

## Love, “Without It, What Are You?”

By: Bill Richardson      Edited by: Bill Kelly

It is my heart of love and to the glory of God which caused me to write this presentation, and I am calling it a study on “Love.” To God this writer owes my all, a debt that can never be repaid. Writing about God’s love was a tremendous blessing to me. The realization of this is acknowledged now more than ever before. There is a song written by F. M. Lehman, titled “The Love of God”, and one verse is set forth here. It attempts to express the length and breadth of God’s love.

“Could we with ink the ocean fill and were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade;

To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry; nor could the  
Scroll contain the whole, though’ stretched from sky to sky

Oh, love of God how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure the Saints’ and angels’ song.’

This writer is in debt to many who proved themselves by their acts of love and teaching, showing what love between mankind is all about. Praise the Lord for them and their making known to me there are loving and kind people, and there are people who are in need of love and kindness. These loving and kind people showed me by their actions, there is a need for growth of love in all people. To all in that category this writing and this effort of love is dedicated.

Many things can be said, and well they should, about love. The reason for my saying that is because love is, in my thinking, the strongest of Christian attributes. Love is the one most needed attribute to live by all over the world and among mankind. There is no subject for which I, given more thought to than love. There is no subject that should be talked about, acted upon, and manifested in our lives more than love. 1 Corinthians 13:13 is concluded by saying, “*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*”

In this study writing I am going to ask a series of questions and discuss with you answers. I know that all of the answers to the questions are discussion type answers and in being such, the approach taken can and may have a different slant and still be correct and true. In addition, I want to word the questions on a very basic level that can be answered simply or can lead into a very detailed answer, which of course can be of needed benefit for learning and motivation. In coming up with the questions my “heart- thoughts” were, and I hope you agree, thought provoking and are on a wide variety of key words assembled together to answer them. They work-over love good, I guarantee you. Now, flip the page and look them over.

The questions for consideration to which I have given thought are:

1. What is love?
2. Do you know love?
3. What are the Godly Attributes of Love?
4. How do you get love?
5. Do you want love?
6. What does love do for you?
7. How long will love last?
8. Can love be lost?
9. Does love die?
10. Does love grow/multiply?

By looking over the list of questions can we pick out the key word which will require us to learn and know certain characteristics of love? To know love is to be able to identify love. One must be able to recognize love, be able to define love, be able to explain love, and it could possible be that the number one thought and reason to know love would be for one to be able to return love from the heart and accept it gracefully. For us to be “able”, as outlined herein, and to give thought provoking answers to the questions is some of the purposes’ of our study together on this most wonderful attribute.

Let’s begin by answering the first question, “What is love? I have chosen and arranged some words to define love as: “A deep and genuine, lasting, devotion and affection for others with strong intense feelings and concern for them.” (It is noted: my desire is that we do not discuss love for “Stuff” and “Things”). However, we may choose to add-to or add-on to the definition of love later on.

“What is love?” The Bible speaks of three types of love. In evaluating love let us look at it in these three ways; the love of God for man; man’s love for God; and love between humankind. Love is rooted in the very personality of God, and no thought can be adequate which does not take into account His boundless love. The supreme manifestation of God’s love is, of course, His sending of his Son to die for our sins that we might have life everlasting (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).

In having authority over anything, there are inherent responsibilities. We are responsible for that which God gives us. One’s emotions are so uniquely made a part of us when we are made in the likeness of God, and with God’s help we must use and exercise control. All the parts of our complex body are controlled, with God’s help, by our mind (our biblical heart). Do you know what I am saying? Your love emotion is controlled by your mind. Proverbs teaches us, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is He” 23: 7. In addition, the Holy Word teaches us that it is not within man to direct his own footsteps. If we accept God’s truth, and it is His will that we do, we must then let His truth rule our actions as we exercise proper stewardship responsibility over that which God has given us to do.

Using some chosen dictionary words, which are good and proper words, then mixing them into God given, God trained emotion; let’s answer the question, “What is love” in this way? “An emotionally guided feeling and genuine (Godly) concern which causes us to act for the good and to satisfy the needs of others and to create the proper influence which will glorify God.” To see the judgment scene and to learn about compassionate compensation for exercising the love emotion for the good of others read Matthew 25:31-46. Please do read... these are words spoken by our Lord!

To continue let us discuss an answer to the second question, “Do you know love?” In order to answer maybe it would be helpful to consider and answer another question, “Do you know God?” It is tragic, but a fact, that there are many in the world today that cannot answer the question in the affirmative. I know all or most all of you reading and studying this would answer and say, “Yes, I know God.” Do you know God is not a trick question, but we would do well to study the word “know” in the question?

