

**LOVE EXPRESSED THROUGH EVANGELISM AND SERVICE
LOVE IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH – PART 1 OF 4
1 CORINTHIANS 16:15**

“LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE”

1. In these last few verses of the letter, Paul is speaking in one way or another about **fellowship** in the **church**.
2. Paul gently shares **seven** expressions of **love** with the fellowship of the church (1 Cor. 16:15-24).

KEY THOUGHT: Paul concludes his comments in this letter by assuring the Corinthians **they are loved**.

I. THE CHURCH EXPRESSES LOVE THROUGH EVANGELISM (1 COR. 16:15a).

A. Sharing the gospel with someone can be a **pure** expression of God’s **love** (Rom. 9:1-5).

1. Paul was using hyperbole to express his **love** for his countrymen and his deep **longing** for their salvation (Rom. 9:1-3).

*“Give me Scotland for **Christ** or I die.”*

–John Knox

2. Paul possessed an **evangelistic** love whose depth seemed to be immeasurable.

B. The love with which Christians live and witness is ours only because **God gave** it to us (1 John 4:19).

1. Paul found he could love others when Christ’s love **controlled him** (2 Cor. 5:14).
2. Divine love, like “evangelizing love,” cannot be generated in our **flesh**, but must be the **work** of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

KEY THOUGHT: Through **evangelism** the early church expressed God’s love in their **lives** (1 Thess. 1:3-8).

II. THE CHURCH EXPRESSES GOD'S LOVE BY MEETING BELIEVERS' NEEDS (1 COR. 16:15b).

- A. The household of Stephanas “appointed” themselves the task of addressing the needs of others (1 Cor. 16:15a).
1. A person becomes a leader in the church not by appointment, but because his/her life and work for the gospel commands respect.
 2. The one who performs the work is a *diakonos*, from which we get our word deacon (Acts 6:2; John 12:26).
- B. Stephanas' family was “devoted” to ministry (*diakonia*) (1 Cor. 16:15b).
1. Devoted (*tassō*) can be translated “addicted”.

“...they [Stephanas' household] have “addicted” themselves to the ministry of the saints.”

Addiction
 - a) Strong habit, overpowering desire, compulsion to do it
 - b) Growing tolerance demands larger and larger doses to be taken.
 - c) Dependence means “must have it” in order to function
 2. The household was the type that perpetually served other believers (Heb. 6:10).

KEY THOUGHT: Paul did the Lord's work habitually, out of a powerful, driving compulsion that brought normalcy to his life.

KEY THOUGHT: Paul was not a workaholic that works for work's sake, but he was “addicted” to ministry for love's sake.

FOR FURTHER STUDY AND PERSONAL GROWTH

July 31, 2011

SUNDAY: **“Let all that you do be done in love” (1 Cor. 16:14)!** Paul stated that our motivation for our actions is sacrificial love (1 Cor. 16:14). Immediately following that statement, Paul then concluded his letter with several statements about fellowship in the church (16:15-24). In these last few verses of the letter, Paul finds a number of ways to define love in the fellowship of the church. Paul gently shares expressions of love with the fellowship of the church. Each expression is selfless and others-centered. That is the remarkable thing about being a Christian; our transformed view of how to live brings a Technicolor contrast to the black & white existence lived in the world. Initially, you will be admired for being others-centered, but eventually you will be envied for being freed from the chains of selfishness. Ask the Lord to “pour His strength” into you today to empower you to live with a focus on others (1 Cor. 16:14; Phil. 4:13). ***May this challenge bring you to the point of total dependence on the Lord!***

MONDAY: **Strive to love others with evangelistic zeal (1 Cor. 16:15a)!** Paul’s first expression of the church’s love was through its evangelism of the unsaved. Sharing the life-giving message of Jesus’ redemptive acts on the cross and about His victory in the tomb is one of the most important single acts Christians can perform in their lifetimes. Sharing the gospel with someone can be a pure expression of God’s love (Rom. 9:1-5). Paul was using hyperbole to express his love for his countrymen and his deep longing for their salvation (Rom. 9:1-3). Paul said that, if he could exchange his salvation for the sake of his countrymen’s salvation, he would gladly do so. Of course, Paul knew this was not possible. John Knox, the Scottish Reformer made a similar statement circa 1560, “Give me Scotland for Christ, or I die”. Paul possessed an evangelistic love whose depth seemed to be immeasurable. What are you willing to do for the advancement of the gospel? How far are you willing to go to express your gratitude for your salvation? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal whether you have a heart for the lost? Ask why you do not have more or a burden for the lost? ***May the words of Paul bring conviction to search what you do this year to advance the kingdom of God!***

