



I Want to Know What Love Is Part 2 – Love is Patient

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Ted kicked off love last week and now we're jumping into 1 Corinthians 13, Verses four and following. One mistake I think we can make in the next couple of weeks that I don't want to make, as we get into this series, is we could start putting a bunch of boxes up and checking them off. Let me give you an example. This is what 1 Corinthians 13 says, ***4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.***

So be careful of these next couple weeks, as you come and hear from the great teaching team of Travis and Shay and Ted, etc., that you don't think, *okay now I just need to be more patient this week or now I need to be more kind this week or now I don't need to boast this week.* Don't walk out of here thinking you've got to check more boxes. You're not going to be able to be more patient, you're not going to be able to be more kind, you're not going to be able to be less self-seeking. Unless the Christ and the regenerated belief that lives in you allows you to be patient... We don't have it within ourselves to be patient.

For a non-believer, it makes all the sense in the world to me that they are impatient. I'm a believer and I'm impatient. As a matter of fact, when my wife and I got engaged, it was the first time that I told her I loved her. It was over at Worman House at Big Cedar where they used to have the restaurant open. Our first date was at Big Cedar, so I took her back there. The very first time I told her that I loved her was when I was on the knee. I still don't think that at that moment I really understood the type of love that we're going to talk about today. Every previous relationship to me, in that moment, was more of an Eros love. I'll explain that here in just a minute.

From the point that I proposed to her until eight months later when we got married, I didn't kiss her. That's called patience, especially for a male. I tell young people all the time, "If you're going to do it God's way, just know this: engagement is all the work without any of the perk." It's true.

Our very first serious conflict was during our engagement because my lack of patience hit a tipping point. If you want to see conflict, get a fiancé and a fiancée and get them to go do some registry. She had this grandiose idea that we were going to go to Crate and Barrel and get everything she wanted. Somehow, she just kind of needed to manipulate me to believe that everything she wanted was what I wanted too, so she brought me in on the activity.

We get to Crate and Barrel and I quickly figure out that she doesn't give rip about my opinion, she just wants me to feel included. Every time I gave my opinion, she politely declined it and went more towards what she wanted. I quickly realized I wasn't needed there. I could be more productive out in the parking lot having a quiet time than just being manipulated into what she wanted, so that's exactly what I did. I went out into the car and had a quiet time in the parking lot. That was our first conflict. I wasn't patient. Trust me, wives, you still do this to your husbands to this day, right? "What do you want to eat?" "I don't know, what do you want to eat?" Sweet wives, you know exactly what you want to eat, just tell us because most of the time, we're great with it. I don't need to guess what you want to eat.

We're going to talk about how love is patient. The very first... right there, I'm out. I am not patient. My sweet bride will tell you I'm the least patient person you know. I have opportunities to take jobs in metropolitan areas that I don't take because I will not sit in traffic. I will go crazy. Do I need to work on patience? Yes. I'm not a saint. I'm not asking you to polish my halo. I have impatience I have to work on, okay? Just like all of you here. There is no perfect patient person in here. That only perfect patient person is Christ.

As we look at this very first word, love is *patient*, we have to understand what that word *love* in 1 Corinthians 13: 4 means. C.S. Lewis writes this fabulous book called *The Four Loves* where he explains that in the Greek, there are actually more words for love than the one we use in the English. It's kind of like that old Wizard of Oz movie. The whole beginning of the movie was in black and white and then when Dorothy gets taken away in a tornado and lands in Oz, everything turns to color. That's kind of what happens when you begin to further understand the Greek. Everything is kind of black and white and then when you look at the Greek, it becomes more illuminated.

So, there are four types of love. The love here in this text is not storge. **Storge is like an affection love**, like the way you love your favorite Netflix show, or you love your favorite pizza, or you love chocolate. So, when you tell somebody, "I love you more than chocolate," no you don't, you just love chocolate a lot differently. It's a different type of love. It's called storge love, something you have an affection for. It's not the way you love people.

