v. 7). - Endure: Commit for 30 days to keep serving that person or situation without quitting, trusting Christ's love in you to endure (v. 7).



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Family I pray that this week you all engage in the **Agapē love** that has been so graciously placed in your heart by our Savior and that you live out this truth.

MP:

**Love is a continual action that never surrenders
to the Devil, Darkness, nor Despair.**

Now let's go to our God who has already told us He would help us live this way when we ask Him by faith.

Prayer

Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus which was lived for us. Jesus lived with the strength of **Agapē love** that propelled Him to believe all things about the Gospel, even that His suffering would be for the good of His people. It caused Him to believe in the Hope that He could live for His people. And by the **Agapē love** He believed He could endure the road to Calvary. Never has a man lived with such love for God and God's people. Praise be to our King who loved perfectly, living out true **Agapē love**.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. And when **Agapē love** found Him on the cross He cried out not to be delivered but to ask for our forgiveness for we know not what we do. When we turned our back on our God, on our King, He chose to love us while we were still yet sinners. By that perfect blood we were saved.



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By the perfect blood we were changed. And by His perfect blood we too now can love Him in return. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love!

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – **“Christians, what do we believe?”** Congregation – recites:

LBCF 1689 Chapter 27 Paragraph 1. Fellowship Between Believers

All saints who are united to Jesus Christ, who is their head, by his Spirit and by faith (although this does not mean they are one person with him) have fellowship in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. 1 Since they are united to each other in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces 2 and are obligated to carry out these duties, both public and private. These duties should be done in an orderly way for the mutual benefit of the saints, both in the inward and outward aspects of their lives. 3

1. 1 John 1:3; John 1:16; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5-6

2. Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 3:21-23

3. 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; Romans 1:12; 1 John 3:17-18; Galatians 6:10

[OFFERING+LAST SONG] “We Will Feast in the House of Zion”

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, who has loved us with a steadfast **Agapē love**, patiently enduring with us, when we deserved not His affections.

Go in the name of the Son, who perfected and now offers us the wellspring of true **Agapē love**, so that His people would never thirst again.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that brings us **Agapē love**, not just to experience it but to deliver it to a world that so desperately needs it.



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[FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATIONS]

- 1) Love in action (vv. 4-5): Which description of love is most difficult for you right now (patient, kind, not insisting on your own way, not irritable, not resentful)? Name one concrete repentance-and-replacement step you will take this week for that specific area.

- 2) Rejoicing with the truth (v. 6): Identify one culturally approved sin or personal habit you've been tempted to excuse. How will you refuse to "rejoice at wrongdoing" and instead rejoice with the truth? What Scripture will you use (e.g., 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 10:23-24), and who will keep you accountable?

- 3) Hanging on when others bail (v. 7): Name one person or relationship where Christ's love calls you to "bear, believe, hope, and endure." What 30-day commitment will you make (specific prayers, check-ins, tangible service), and how will you guard against cynicism?

- 4) Gospel-rooted assurance: How has receiving God's covenant love in Christ changed your instincts toward others (from self-protection to self-giving)? Where do Romans 8:28 and Philippians 4:13 give you courage to keep loving when it's costly?

- 5) From home to church and neighbor: What two practical actions will our family/group take this week to embody agapē—one inside the church (bearing a member's burden, public thanksgiving for someone's gifts) and one toward a neighbor (defending someone maligned, meeting a need)? Set names, times, and steps.



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