TUESDAY: **God pours His love into our lives as believers (Rom. 5:5)!** The love with which Christians live and witness is ours only because God gave it to us (1 John 4:19). It is hard to love others as much as ourselves (Phil. 2:3-4). Paul found that he could love others when Christ’s love controlled him (2 Cor. 5:14). This divine love is described in Romans 5:5 as being “poured into our lives” by God. At conversion, God’s love is not dribbled into our lives, but it is poured in torrents. Divine love, like “evangelizing love,” cannot be generated in our flesh, but must be the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). The challenge for each Christian is actively seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit and better under the control of God’s vast love. A Christian under the control of God’s love seeks to share the glory of God and salvation regularly through both living and verbal witness. Ask the Lord how you can be under the influence of His love more each day. Request the Holy Spirit reveal sinful issues that cause you to not be Spirit-controlled. ***May the love of God control your life so you are filled with His strength to witness!***

WEDNESDAY: *Evangelism was a lifestyle in the early church (1 Thess. 1:3-8)!* Evangelism was one of the ways the early church expressed God's love in their lives (1 Thess. 1:5). The genuineness of the Thessalonians' conversion was affirmed by the power with which they shared the gospel. The gospel is not just the message conveyed in words, but the power of the Holy Spirit bringing conviction. The Holy Spirit attests to the validity of the gospel by the Spirit-led life of the one who is sharing. Specifically, what areas of your life need to be controlled more fully by the love of God? Ask the Lord to help identify struggles you have with being submitted to the leadership of the Holy Spirit? *May the practice and example of the early church become a catalyst in your life as a kingdom Christian!*

THURSDAY: *The church expresses God's love by meeting believer's needs (1 Cor. 16:15b)!* Paul writes about the household of Stephanas who "appointed" themselves the task of addressing the needs of others in the church (1 Cor. 16:15). The family and their servants made up their household. They chose a life of service to others because it brought glory to God. It was not a role assigned to them by the church but one in which they cast themselves. A person becomes a leader in the church not by appointment, but because his/her life and work for the gospel commands respect. The one that performs the work of a "slave", or servant, is the word from which we derived the word deacon (Acts 6:2; John 12:26). The household of Stephanas was committed to serving the needs of others as an expression of God's love. Ask the Lord how your talents, abilities and spiritual gifts could be used to uniquely bless other believers. Reflect on the love of God that led to your salvation and how you can express God's love through your life. *May your willingness to be controlled by the love of God lead to lifestyle decisions that build the kingdom of God!*

FRIDAY: *Service of other believers is a coveted lifestyle for a Christian (1 Cor. 16:15b)!* Stephanas' family was "devoted" to the ministry (*diakonia*) (1 Cor. 16:15). Devoted (*tassō*) can be translated "addicted". Stephanas' family had made the choice to live a lifestyle that was "addicted" to the ministry of the saints. Some of the characteristics of addiction can be applied to the life of a Christian devoted to serving. First, addiction describes a strong habit with an overpowering desire or compulsion. Second, the longer the addiction continues, a growing tolerance demands larger and larger doses to be taken. Third, dependence on the behavior means the addicted person "must have it" in order to function. Stephanas' household was the type that perpetually served other believers as described in Hebrews (Heb. 6:10). The level of devotion mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16:15 would call to mind our idea of being "sold out." Someone whose number one priority was to whatever or whoever they were committed. Would either the "devoted" or "sold out" label come close to describing you? If not, why? Confess your reservations with the Lord and ask for forgiveness. Reflect again on 1 John 4:7-11 to see the love that brought you into the kingdom of God. *May the Lord clearly bless you by your obedience in serving others!*

SATURDAY: *Is our community on your heart?* John Knox had a passion to see Scotland come to know Christ. Paul voiced the anguish he felt for the Jews because they had not turned to Christ. Paul did the Lord's work habitually, out of a powerful, driving compulsion that brought normalcy to his life. Paul was not a workaholic that works for work's sake, but he was "addicted" to ministry for love's sake. Ask the Lord how the description of Paul could describe you more. *May the challenges offered from this passage push you to desire to be a kingdom building Christian!*