The other type is a **phileo love**. This is where we get the word Philadelphia, City of Brotherly Love. It comes from the word phileo which **means a friendship**. It's like a love you have for your co-workers or your friends. C.S. Lewis thinks that this love is actually the longest lasting. Some of you have had friends longer than you've been married. He suggests that a phileo love is actually the strongest type of love there is as far as a bond. Usually it's a give/give, not a give/take.

The other type of love is **eros or a romantic love**. The other great 80s movie... and I'm kind of torn that they are going to create a sequel... Any Top Gun lovers out there? There is a famous song in there and it's talking about eros love. "You've lost that lovin' feeling. Oh, oh that lovin' feeling." What they're talking about in that great 80s song is You've lost that eros. You've lost that romance. So, there's this eros, this romantic love that can be lost.

Author and speaker Gary Thomas, who wrote *The Sacred Search*, talks about this eros or this infatuation. What happens during this romantic love, this Bambi, twitterpated, feelings stage is that epinephrine and the endorphins in your brain give off these chemicals that are very similar to the stuff that you experience if you did drugs. Like drugs, you create a tolerance to it. So, the more you get comfortable with it, the more drugs it takes to get you high. Or, in this case, the more you are around it, the more numbing it takes. So, the first time you hold that girl's hand, you're not going to have that same rush of emotions in your brain like the 300th time you hold her hand. Or the first time you kiss your wife, it's not going to be the same 20 years later. You still might enjoy it, but it's not going to give that same chemical release because you build up a tolerance for it.

A lot of times when people say, "I fell out of love," what they are referring to is eros. "I no longer feel this romantic love for this person." Thank God that Jesus' love for us wasn't based off of eros. And thank God that Christ living in me helps me love my wife, not with an eros love, but with an agape love.

The word we're look at here today in 1 Corinthians 13: 4 is an **agape love**. **It is a divine, unconditional, unwavering love**, which, by the way, none of you will possess apart from Christ. I don't possess it apart from Christ. I can't love you with an agape love, with a divine love, divine being THE divine, without Him in side of me. So, I don't expect a non-believer to have agape love for anyone.

Thank God that Jesus, in the garden on the night he was betrayed, (Matt 26: 36) when he knows he is about to be betrayed, he realizes in that moment he has an agape love, not an eros love, because if he had an eros love, we know he wouldn't have gone all the way to Calvary because he cries out, "Father, if there is anything else I can do, take this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will but your will be done." This is showing to us that he had a deep agape, divine, unconditional love for us that equated into patience for us. If we are to exercise this, we must walk in the Spirit he gives us when we become believers. So, the moment you trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, and understood that he lived the life we all should live, died the death we all deserved to die, was buried, resurrected, and is sitting at the right hand of the throne of God. Once you believe that, the Spirit came to live inside you to indwell believers.

In Galatians 5: 22, it says this... It's not singular; there are no fruits, no s at the end of fruit and no s at the end of Spirit. So, it's not fruits and it's not Spirits. When you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit as a regenerated believer in Jesus Christ, these all come inside of you, this whole characteristic is inside of you now. **22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.** They are all in you. "I have love, but I don't have joy." "I have joy, but I don't have patience." No, all of them live inside of the believer.

Now, it's whether or not we choose to exercise this Spirit inside of us or we choose to ignore it. If this is a fruit of the Spirit, of being a regenerated believer in Jesus Christ, then the opposite of that, as John Bloom would say, is this: "Impatience is a fruit of selfishness; it's not a fruit of the Spirit". So, the more we exercise our impatience with people we don't think deserve our patience, or with people that continually take advantage of us, or people that continually drive us crazy, or whatever situations we may be in throughout our work week, that is an act of selfishness.

Thank God Jesus didn't act out of selfishness. As a matter of fact, he's the most selfless person ever to walk this earth. Jesus says, "I give you patience not because you deserve it but because I love you," and that's why love and patience are tied together here and that's why it kicks off an entire series that we're going to go through in the next few weeks.

