



From Clanging Cymbals to Beautiful Music

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If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 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. Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (select verses)

At the 2025 WELS National Band Fest, the concert ended with an awesome piece of music called “Foundations.” It was based on the hymn “The Church’s One Foundation.” Before the music started, the band director told the audience, “Listen carefully to the percussion at the beginning—it sets the beat for the whole song!”

To the untrained ear, the opening measures sounded like someone clapping two wooden blocks together. Clap. Clap. Clap. It didn’t sound very exciting at first. But then the flutes joined in, then the trumpets and trombones—and the music grew louder and more beautiful. By the end, the music was huge and amazing!

This is kind of like what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 13. If we don’t have love, we’re just like that lonely percussion—clap, clap, clap—without a melody. Even if we do good things like give toys to kids, feed the hungry, or help others, if we don’t do it with the love of Jesus in our hearts, it’s just noise.

But when we do have Jesus’ love, our lives become a beautiful song! The Bible tells us what that kind of love sounds like:

- “Love is patient. Love is kind.” (That’s like flutes.)
- “It doesn’t brag or get jealous.” (Here come the clarinets!)
- “Love doesn’t get angry easily. It forgives.” (Here come the horns!)
- “Love always protects, trusts, hopes, and keeps going.”
- And then the big finish: “Love never fails!”

Why? Because Jesus never fails.

Questions to Consider:

Who do you love?

How do you show love to that person?

In the Bible, Paul talks about what love isn't. Can you think of the eight things love does NOT do? (Example: "Love does NOT envy . . .")

Which one (of the eight things) do you find hardest to do? Explain why.

Name someone in your life who shows the kind of love we talked about today.

Of all the ways love was described today, which one is your favorite? Why does it matter to you?