

1 Corinthians



13 for Today

Adapted from Maria Fontaine by Josie Clark

1. Though I can speak five languages and talk intelligently on dozens of subjects, if I don't have enough love to keep from gossiping or putting down others, I'm not just making so much useless noise, I'm being downright destructive.

2. And though I read the Bible regularly and even know parts of it by heart, and though I pray daily and have a lot of faith and other spiritual gifts, if I don't have enough love to sometimes sacrifice some of my personal desires for others' sakes, then all of my "spirituality" amounts to nothing.

3. And though I work two jobs to provide for my family, and though I give to charity and volunteer for every community project that comes up, if I don't show love and kindness to those I live and work with, all my hard work and self-sacrifice are worthless.

4. Love has a long, hard, frustrating day at the office, yet doesn't get snappy and short-tempered. Love is happy for the other guy when he gets all the breaks. Love doesn't have to drive the flashiest car, live in the biggest house, or have all the latest gadgets. Love doesn't always have to be the boss or have the last word.

5. Love isn't rude or crude, isn't selfish, and doesn't gripe, guilt-trip, or pressure others to get what it wants. Love is too busy being concerned about the needs of others to spend much time worrying about its own. Love doesn't freak out when things don't go its way. Love is quick to believe the best about people and slow to believe the rest.

6. Love hates to hear gossip and instead wants only to talk about others' good qualities and the good that they've done. Love knows that what it listens to, watches, or reads will affect its attitudes and actions and thereby have an effect on others, so it's careful about how it spends its time.

7. Love is flexible, takes everything in stride, and can handle whatever comes its way. Love is always ready to give others the benefit of the doubt and looks for the best in them. Love wants to see others reach

their full potential and does all it can to make that happen. Love never runs out of patience, even with those who are slow to get with the program or do their share. Love doesn't keep looking at its watch when others are talking.

8. Love never fails. I fail others, and others can fail me. We all can be mistaken, misguided, or confused at times. Our words and deeds often fall short, and our bright ideas don't always play out the way we want or expect them to.

9. We're frail, fallible, and often foolish, and our understanding of the world we live in, not to mention the world to come, is only partial at best.

10. But when God's Spirit of love lives in us, that changes everything.

11. We're really just children when it comes to practicing real love, but God can help us outgrow our childish ways.

12. Without Him we're clueless when it comes to love and the other things that matter most in life, but when we live in His kingdom—the kingdom of Heaven that Jesus said is even now within us—we can see things as He does, get our priorities straight, pull out the stops, and live and love to the full.

13. There are lots of nice things in life and lots of good things, but none are as good or as important as love!

The Essence of Love

All the best things in life come packaged in a ribbon of risk. You untie the gift, you assume the risk, and equally, the joy. Parenthood is like that. Marriage is like that. Friendship is like that. In order to experience life in the full sense, you expose yourself to a bottomless pit of vulnerability. That is the essence of true love.

—Kristin Armstrong

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Topic: love

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YOU ARE NEVER ALONE

By Lilia Potters

“Haven’t you heard?” a friend asked. “Didn’t you see the news yesterday? The whole world is heartbroken for a little girl who lost her family in one fell swoop.”

I was overcome with tears as I listened to the story of 11-year-old Huda who saw her father, stepmother, brothers, and sisters all die when an artillery shell exploded near them while they were having a picnic on the beach. Huda’s cries echoed around the world. “Don’t leave me alone! Please don’t leave me alone!”

Within days Huda had become a symbol of Palestinian suffering, but the more I thought about her, the more she seemed to be even more than that. *Perhaps she is a symbol of all the children who suffer in our world today*, I thought. *Perhaps she exemplifies the children of Sudan, the Congo (DRC), Iraq, Afghanistan, and other war-torn countries, and the many millions of children who are malnourished, and all of the children who have suffered the loss of loved ones in natural disasters or to diseases like AIDS.*

But Huda was *not* alone, I knew. God cared for her, and not for her only. He cares for all who suffer. I was reminded of many promises from the Bible that one day soon God will wipe away every tear and bring forth beauty from the ashes of defeat. White lilies will spring up where once there was nothing but blackness.

MAKE US BRAVE FOR LIFE

God, make us brave for life; oh, braver than this.
 Let us straighten after pain, as a tree straightens after the rain,
 Shining and lovely again.
 God, make us brave for life; much braver than this.
 As the blown grass lifts, let us rise
 From sorrow with quiet eyes,
 Knowing Thy way is wise.
 God, make us brave, life brings
 Such blinding things.
 Help us to keep our sight;
 Help us to see the right
 That out of dark comes light.

—Author unknown

The meek shall inherit the earth, and there will be no more war, death, or destruction. Soon the promised era of peace will come, where love shall reign supreme.

Until then, please take heart and don’t lose faith, dear little Hudas of the world. You are loved and never, never alone! God is there to comfort and care for you. It’s not here yet, but the day is coming when there will be relief from all suffering. The day is coming, dear children, when all the sorrow and sadness will be wiped away. Until then, we must be brave and ask God to help us face the blows of life with heads held high, and we must always remember that we are never alone!

God is aware of your needs and mine. He sees every tear that we shed. He knows every heartache and every pain we bear. God wants us to tell Him exactly how we feel. Whether we have been a “believer” before or not, when our world comes crashing down on us we suddenly become aware that we need God’s help and comfort to stand up under the heavy load. I have experienced His peace in the midst of these stormy days, and I pray you will seek Him and find that same peace. He cares for us all.

—Loretta Williams

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Topic: God’s care

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