

15 Attributes of Agape Love

1 Corinthians 13 Homework

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Instructions This will be a difficult study with hard questions for you to answer. Don't give up. Do this to the end. Look to become more like Christ through this study. The goal is not to save your marriage, but to truly conform your heart to be like Jesus. All the rest follows after we seek him first (Matthew 6:33).

Read: For five out of seven days, read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 aloud, focusing on the qualities of love using the 1 Corinthians 13 study attached. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

Pray: Begin each session asking God to reveal where you've fallen short and to give you strength to love your wife as Christ loves (Ephesians 5:25). **Journal:** Answer the application questions below in your journal, writing at least two sentences per question. Be specific, referencing your past unfaithfulness, your wife's trauma (e.g., feelings of betrayal or being an "accessory"). **Apply:** Each week, choose one small action from your answers (e.g., a kind text, listening without defending) to show your wife biblical love. Track how it goes in your journal.

Day 1: Introduction to Agape Love Agape love is not based on emotions, appreciation, or admiration. It's an act of the will that chooses the best for others, even when undeserved. God loved us while we were enemies, giving His Son for us. Love is action-oriented and sacrificial, reflecting God's nature: "God is love" (1 John 4:16). We cannot love this way without being born again and partaking in God's divine nature. Love is most displayed in Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross: "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers" (1 John 3:16). God's love is unexpected and for the unworthy: "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Husbands are called to love wives as Christ loved the church, giving himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25).

Love is a command, not optional: Husbands love wives, wives love husbands, believers love God, enemies, neighbors, and one another. Love is the goal of Christian growth, the highest expression of maturity (2 Peter 1:5-8). The definition comes from 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a: "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." Application: Reflect on Christ's willingness to die for sinners such as us. Commit to studying this chapter daily as assigned in counseling, focusing on selfless love rather than theology alone. Ask God to create a genuine fellowship between you and your wife and Himself. Questions: 1. Write down two specific ways can you demonstrate care and goodwill with this week. 2. Pray: Ask God to reveal where pride has led to non-communication. After praying and reflecting, write down 2 or 3 areas of pride in your own heart that are apparent to you. 3. How has your understanding of love as "knowing the right theology" differed from genuinely loving your wife selflessly? Pray: Ask God to reveal areas where pride has hindered your love

Day 2: Love Is Patient Love gives people time to grow. It suffers long, like having a "long fuse," opposite of being short-tempered. God changes us over time, so love endures personal wrongs gently, without retaliation. Patience is the ability to be inconvenienced repeatedly without anger. It waits for godly outcomes, refusing sinful anger, and never retaliates. In marriage, patience means giving your spouse room for imperfections. It's joyfully submitting to Christ for their good, as Jesus did (Hebrews 12:2). Love has no clock-it's 24/7 availability. Key Verse: "Love is patient" (1 Corinthians 13:4a). Application: When your wife expresses frustration or trauma, listen without defending or retaliating (even if the retaliation are bad thoughts about her in your mind). Give her time to heal without pressure for quick reconciliation. During your weekly lunches, focus on her needs rather than expressing stagnation. Be patient, waiting on God to heal her (and you) and to heal your marriage. Questions: 1. What are three things you wish God would do in your marriage right now? Why do you think he is having you wait?

2. What are common ways you tend to show impatience in your relationship with your wife? Write them down and how you want to work on them. (Example: clamming up or shutting down) 3. What one inconvenience from your wife can you endure joyfully this day?

Day 3: Love Is Kind Love helps people grow by serving and making life easier for others. It's "giving until it hurts," being useful and profitable. Kindness is soft and gentle, like Jesus' easy yoke: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). It lifts burdens, and genuinely rejoices in serving the other person, seeing their burdens lifted. In your marriage, be kind by putting your spouse's needs first. Serve from the heart: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). Key Verse: "Love is... kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4b). Application: Questions: Perform acts of kindness that validate your wife's feelings, like acknowledging her hurt without defensiveness. Think about practical ways you can lift her burdens. 1. How can kind words during a misunderstanding rebuild trust? Write down one kind thing you can say to your wife this week. Plan to say that to her next time you see her. 2. your wife has asked for boundaries in your relationship as she heals from the trauma of your actions. Write down two ways you can accommodate her boundaries. 3. Show kindness by lifting your wife's burdens. Ask her, "What is one burden that I can lift for you?" Be willing to meet the needs of her burdens in practical ways.

Day 4: Love Is Not Jealous Love isn't envious of others' positions, gifts, or success. Jealousy resents when someone seems ahead in honor, respect, or possessions. It's selfish, wanting attention for oneself. Instead, love puts others first and rejoices in their success: "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Corinthians 12:26). In marriage, avoid resenting your spouse's ease or role. Be grateful for their gifts and position. Godly jealousy

protects God's glory and others' good, but sinful jealousy destroys. Key Verse: "Love does not envy" (1 Corinthians 13:4c).

Application: Celebrate your wife's strengths and independence during separation. Avoid resentment over her boundaries; instead, express gratitude for her role as a wife and mother. See her as compassionate and competent. Questions: 1. What are the top three areas you resent your wife's ease or where you think she has it better than she ought? 2. Choose to give each of these things to God, rejoicing in God's blessing in her life. 3. Name one thing you are grateful for in your wife.

