

I have used the Message for the opening part of 1 Corinthians and reverted to the NIV for the attributes of love – probably more familiar and the most likely version for church bibles

Setting

Two people (male and female) sitting centre stage at a table with enough on the table to convey two people having a meal together – a really ‘cosy’ little scene; if props can manage a lighted candle, so much the better. Behind them a screen to give a backdrop, The ‘Voices’ can sit anywhere they are not seen by the congregation, as long as the amplification is good enough not to give away their real position).

While the Narrator reads 1 Corinthians 13 the two remain in freeze position until Narrator stops as follows

Narrator If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. ²If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

Love is..... *Narrator is cut off by the man saying*

Man

More wine?

Woman

Sure..... why not

(He pours some more)

Man

That was a beautiful meal..... thankyou

He picks up his glass and holds it up – she follows suit; they raise their glasses and as they touch he says

You know....I love you so much

Woman

I love you too

They both take a drink and put their glasses down. After a moment,

Man

Did you ever think about the real meaning of the word ‘love’? I don't think it's really a word at all

Woman

Oh!..... what do you mean? *she interjects with surprise – he continues*

Man

You see, I think it is really an action....doing or acting towards someone to demonstrate how much you care about them

Woman

Doesn't the bible say something about that?....let's get it out and take a look, now that we're in the mood

Man

Good idea (*She gets up and goes and gets two bibles, which they open at 1 Corinthians 13. As they do so, they fumble just a little (just to appear like ordinary people, not totally familiar with where to find it)*)

Man

Do you know where to find it?

Woman

I think so.....let's' have a look.....

Man (*while she is looking*)

I always have difficulty finding these books in the bible

Woman

Here it is, I've got it.....page (*use page no. of church bibles*)

She starts to read where the narrator left off

'Love is patient,

Love is kind, Love is.....' she fades away a little, a short pause and then says

Hey, here's a thought..... how about we try putting the word 'i' there instead of 'Love' and see how well we do.

Man 'Good idea'do you want to start or will I?

Woman Oh, you go first.

He I am loving and patient – well ...except sometimes with you

Voice1 yes, and what about your work colleagues And in traffic ...and

She I am kind – sure everyone here knows that!

Voice 2 How come **I** don't know it then?

Voice 1 – me neither!

He Well I definitely don't envy,

Voice1 Except when your friend landed that big job

She I do not boast, I just tell people a little about myself – in a modest way, of course

Voice2 Huh! Did you ever listen to yourself – how often do you use the words like 'I' and 'My' in conversation?

He I am not proudI just am my own person

Voice1 like when you can't adopt a servant role!

She I'm certainly not rude,

Voice2 *like when you're very pushy*

He Definitely, I am not self-seeking,

Voice1 *how come then I hear the words 'I want' so often*

She I am not easily angered,

Voice2 *oooh...you wish!*

He i keep no record of wrongs.

She Good, so I'm forgiven for messing up your arrangements for the 20th time then?

He Touché! Alright then..... I do not delight in evil but rejoice with the truth.

Voice1 That's good

She I always protect, always trust, always hope, always persevere

Voice2 That's good too, but keep at it

After a short pause while they look at one another

He I dunno about you, but I've a long way to go to reach that standard.....I think I'll make the coffee.

He exits while Narrator finishes the passage – She adopts a pensive appearance and examines bible – freeze position

Narrator

Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.

When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.

We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.

As the narrator finishes, he walks back in with the coffee and as he pours,

She (after he pours her coffee) Thankyou

He So.... what have you been thinking about?

Sheactually I was thinking of another type of love altogether (*stands up and moves to stage front, speaking largely towards audience*) You know how preachers often talk about a thing they call Agapé (*pronounced aga~pay*) love, the type of love Jesus

demonstrated when he sacrificed himself for people who couldn't care less..... you know, love that has real cost..... wouldn't that be real love?

Man (*gets up and joins her,*)

I never thought about that too much ... but now that you mention it that would be a real wonder why he would do that – what a cost!

END LINE

He and she hold hands

Voice1 How much did your love for Jesus cost you last week.....

Man & Woman (*together*) **Bring on song as they start these words**

....and how much will it cost next week?

Piece of music (How deep the Father's love for us.....) cued to start just as they finish. The two actors pause for a few moments and walk off stage while the song captures the atmosphere for reflection. Make sure your licence covers playing this song.

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