Do you know love? It is tragic that there are many in the world today and yes, in times past also, that have lived their childhood and have grown into adulthood and have never had anyone to place their arm across their shoulders or arms around their body in a hug and told, “I love you!” That is hard on the emotion to think about. CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT? I cannot think about it, I cannot write about it or even say yes or no to it without crying. It hurts throughout one’s soul. Then think about how humankind down through history has treated each other. Think how much God loves all of us—He created us! God permitted His Son to die for you, me, and all mankind. Think about what is said by all of 1 Corinthians 13. More will be said about that in just four lines down.

Can you tell the story of LOVE? Can you tell the story of love, and after telling it give your listener a big hug and tell them you love-‘em? Then ask them the question, “Do you know love?” Ask them, “Do you know God?” TELL THEM—LET THEM KNOW THAT GOD IS LOVE!

The third question is “What are the Godly attributes of love?” Let us look at (1 Corinthians 13), and see therein the great lessons on love. This chapter is known as the love chapter of the Bible. It will give us the answer to the third question. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 lists the attributes that are identified with love. However, before we discuss them, look at some of the earlier verses and note our jeopardy if we are lacking love.

Note and remember where or how we stand in our relationship with God if we do not have love. The apostle Paul, speaking by inspiration says in verses 1-3, *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”*

After reading what Paul said in the first three verses the question comes to mind, and I ask, “Who wants to be of no profit to the Lord?” Who wants to be a nothing? Wouldn’t that be sad? How do you define “a nothing?” Yet, without love—you are nothing, and that is a sad state. With the help of Christ and following His example let us pray first to let Him be our Lord, and that we will have a life filled with love. Love for God, love for our neighbor and each other is the greatest and first commandment. Let us then, (in love) resolve that we can, that we will...because it is commanded, it is a “Thou shall” and what ‘er we do, we do in LOVE and to the glory of God.

Here are the attributes identified to love which are listed in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8:

- (1) *Love suffers long*
- (2) *Love is kind*
- (3) *Love does not envy*
- (4) *Love does not parade itself*
- (5) *Love is not puffed up*
- (6) *Love does not behave rudely*
- (7) *Love does not seek its own*
- (8) *Love is not provoked*
- (9) *Love thinks no evil*
- (10) *Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth*
- (11) *Love bears all things*
- (12) *Love believes all things*
- (13) *Love hopes all things*
- (14) *Love endures all things*
- (15) *Love never fails*

Much has been said about these fifteen attributes of love. It has been summarized this way; permit me to quote it here. "The loving person is patient with other people's failures. The loving person is not proud of attainments or deeds, does not behave in ways that are embarrassing to others, does not seek his own selfish interest, is not provoked to anger by the insults of others, and bears no grudge for the wrong done to him. The loving person is not glad when iniquity prevails or when someone falls into sin. The loving person rejoices when God's truth brings forth its proper fruit to holy hearts and lives. The person filled with God's love puts up with all kinds of difficulties. He does not assume others have bad motives but always believes the best about them. He always hopes that they will turn to God. He does not give up. Love remains throughout eternity...**LOVE NEVER FAILS**"

We are up to question number four, and it asks, "How do you get love?" Question number five asks, "Do you want love?" Perhaps it would be helpful to combine the two questions making a two-part question to read. "Do you want love, and how do you get it?"

If you were blessed to grow up in a loving caring environment by loving parents from infancy, you will not have any problem answering that part of the question, "Do you want love?" If you were told repeatedly and in truth, that is... shown by action, "I love you", before you knew what the word meant you were truly blessed. That is the way it should be. There is no greater or more cherished reward to parents than to gather their child into their arms, hug and kiss them and tell them, "I love you". Then have the child return the blessing by holding their parent's face with their little hands, looking into your eyes and saying, "I love you", or saying, "I love you too". Then they finish with a kiss on your face or lips, and with both arms giving a big squeeze-hug with a big grunt thrown in.

This almost seems natural and it is, for the most part. However, there is a danger and that is there must be proper teaching to go along with this love, but as sad, terrible,

and sinful as it is, more often there is the lack of it. The greatest of teachers are loving parents, not only by what they say, but also by more of what they do and how they act has the greatest influence. Love is not something we are born with. Love is the show, tell, and continuing—keeping-on. Practice, practice, practice, show and tell, show and tell, etc. that which one is taught, he must teach, what is taught and practiced is learned—teach and learn. Is it natural? The rewards of learning, knowing, and teaching are so great it seems to be natural. However, I will stick to my saying that “Love is taught.”

There is something about our God-given nature that causes us to accept love. After the teaching and after acceptance, we are capable of molding, shaping, and growing (MS&G) that taught love into the action part of us, and thus we have become the steward that we ought to be. The MS&G must be at the head of the list of the greatest desires that we have. In having this desire and fulfilling it, we are involved in affecting the first and greatest commandment. What say ye? Let us do it! When...when we rise up in the morning, when we sit down to the table, when we walk by the way, and when we go to bed at night...that is when!