Day 5: Love Is Not Boastful or Proud Love doesn't use inflated words or have an inflated self-view. Boasting is like being a "windbag," parading accomplishments. Pride leads to superiority and contempt. Humility is selfforgetfulness, thinking of oneself less, not less of oneself. Spiritual pride is worst among Christians. Combat pride by praying for illumination, confessing sins, humbling yourself, and focusing on God's greatness (Psalm 139:23-24; 1 Peter 5:6). Key Verse: "Love does not... boast; it is not arrogant" (1 Corinthians 13:4d-5a). Application: Think about ways in which you might think you are better or more deserving than your wife. In conversations, avoid defending your intentions; humbly listen to your wife's perceptions. Confess pride in selfish behaviors or past deceit to God and her. Questions: 1. How can reflecting on God's greatness help you combat pride in your marriage? 2. How has pride led to shutting down communication or allowed you to disconnect emotionally from your wife? 3. What prideful attitudes surface when your wife misinterprets you? 4. What prideful attitudes might you need to confess to improve your marriage? Think of at least two. Write them down.

Day 6: Love Is Not Rude Love doesn't act unbecomingly, with disdain or embarrassment toward others. Rudeness shows no concern for others' feelings, including through silence that dismisses concerns. Excuses like "bad day" don't justify it: "To speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people" (Titus 3:2).

In marriage, avoid rudeness in growth differences. Use courteous words to edify: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29). Key Verse: "Love... is not... rude" (1 Corinthians 13:5b). Application: Replace a lack of communication with gentle, courteous engagement when your wife expresses concerns. Show respect for her feelings, honoring her boundaries. Monitor your tone and actions. If rude to your spouse, apologize and commit to courtesy. Reflect on pressures that trigger

rudeness. Questions: 1. How did Jesus act when he was disrespected? Was he ever rude? When you feel you want to be rude, instead pray, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do..." 2. How can you ensure your words and actions show respect, even when you're tired, stressed, or feel disrespected? 3. How is defensiveness a form of rudeness? 4. Are you committed to courteous dialogue even when you are misunderstood or disrespected? Can you see how this approach would build trust?

Day 7: Love Is Not Selfish Love doesn't insist on its own way, laying aside rights for others' good. Selfishness destroys relationships by ignoring needs: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3). Selflessness does not mean we think less of ourselves, but that we don't think of ourselves at all. Instead we rejoice in serving others, especially our spouse. Key Verse: "Love... does not insist on its own way" (1 Corinthians 13:5c). Application: Prioritize your wife's needs above your own desires and needs. Serve her without expecting immediate reconciliation. Joyfully trust God even though this could be a long road ahead. Questions: 1. How can you daily look to Christ for inspiration in sacrificing for your wife? (Example: when he was reviled, he did not revile back but instead submitted himself to his Father.) 2. In what ways does selfishness appear in your marriage in your life, and how can you replace it with selflessness? 3. What personal desires do you need to set aside to prioritize your spouse's needs?

4. How has your desire to find friendship / intimacy outside of marriage been self-centered? What selfish motives led to you setting aside your vows? 5. Are there ways you have felt like you deserved something more than your wife that led you to be unfaithful?

Day 8: Love Is Not Irritable Love isn't easily provoked, exasperated, or grumpy. Irritability includes withdrawing into silence, often from weakness like tiredness or emotional exhaustion. Though this is very human, it is also self-centered: Solutions include rest, thankfulness, and Scripture meditation: "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you" (Isaiah 26:3). In marriage, restore your exhaustion with joy in Christ by spending time with him in the word, and by being with God's people. Key Verse: "Love... is not irritable" (1 Corinthians 13:5d). Application: When tempted to shut down or give up due to hopelessness for your marriage, hold back irritation and express brokenness humbly to God. Questions: 1. What triggers irritability in your interactions with your spouse? 2. How can resting in God's peace help you respond calmly to your spouse in an honorable, gentle way? 3. Are you able to see your spouse through the eyes of Jesus? Where do you struggle with that? 4. What pressure triggers rudeness for you, and how can you prepare to be courteous instead of rude?

Day 9: Love Is Not Resentful Love keeps no record of wrongs, not nursing grudges or holding ledgers. It forgives as God does: "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). Resentment seeks to get even; love covers sins (1 Peter 4:8). In marriage, forgive without revisiting wrongs. True forgiveness means "paid in full," rebuilding trust over time.

Key Verse: "Love... is not... resentful" (1 Corinthians 13:5e). (Note: Resentful means "does not count up wrongdoing.") Application: Release any resentment over your wife's trauma responses. Forgive her perceptions without defensiveness, focusing on your accountability. Questions: 1. 2. 3. 4.

What past hurts are you holding against your spouse, and how can you release them? How does God's forgiveness of your sins inspire you to forgive your spouse? What steps can you take to rebuild trust after forgiving your spouse's wrongs? In what ways does keeping a "record of wrongs" affect your ability to connect with your spouse? 5. Pray: Confess resentment and ask for grace to forgive.