So, every opportunity we get to exercise patience is actually an invitation for love. Think about it. This week, when you leave here, you're going to have an opportunity to show love through your patience. How many of you experience this? You go to the airport and it's delay, delay, delay, and cancel. All of the sudden, your impatience comes out that quickly. You somehow think that the person at the kiosk is responsible for the frozen weather. And so, like a hundred other people that have completely yelled and criticized their job that day, you decide to be 101. Impatience does not reflect or show the love of Christ.

My wife will tell you that she's traveled with me a lot. Any time this happens, and I know someone behind that kiosk has had a horrible day... She's like, "I don't get how you do this." It's really simple. Just showing love and patience goes a long way. "Hey, I know you've been having a really bad day and I know you don't control the weather. Is there any way I could go get you a Starbucks or anything to brighten up your day because I know you're not responsible for any of this? I'm serious. Do you want a coffee or anything? I know you might be able to help me out and you might not be able to help me out, but I know regardless, you don't control what's going on."

You won't believe the amount of airport workers that change their face when you're one person that shows them patience. They have nothing to do with your snow storm or your ice storm or mechanical errors or whatever the case may be. Not all the time, but sometimes it's amazing what they can actually do for the people that are nice to them. I've been able to get on flights before where my wife is wondering how I did it. Patience and love. It's amazing what Christ says actually works when we apply it in our real world.

How about this one. At Walmart... Or you hoity toity types that only go to Target, don't experience much of this. I'll actually go to Walmart and there will be lines. Sometimes I'll see employees on their walkie talkies and I'm like, *Do you not see a lot of us in line and there are like 20 open places you could open up to get this moving faster.* What I try to make a practice of... They all have their name tags on. When I'm going through that... I told you every time we have to exercise patience is an opportunity to show love. "How are you doing today, Susan? How's your day going? How can I pray for you?" What a fun interaction with just the grocery store clerk instead of getting really perturbed and frustrated. That person in that line can't control whether or not other employees are being lazy. So, don't take your frustration, your impatience out on that person that is actually the one checking you out. Think about that.

How about this one. We get to experience this at Branson. My lack of planning now has become the DMV's emergency. *I know I should have renewed my tags three months ago, but now I gotta do it last second. Now I'm late and it's my fault, but I'm going to take it out on you.* It's got a little quieter in here all of the sudden. A little conviction just dropped. How does our lack of planning become their

emergency? Whether or not the people inside of the DMV know Jesus, we have an opportunity, when we walk into places like this, to show love and patience.

For some reason we're able to show patience at Chick-fil-A. We're somehow able to show patience in this context. Because you're going to yell like, "What took so long?" and they're going to say, "My pleasure." How do you get mad at that? You don't. It's amazing how that takes place.

Some of you will be different leaving church today. Some of you will leave church and you'll cut somebody off and you just make sure they don't see your head and you'll just keep going because you can't even sit one more car in line leaving church. That's crazy.

Check out this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYVX-aQDPH8>

We're laughing at ourselves. People like me that don't like to be still and just go, go, go... I probably run in my sleep and don't even realize it. I don't sit still very well. There's a philosophy that the early bird gets the worm, so go after it and get after it. But, remember this. The second mouse always gets the cheese. So, we like to speed God up. We don't like God's timing. We don't want to be patience for what God is doing. But we must realize that in the waiting, God is doing something in us. God is trying to cultivate patience in us.

The reality is our culture today is actually stirring or creating more impatience. I think it requires more patience today that it did ten years ago. Let me give you a couple of examples. Every opportunity we get to practice patience is an opportunity to mature in love. I think in our world we have more of those. For example, like I told you, this is why I don't live in a metropolitan area. If you are in traffic throughout the day, you could put in a podcast, you could listen to the Bible on tape, you could do something that exercises your relationship with God rather than just being in an impatient, not-Christlike manner.

There are ways to maximize moments that God gives you because in the waiting, he's doing something in us. We see this all the way through scripture. Rarely is man's timing synonymous with God's timing, but God's timing is always perfect and he's teaching us something in patience. He's sanctifying, he's working something out in us in the waiting. You see it several times throughout scripture. Wait on the Lord. Wait on the Lord. Wait on the Lord. When we try to push it or be impatience, sometimes we miss what God is trying to do in our life.

