

A Patient, Kind and Humble World

The passage from 1 Corinthians 13, often recited at weddings, offers a profound description of love—patient, kind, humble, and free of envy or pride. Yet, these virtues extend beyond romantic settings and serve as a guiding light for how we might relate to God, ourselves, and all of creation. Love, as described in this passage, is not merely an emotion but a way of being that shapes our relationships and interactions with the world.

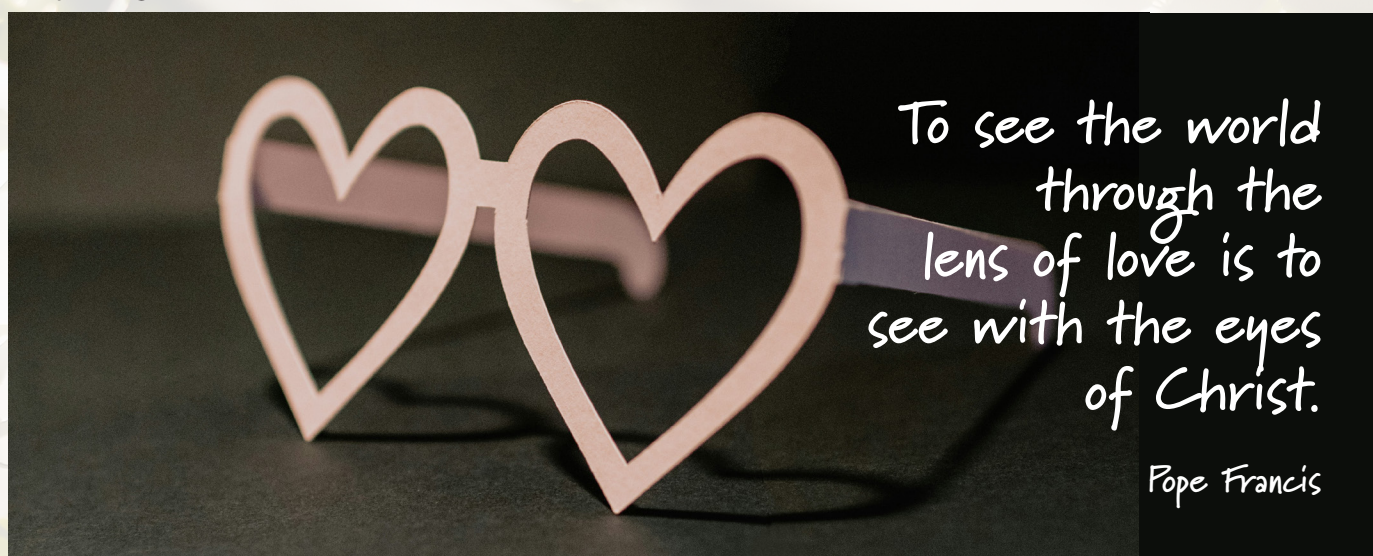
Russell Brand (2024) and Anna O’Neil (2019) offer unique approaches to understanding the passage. Brand’s method is personal, as he replaces the word “love” with his own name—“Russell is patient, Russell is kind.” In doing so, he confronts the gap between his ideals and actions. His reflection serves as a practical exercise in self-awareness, highlighting the ongoing challenge of embodying these virtues in everyday life, especially in moments of frustration and imperfection. Brand’s vulnerability in admitting his struggles, particularly as a father, points to the difficulty of maintaining patience and kindness, while also emphasising the importance of growth and gratitude for the opportunity to improve.

On the other hand, O’Neil shifts the focus from self to God. By replacing “love” with “God” in the passage, she reframes these virtues as

intrinsic to God’s nature. This shift transforms her understanding of God from a figure of judgment to one of love and protection. In recognising God’s perfect embodiment of patience and kindness, O’Neil finds both comfort and motivation in her spiritual journey, feeling less burdened by her shortcomings and more supported in her efforts to grow.

Both reflections remind us that love is not merely an individual pursuit but a shared responsibility that connects us with others and with the divine. When we shift the focus from “I am patient” to “We are patient,” we emphasise the collective effort required to live out these virtues in our communities. In this light, the passage challenges us to reflect on our individual and shared roles in fostering a more loving, compassionate world.

Ultimately, these reflections on love serve as a reminder that love is an ongoing effort, a way of living that requires constant self-assessment and humility. Whether we look at it through the lens of personal growth, our relationship with God, or our connection to all created things, the virtues of love remain timeless and universal. By focusing on love as both an individual and collective goal, we can better understand our place in the world and work toward becoming the best versions of ourselves — together.



REFLECTION: How can we better embody the virtues of love—patience, kindness, and humility—in our relationships with others and with ourselves?

REFERENCES: Brand, R. (2024) ‘I can’t believe I missed THIS in the Bible’ [Instagram].
O’Neil, A. (2019) accessed at - <https://aleteia.org/2019/11/14/a-life-changing-way-to-read-the-love-is-patient-love-is-kind-passage>