Now, attitude, the way we think, has come into play. Not only do you get love by ways as explained above, but also you get love through association. It is shown to you by the acts of your parents and other family members; by your Bible teacher and minister; by acts of love by other caring adults, and yes by your schoolteacher and your peers. All of these actions, acts of love, working and influencing your heart should be motivating forces in your life to tender your heart and create the love emotion in your life.

Do you know what happens to you if you are motivated? What is motivated, you may ask? To motivate someone is: “To create within someone a desire to act, or do.” If you are motivated, you have a desire, (a loving desire) to take the necessary action and do whatever you can to be obedient in doing the will of God.” You are blessed beyond measure if you know, (have knowledge) of what the will of God is. We all need to pray about it. Remember God is on our side. He will help you and me. We must never try to excuse ourselves by saying, “I can’t.” It is our responsibility to do our very best. If what we do needs improving, well there is the next responsibility of motivation. We will get to Heaven by the Grace of God, but that does not relieve us from doing. Do the love “thing”! Love God with all your heart and soul, and love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Therefore, from all of this you may ask, as does question number six, “What does love do for me?” Remember the comments we made in the brief study of 1 Corinthians 13:13? There it is taught and we learned that love is the basis for all that we do, and if we do not have love, we are nothing. For us to have the right relationship with God, or with anyone for that matter, love is the active ingredient. Love is required to be a part of self. We are to love ourselves and if we cannot or do not, we cannot or will not love God or anyone else. WE MUST LOVE! We must love God, everybody else, and love self.

Notice what can be involved or how thought provoking the last four questions are. They were asked for that specific reason. Here they are. Number 7, “How long will love last”; Number 8, “Can love be lost”; Number 9, “Does love die”; and number 10, “Does love grow and multiply”?

In discussing number 7, “How long will love last”, I submit this thought to you. Love is not something you pretend, you must show love. In addition, showing your love motivated by love proves it. It is proven by what you do all of your life! God is love...remember? 1 John 4:16 tells us that. And Jeremiah 31:3 says, “*God’s love is everlasting.*” How long will love last? Love is everlasting. God is love! God is everlasting.

This leads us into question number 8, “Can love be lost”? The thought deserves more than a yes or no. We are taught by God to love one another, 1 Thessalonians 4:9. In John 15:12 we are commanded to love one another. The way I see it, should love be lost, let us lose it in loving God and one another. If we lose it in that way, it is not lost. We have just given it away in using it for good as was intended in the first place. It is God’s plan for us. “*If you love me, keep My commandments*” (John 14:15).

Question number 9, “Does love die”? Answer it by asking, “Does or will God die”? I hope you would say “How absurd! How ridiculous can you be?” We have already noted that God’s love is everlasting (Jeremiah 31:3). If God’s love is everlasting then His love will endure forever. It is the law...it is the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). You do not stop loving, “*Let brotherly love continue*” (Hebrews 13:1). We are to love one another with a pure heart fervently. Romans 13:8 admonishes’ us to “*Owe no man anything, but to love one another.*” We are commanded to do these things, and through teaching we are motivated to do them in love fervently. How can love die? The answer to the question, “Does love die” ...is a resounding NO!

The 10th and final question, “Does love grow and multiply?” It seems now even more important and necessary to answer the question, maybe, more than first thought. Thinking of how wonderful and beautiful love is. Think how needful the love attributes are to our life and those to whom we are responsible. Well, it should cause us to do that which is necessary. If there is a needful action to be done, for the love of God do it! That is love, it will grow and multiply in our life, and we must be busy planting and watering “love-seed” all around and everywhere. I tell you, love will cause more things to be done for the right purpose than anything I know will.

I now want to refresh our memory of the definition which was worded a few pages back:

“An emotionally guided feeling and genuine (Godly) concern which causes us to act for the good and to satisfy the need of others and to create the proper influence which will glorify God”

If we can get genuineness into active love, it will grow. Then mix in enthusiasm, and it multiplies repeatedly. Now tell me...that is the growth for which is needed in lives. Only good can come from such a formula. Romans 13:10 tells us that, “*Love does no ill.*” Moreover, remember we are answering the last question in this study, “Does love die.” Can we not say, “Love will live and remain the active attribute for eternity?” To affirm that, is affirming our knowledge of God’s word—that is what the Word teaches.

That causes me to consider writing a song poem, beginning like this, "Let it grow, let it grow, let it grow." You know the tune, don't you? So, let loves grow let it multiply and let it grow!