How many of you are guilty of this? You're honking at this person, and this has been you. "By all means, finish your text. We'll just wait for the next green light." What's is God doing in that moment when that little teenage girl is texting in front of you and you see a green light and you want to lay on your horn while you've got your ichthus sticker on the back of your car. What is God teaching you? I'm impatient. And, God, your patience for me never ceases.

There are ways that our world has completely eliminated patience. If you want something, you can click on Amazon and have it within 24 hours. You don't have to wait until the store opens on Monday. You don't have to wait until Christmas. Instant gratification is the culture we live in.

Keep in mind 1 John 5: 19. We all know that we are children of God, but the whole world is under the control of the evil one. I think the more he can speed up our impatience, the more we miss the love of Christ. Remember, Christ is love and Christ is patience. So, we no longer live in a culture where we have to wait for anything. Things are open 24/7. Drive through. It's all about you and instant gratification. Remember impatience breeds selfishness. Patience breeds selflessness.

Here's another way culture has changed a ton. "Why haven't you responded? I know you're getting my text." They have the read receipts on, and you go crazy. "I know they read my text..." At least take your read receipt off so I know that you didn't read it and don't think you're being rude when you don't respond within 30 seconds. Or they do the thinking bubbles and then they change their mind. What were they going to say? Why did they stop texting?

Think about this for all our war veterans in here. They went off to war. There was no pay phone. They wrote these things called letters. They had to lick stamps to put on it and mail it. And then their fiancée or their spouse back home in the states would get it two weeks later, maybe three weeks later. Then they would write one back and send it in the mail. So, this conversation going back to the value of patience of what was built in that generation is radically different than the generation we're living in now. I think there is so much value in letters and not having instant gratification. A lot of times, we'll respond off the cuff anyways. It's not very wholesome. It's not very holy.

How many of you remember this sound? [sound of dial tone and push button tones and a modem connection] How old are you? You're 13? You've never heard that sound in your life. You have no idea what that sound means. You never had to wait 30 second for the internet. You whip out your phone and, wham, there it is. You want to see teenage impatience? Watch the internet slow down. Take the internet password from the house. They couldn't handle all that noise. We have created a product of impatience.

Here's the problem. **Impatience cultivates conflict.** Throughout scripture, impatience never manifests itself in a good way. And it never manifests itself in a good way when we are impatient with others. Regardless of whether or not they think we deserve it.

Look at this story of Abram and Sarai in Genesis 15. ***1 After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."***

2 But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."

4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." "Your offspring, Abram, is to be as numerous as the stars in the sky that you can't even count."

6 Abram believed the Lord... The text says he believed him, but what happens is, as we are going to see in a second, he got impatient. *...and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

Now, not even a chapter later, looks what happens after God just said, "I'm going to do this. Be patience in my timing."

Genesis 16 - **1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her."**

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. And from there, impatience brings conflict. And from Hagar comes Ishmael, from which comes Islam.

Finally, he delivers his promise because God's not a liar and he's going to fulfill his promise. Through Sarah and through Abraham, you have Isaac who comes the line of Christ. And you still see today Muslims and Christians in strong conflict. All because a man wasn't patient on God's timing. He told him he was going to do it. So, we see that impatience brings great conflict that still exists centuries later.

Patience brings healing. So, just as impatience brings conflicts, patience can bring great healing. Remember this story in Genesis 37: 5? Joseph had a dream and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. So, this faithful man, filled with integrity, has a dream. He's waiting on God's timing. His brothers sell him into slavery. He's falsely accused of trying to sleep with Potiphar's wife. She rips off his clothes and he runs away. He goes down to the pit. He's in prison. Patiently knowing that God gave him a dream. He's patiently waiting on God's timing, patiently believing and trusting God is going to do a work that he can't do of himself. Then he's raised second to none to Pharaoh because he can interpret dreams. As a result, he's reconciled and restored to his family. And he actually rescues his family from the famine. Had he not stayed patient and trusted in God and God's timing... Patience bring great healing.

