

# G O D I S L O V E

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## 「 Introduction 」

The Corinthian church was rich in spiritual gifts but unfortunately, they used them to compete with and envy one another. As a result, there was severe disorder within the community. The Apostle Paul diagnosed the root cause of these problems as a “lack of love,” and in 1 Corinthians 13 he teaches what true love—agape—really is.

Paul’s ‘chapter on love’ shows us God’s love in 15 different colors. Just as it is difficult to draw a clear line between where the rainbow turns from red to orange, the 15 characteristics of love that Paul describes also overlap with one another and are hard to distinguish sharply (From Love by Kook-jin Lee). And all 15 expressions of this love perfectly correspond to the character of Jesus Christ.

## 「 Beginning with Love 」

The love spoken of in the Bible is not merely an emotion. It is an active act of obedience that grows us into the character of Jesus Christ, and a holy life that leads relationships toward maturity. As we begin our small group, let us write down three specific people (or groups) to whom we will practice Christ’s love (agape) over the next year. To whom will I apply this love?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

# Love is patient

## 1. Here are 3 things we must be most careful about in the church:

- 1) Words without love (1 Cor. 13:1)
- 2) Power without love (1 Cor. 13:2)
- 3) Sacrifice without love (1 Cor. 13:3)

## 2. Patience : the beginning of love

- Among the 15 attributes of love, the first one mentioned is “patience”.
- Among these 15 attributes, similar expressions to ‘patience’ appear two more times (“bears all things” and “endures all things”). Paul describes both the beginning and the end of love in terms of patience.
- The decisive difference between agape love and eros love lies in patience: eros cannot endure, but agape is a patient love that gives even its life for us sinners (ones without worth).
- God’s love is patient.

### 2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

## 3. Misunderstandings about patience

### 1) Patience does not mean enduring everything unconditionally.

Patience requires discernment. There are situations that need healing; times when counseling and help should be sought; cases where effort for improvement is necessary; moments that call for courage to change one’s environment.

Patience means that through all of these processes, we do not become discouraged by the outcome or give up, but continue to trust to the very end that God will ultimately accomplish what is best (David in the wilderness).

## 2) Patience is not biding one's time.

We sometimes say that we are 'enduring', but in reality we are not truly enduring but storing things up in our hearts. We calculate, keep records, and bear with it, and then when we cross a tipping point, we explode. And then we say, "Do you know how much I've endured?" But this kind of attitude is not true patience but 'biding one's time.'

Hebrews 10:17 I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.

## 3) Patience is not tolerating sin.

Patience does not mean overlooking sin. Leaving sin as is cannot be an act of love. In fact, it is more dangerous to think that the act of pointing out sin is loveless. Because God loves us, He does not leave sin as is but deals with it. Therefore, patience is love that does not give up on a person but takes responsibility to the very end, and a patient love that endures along through the process of healing, restoration, and sanctification.

## 4. Patience that the Bible speaks of

### 1) Patience is waiting for God's timing.

Waiting for God's timing is not merely a delay; it is a confession of faith that God's timetable is the best. This waiting is not passive inaction, but an active act of faith that trusts that God is at work and leaves it all to Him.

Therefore, patience is not a passive resignation in the face of reality, but an enduring faith that stands firm and believes that God's timing is the best. Even now, God is preparing your time, and we endure today by trusting in His timing (James 5:7-8).

### 2) Patience is trusting God's way.

When the Israelites left Egypt they were led not by the shortest route but by the Red Sea. The Bible says that 'God led them around by the way of the Red Sea' (Exodus 13:18), testifying that this was God's method. Even if God's way seems slow, we must believe that He is guiding the wilderness journey in the best way.

### 3) Patience is enduring people.

Patience is more about tolerance than forgiveness. We are first tolerated by God. If forgiveness involves keeping count of wrongs, tolerance is a broad embrace that accepts people as they are without keeping score.

## Colossians 3:12-13

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

"Love is recognizing and accepting a person whom I am not satisfied with as one that cannot be controlled. The love that the Bible speaks of does not demand repayment for the genuine love that one shows. The reason: because we are first recipients of that love" (Young-seon Park)

## 4) The source of patience is only God's love.

Our mission is to be soaked in the love of the cross. Love guides us. Love renews us. Without love, patience becomes agony. When we come to know God's patient love toward us we too can practice that love. There is no other way.

## Exodus 34:6

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

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## Sharing

1. It is said that it takes patience to learn patience. In which areas of your life is patience being required? What makes you impatient in those situations? Share your thoughts with your members.

2. Today is the first Small Group of 2026. Share your prayer requests for the year and spend some time praying together.

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