

Monday, December 24 – *“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant.” (1 Corinthians 13:4)* As we think about love this Christmas week, we think about the other. Our world is so quick to teach us to think about the other as the enemy, someone to be defeated or overcome in some way. The other is a rival for promotions, affections, resources and attention. Yet, love sees the other from a totally different perspective. Love sees the other and is patient and kind, not envious or boastful or arrogant. Love sees the other not as competition, but as someone to be cherished, esteemed and honored. How would you feel if your boss was patient and kind? How would you feel if your spouse or kids or parents or co-workers or neighbors were patient and kind? Understanding your answers to these questions, why then would you not be patient and kind? Give your world a Christmas gift and drop the envy, the boasting and the arrogance and replace it with patience and kindness.

Tuesday, December 25 (Merry Christmas!) – *“(Love is not) rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.” (1 Corinthians 13:5)* First things first, way to go. You are reading a devotion on Christmas Day! Second things second, we see four things that love is not in today’s verse. Sometimes in order to understand something you must point out what it is not. This negative focus is usually the case when the majority of society acts in this negative way. No need to remind anyone that love is not rude or not insisting on its own way or not irritable or not resentful unless the norm for the majority of society is to be rude and insisting on its own way or to be irritable or resentful. When we read such negative things, it hits close to home. All of us struggle with these, opposite of love, characteristics in our very own lives. Today, get real with yourself and God. Are you rude? Do you insist on your own way? Are you irritable or resentful? Allow God to love you right where you are so that you won’t be left right where you are.

Wednesday, December 26 – *“(Love) does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.” (1 Corinthians 13:6)* Confession time. Have you ever rejoiced in the wrongdoing of someone else? I once rejoiced in the downfall of a pastor of a large local church simply because I didn’t like him. Upon closer examination I came to realize that I rejoiced in his downfall because I was jealous. This is the opposite of love. My rejoicing in his wrongdoing was all about me. Does this sound familiar to you? As you examine such things make sure you remind yourself that the examination isn’t about right or wrong, it is about getting real with God and allowing the Holy Spirit to convict you of the rightness or wrongness of your attitude and actions. The truth will set you free, but that means you have to be imprisoned by something. In order to break out of your personal prison, you must get real and allow God to meet you there and love you.

Thursday, December 27 – *“(Love) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Corinthians 13:7)* Finally, we have moved passed what love is not to what love is. Upon your first read you might think that love is a doormat for it takes on everything, it is a sucker, it is a dreamer and it puts up with anything. I must concede that there is a fine line between loving and enabling, but that is a topic for another day. Suffice it to say, staying with our theme of the other from Monday, you would want to be treated in this very same way. You want the people in your life to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and endure all things. For the opposite is a life full of people who will drop you like a hot potato the moment that your existence no longer benefits their existence. The popular “What’s in it for me?” perspective is so prevalent in our culture and very easy to follow. It doesn’t require any effort, no thinking of the other only thinking of yourself. Yet, this is the opposite of love.

Friday, December 28 – *“Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Then the angel departed from her.” (Luke 1:38)* Here it is, a living, breathing testimony to love. You might think that I am talking about Mary, but you would be incorrect. Don’t get me wrong, Mary expresses a great deal of love toward God and the world in these words. Yet, without Mary understanding how much God first loved her these words would have been missing from history. Mary’s words of love are nothing more than her response to the love that she has received from God. This is the secret of love, you don’t have to bake it from scratch without a recipe. God has shown you what it means to be loved which, in turn, gives us the recipe to love others. The love that we have in our lives is a gift from God and a gift is no good unless it is opened and shared with others.

Elizabeth & Mary –

Thinking of _____

Love is _____, we don't have to bake it from _____ without a recipe

Love is our _____ to God who first loved us.