

I Love Lists!

Yes, I love lists! Okay, I'm a bit weird, but lists are great. Lists get right to the point of the subject at hand. "The facts, ma'am, we just want the facts," (Sargent Friday, *Dragnet*.) Lists dispense with all the fluff. Lists give us the main points in short order. Lists boil things down to the essentials that must not be forgotten.

God's word is replete with lists: sin lists, blessing lists, things to be avoided and things to be pursued. The first list *ever* had only one item, "Don't eat from the tree!" Lists get longer with the Ten Commandments, then the blessings at Mount Gerazim and the curses at Mount Ebal. The Old Testament prophets had whole laundry lists of problems that explained why the nations suffered negative consequences and even loss of national sovereignty.

New Testament lists are, at times, a bit different. While the Old Testament prophets' lists are usually national in nature, New Testament lists are usually quite personal, guiding the individual reader into a more personal spirituality. There are several *sin lists*, including the better known ones found in Romans 1, I Corinthians 6, Galatians 5; II Timothy 3, et al.

But there are also lists of good things, such as those found in, Philippians 4, Galatians 5, I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 (specifically about elders), and perhaps the premier list in I Corinthians 13:4-7 about love.

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;]bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

This list is profoundly important because it helps us both define and recognize genuine love, which verse 13 says is the greatest of all. I adjure you to read this list slowly and carefully asking yourself, "Am I (each of these things)." God not only calls us to love but He has so carefully defined love and given examples of love that it would be hard for any serious reader to misunderstand. (Follow it? Hard at times. Understand it? Fairly easy.)

When God gives lists He is making His point both clearly and firmly. When we see a list we should examine it deeply and seriously. God has given us His word for a very clear and specific reason, as seen in John 15:11, "**These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.**" Our joy is best found in seeing, understanding, analyzing and **doing** the will of God. The lists just make it easier! Hallelujah for God's lists!!!

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