What is presented in this study writing about love is just plain and simple Biblical truth. The study-thoughts presented herein for your consideration, were prepared for the right purpose and for good reason (love) of my heart. My thoughts for discussion as presented here can be used as a teaching aid, along with your Bible. It will help self and others develop a greater appreciation for love, and I hope they will. We can and must develop a better understanding of how love can or should be a great and lasting force in our live. Please permit love in your life to be active, growing and multiplying. Love acting in lives will cause us to learn and teach others. Teaching others to teach others that they too will teach others is also a growth process. Love in action is what it is.

I have already proposed that love is not inherited, that it is a taught attribute of human nature which I submit that God planned it that way. There are things which God expects of us. He requires daily stewardship of those talents entrusted to us, thus we are to love, to teach, and do. We must use the talents and multiply them which God entrusted with us. We must not be afraid and hide them. The story is told in Matthew 25:14-30 of the servant who hid his talent. The servant who hid the talent entrusted to him by his Master and did not multiply it was named worthless and cast into outer darkness.

The only way that I know we can serve God is by loving our fellowman and serving him. Serving our fellowman in love by caring for his needs is the way to serve God. Remember the story which is a lesson to us that Christ taught in Matthew 25:40. He said, *"Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."* Please note at least three things here: first, love caused the action, the "doing", second, by doing they were obedient, in that they served Christ and third, by doing and serving Christ they served the needs of others.

*"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this the law and prophets"* (Matthew 7:12). *"Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law"* (Romans 13:8). *"If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scriptures, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well"* (James 2:8).

God bless you for reading and studying this love lesson. May we abide in faith, hope and love?

The scriptures and commentary that have been set forth in this lesson have been prepared to help all of us. Scriptures and principles cited, and the thought presented and discussions were to motivate true and honest hearts to gain knowledge and to help us grow and be stronger in the faith and love. It is my prayer that by you reading and studying this lesson will accept the truth presented herein and that it will be a conscience server (a helper) to you as it has me.

The well-trained conscience is equal to the knowledge, abiding faith, and love that we expose or subject to our mind. With confidence I say that you studied this lesson with faith and love, and that it will be love and faith growing.

With confidence I say that it is your desire to gain more knowledge, which is associated with responsibilities. This creates a desire to seek, to search more diligently, and to accept when found, and associate with and be an active part of abiding faithfully in the Lord's Church.

The church of which I am speaking cost the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is His Body, His Kingdom, and His Church. Please be an obedient dedicated part of the church of the Bible. You cannot pass through Heaven's gate if you are not in His Body, (His Church), and it is the church, the only Church that you read about in the New Testament. This is the truth—it is what the Bible teaches.

I invite you to view other writings on my Website, [www.geocities.com/dubbyt](http://www.geocities.com/dubbyt). There are several writings posted on the Website. I recommend, and I am sure you will want to view the writing, titled, "The Church of the Bible, Christ's Church" it has a two-page enclosure, which has the title, "What Must I Do To Be Saved." Please study both of these with an honest and receptive heart for truth and obedience. The study of them will bring you blessings! God bless you for reading and studying this lesson. God loves you!

One enclosure: "Attributes of Love". This is one of my poems which I wrote some years ago. I hope you enjoy it. I love you and remain yours servant! God bless!

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Remember:

My Website, [www.geocities.com/dubbyt](http://www.geocities.com/dubbyt), has a link to: [www.hartsellechurch.org](http://www.hartsellechurch.org), which is the Hartselle Church of Christ, Hartselle, AL, a link to, [www.ausatinvillecoc.org](http://www.ausatinvillecoc.org) which is the Website of Austinville Church of Christ, Decatur, AL, and a link to [www.northcobbchurch.org](http://www.northcobbchurch.org), which is the Church of Christ at North Cobb, Kennesaw, GA. Please visit those Websites also; you will be blessed.

## ATTRIBUTES OF LOVE

My heart is so full of desire to know that someday when my life is past, that you will truly know how much I love you.

(LOVE IS TO CHERISH)

I realize that time blessed us to be together. Time gave us the opportunity to know, to grow love and share that love, it is love that binds hearts together in a lasting relationship.

(LOVE IS ETERNAL)

It is true that time also separates and can be a force which if properly cultivated causes the heart of love to continue in strength of growth. Love growing is a force which will never die.

(LOVE IS SELF PERPETUATING)

The question may be asked, "Can there be love when doubt exists?" The doubt of which I speak is not to question my love for you, but doubt as to whether my action demonstrate my love to you so that you truly know how much I love you.

(LOVE IS MANIFESTED)

The genuineness of my love is free from hypocrisy or pretense. The love for you is controlled by me and no other. It is exactly as it appears.....without deception.

(LOVE IS REAL)

True love will never die. Cultivation is necessary to assure proper growth. To experience living, growing love is wonderful to me. My love for you will forever be, the total of my love each day and my thanks to you in every way.

(LOVE, THE GREATEST SOURCE OF PLEASURE)

By: *William T. Richardson, Jr.*