Day 10: Love Does Not Rejoice in Wrongdoing Love doesn't gloat over others' failures or parade sins. It grieves sin, as God does, and seeks restoration:

"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6:1). In marriage, don't ignore wrongs through silence. Focus on growth and restoration. Key Verse: "Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing" (1 Corinthians 13:6a). Application: As God gives you grace, grieve your past unfaithfulness without self-justification. Pray that God will give you an opportunity to initiate a gentle conversation to validate her hurt and discuss restoration. Obviously, this will take time but trust the Lord to see that it will happen. Questions: 1. How does focusing on your own sinfulness help you avoid pride when your spouse fails? 2. How can your wife encourage you and show you she has forgiven you? 3. What would restoration look like for you and your wife? Name three steps that you could take that would lead in the direction of restoration.

Day 11: Love Rejoices in Spiritual Growth Love rejoices with the truth, excited by spiritual victories and changed lives: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (3 John 4).

In marriage, encourage growth together: Bible reading, prayer, worship, serving, giving, and sharing faith. Key Verse: "Love... rejoices with the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:6b). Application: Rejoice in your wife's spiritual growth. Questions: 1. What spiritual victories in your spouse's life can you celebrate to encourage them? 2. In what ways does rejoicing in your spouse's faith deepen your emotional connection? 3. What shared spiritual practices can you adopt to foster unity and joy? (Example: a good place to start is by praying for one another diligently each day).

Day 12: Love Always Protects Love bears all things, covering and protecting like a roof or soldier: "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). Husbands cherish wives (Ephesians 5:28-29); wives support husbands. Protect reputation, provide security, and confront sin compassionately. Key Verse: "Love bears all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7a). Application: Protect your wife's emotional security by respecting her boundaries, seeing this not as a negative but as a joy to serve her as you serve Christ. Protect your wife's emotional security by validating her trauma. Avoid comparisons; cherish her through accountable actions. Questions: 1. Write out the path you took that led you to stop protecting your marriage and become unfaithful to your wife. 2. List two ways to you can rebuild that protection by rebuilding trust. 3. What boundaries does your spouse need you to honor to feel safe in the marriage?

Day 13: Love Always Believes the Best Love believes all things, trusting and giving the benefit of the doubt. It's not gullible but fills unknowns with positives. In marriage, think the best of your spouse, as in courtship. Avoid cynicism; respect and praise them.

Key Verse: "Love... believes all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7b). Application: Believe the best in your wife's intentions, even in miscommunications. Fill blanks positively when she expresses needs. Questions: 1. How can assuming positive intent in your spouse's actions improve your communication? 2. How can believing the best (for example, that your spouse is compassionate and competent) encourage dialogue? 3. Share a positive assumption with your wife the next time you see her. 4. How does believing the best about your spouse reflect God's grace in and through you? 5. How can praising your spouse's intentions build a stronger marital bond?

Day 14: Love Always Hopes for the Best Love hopes all things with certain expectation of God's good work: "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). No person or marriage is hopeless. Anchor hope in God, not circumstances. Key Verse: "Love... hopes all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7c). Application : Replace hopelessness with hope by praising God for his work in your marriage, even if you don't see it. Questions: 1. How can anchoring hope in God's work in your wife and in yourself help you remain optimistic about your marriage? 2. What hopeless thoughts about your spouse or marriage need to be replaced with biblical hope? 3. In what ways can you pray for your spouse's future growth and your marriage's healing?

Day 15: Love Always Perseveres Love endures all things, standing fast like a soldier, never giving up: "Looking to Jesus... who... endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2). In marriage, know the enemy (not your spouse), use God's armor, seek mediation, humble yourself, focus on Jesus, and choose love.

Key Verse: "Love... endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7d). Application: When you feel hopeless and ready to give up, make a habit of finding a verse of hope and meditating on it (for example, Romans 8:28, God works all things together for good, for those who love God and are the called according to his purpose...) Questions: 1. 2. 3. 4.

What challenges in your marriage require you to persevere rather than give up? How can focusing on Jesus as your example help you endure marital difficulties? What role does humility play in persevering through conflicts with your spouse? What practical steps can you take to remain committed when your spouse is distant?

Day 16: Love Always Produces Eternal Fruit Love never ends, always triumphing and bearing eternal rewards. It's supernatural, from God's love in us: "Pursue love" (1 Corinthians 14:1). In marriage, demonstrate Christ's sacrificial love. Lay down your life as He did (Ephesians 5:25; 1 John 3:16). We are to become like God and bear the fruit of Christlikeness. This is why love never fails. Application: Review the study and trust God for supernatural, heaven sent fruit, with his power working in both you and your wife to produce love, true Christlikeness in you through this suffering and trial. Questions: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

How does pursuing agape love in your marriage align with God's eternal purposes? How can your daily choices to love your wife reflect Christ's love for the church? In what ways does your love for your spouse, despite the pain, make you more like God? Pray: Commit your marriage to God for His glory. How can you encourage your spouse to pursue love that never fails in your marriage?