It's not about whether or not we think someone in our life deserves patience. I don't deserve the patience of Christ. I don't deserve the patience Jesus gives me on a daily basis. It is through Christ and Christ alone, the Christ living in me, that I even operate out of any patience toward any of you. The Adam living in me, the flesh in me, I'm going to be so impatient with you. So, it never surprises me when a non-believer acts impatient. They don't have the Spirit of patience within them. Christ is the patience within us.

As a matter of fact, when we operate in patience, when we exercise it, we reflect Christ. Christ is patience, Christ is love. So, when you go to a restaurant after church today and the waiter or waitress messes up your order, you have an opportunity to reflect Christ in your patience. He is the epitome of patience and agape love. Those two coincide with one another. Your lack of patience shows people the exact opposite, which is not Jesus.

My lack of patience shows people the exact opposite. I have a six-year-old and a four-year-old, so I have the opportunity to exercise patience every single day of my life right now. And as a lot of mothers just

said, Amen. It's not whether or not we think someone deserves our patience. That's not agape love. Agape love is divine; it's unconditional.

It goes in line with Ephesians 4, **31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger...** which usually comes with impatience. **...brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another...** I'm going to add here: be patient towards one another. **...forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** God is patient with you.

To put it another way in 2 Peter 3, **9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

So, if God is patient with you and you understand that, why is it so difficult to be patient toward your spouse? During engagement, you had all the patience in the world when you were in the eros stage. "Oh, that's okay; I'll overlook that smacking out of your mouth food sound you're making right now." Got some misophonia in here I can tell. In case you're wondering what misophonia is, it's the extreme irritability of mouth noises. I know because I have it. My wife smacked when we were engaged, and it was beautiful then. Still trying to make it beautiful now. She's also great at not chomping apples in my ear anymore too.

Why, during the eros stage, which fades and falls away, are we so quick to show patience when the type of love that a lot of young people that are infatuated, and they think they're in love with somebody because of the epinephrine... They don't understand an agape love. They don't understand what a love looks like when you're in the trenches and you're having to go through it. It's a love that unconditionally continues to show patience.

I know my wife is not perfect. She knows I'm not perfect. And understanding that reality that both of us need Jesus helps me exercise more patience towards her. It's not that I need to pursue more patience; I need to pursue more Jesus because the Jesus inside of me is going to enable me to be more patient with her and vice versa. I don't need to read more books on patience to be more patience with my son. I need to spend more time with Jesus because Jesus inside of me gave me a fruit of the Spirit that is patient and it's going to help me be more patient with my son, realizing it's just not that big of a deal and losing my temper isn't very Christlike at all.

Jesus is patient with us because he never made it about himself. That's why he was patient. It wasn't about him. It's easy to be patient when it's not about you. It's really hard to be patient when you make it all about you. That's what traffic is. That's what lines are. That's what being put on hold is. That's why every person you call now has an answering service that you have to push 50 buttons to finally get to an operator. They want to see if you even have the patients to talk to them.

We are impatient with others because we make it all about ourselves. Well that's easy. Let me remind you of something. It's always been about Jesus. It's always going to be about Jesus. And it is never going to stop being about Jesus. When we make it about ourselves, we are going to be impatient, non-loving people.

When we make it about Christ and exalting his name and making him great and removing ourselves from a selfishness standpoint, we're going to exude love and patience, which, as I said, coincide together.

So, how do you become more patient and all these other things the teaching team is going to unpack for you? Seek more Jesus. Seek after him. He is the epitome of love and he is the epitome of patience.

Father God, we cannot thank you enough this morning for how unbelievably patient and long-suffering you are for us. We cannot thank you enough that your love for us was not based off of eros or storge or phileo, but you have an agape, divine, unconditional love which means everyone in here didn't deserve it, but you gave it to us regardless.

I pray that anyone that walked in here today that thinks they are undeserving of your patience or undeserving of your love are reminded that so is everyone else next to them, including this man standing up here preaching your word. Thank you that you don't give us what we deserve. And thank you for your grace, and your mercy, and your cross, and your unconditional love and patience.

It's in the matchless and mighty name of Jesus we pray. And all God's people said... Amen.