

“What’s Love Got to Do With It”

1 Corinthians Chapter 13

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 are important chapters concerning spiritual things.

Chapter 12 Paul addresses an issue the Corinthians have concerning Spiritual Gifts. The main issue Paul addressed is that they were divided as a church over Spiritual Gifts. The scriptures teach that the church is to be in unity and that the spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit are to build up the church.

Paul saw that the church used Spiritual Gifts to compete with each other not to build one another up.

At the end of chapter 12 Paul transitions to this 13th chapter by saying “*And I show you a still more excellent way*”. Not showing a more excellent gift but a more excellent WAY of operating in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

End of Chapter 12 Paul says, “*Earnestly desire greater gifts.*” Beginning of chapter 14 he says, “*Desire earnestly spiritual gifts.*” The context is spiritual gifts. So chapter 13, while it applies to so many more areas in our lives it is giving us instructions on how to operate and desire spiritual gifts.

1Cr 13:1 1) The Preeminence of Love vs 1-3

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

1Cr 13:2 If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

1Cr 13:3 And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

- It is important to understand that this passage is not laying down a choice. A choice between Spiritual Gifts and Love. But it is demonstrating the WAY Spiritual Gifts are to be used. For without Love, Spiritual Gifts are nothing and accomplish nothing.
- If We Speak Exceptionally Well
 - Of Men - preaching, teaching, encouragement, evangelism
 - Of Angels - There isn't another meaning except a language that is not of men. Chapter 14 we will see it is a language between God and man that edifies an individual. But if used between man and man it isn't understood.
 - **WITHOUT LOVE - tongues are just noise and obnoxious noise at that.**
- If We Stand Out Spiritually
 - Prophecy - 1 Corinthians 14:1 Paul says to especially desire prophecy. 1 Corinthians 14:5 He says I would rather you prophesy. To be able to boldly and correctly proclaim the heart of God and His Word.
 - Knowledge - gifted in scripture memorization and has the ability to recall appropriate verses and recite them chapter and verse.
 - Mountain Moving Faith - to have the boldness of Moses, Joshua, Elijah, or Daniel or Paul. To step out and confidently live Christianity where most people are left behind doing nothing in their fear.
 - **WITHOUT LOVE - being spiritual makes us nothing. Truthfully it is better said that without love we would only be acting spiritual rather than being spiritual.**
- If We Serve Sacrificially
 - Give All Our Possessions - to be generous beyond are for your own need.
 - Martyrdom - To Literally Die for Christ. (Suicide bombers have not benefited in their devotion. Neither do Christians how put themselves in harm's way without love.)
 - **WITHOUT LOVE - sacrifice profits nothing at all. It is just a terrible waste.**
- This lists a few of the gifts. What is your Gift? Worship, Hospitality, Administration, Helps, Leadership? Apply the same lesson here to your gift and calling.
WITHOUT LOVE - it is ineffectual and accomplishes you nothing.
- The purpose of Paul's writing is not for us to quit these wonderful gifts but to function in them in a more excellent way.

- Love is a behavior not a feeling

1Cr 13:4

1) The Performance of Love vs 4-7

Greek words for Love:

- Eros - Erotic and Sexual love (selfish)
- Storge - Family Love Parent to Child, or child to Parent
- Philio - Friendship love / shared a 50/50 love. I'll love you if you love me.
- Agape - Selfless Love. Love that loves without any requirement of a return. In many instances it is impossible for a return of affection. This is a love that is given even when rejected.

Love in this passage is Agape.

1Cr 13:5

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*,

1Cr 13:6

does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but **rejoices with the truth**;

1Cr 13:7

bears all things, **believes all things**, **hopes all things**, **endures all things**.

- 15 Behaviors (7 things love is and 8 things love is not)
- **PATIENT** (suffers long) - It has the ability to trust. Patience is a trust that the eventuality of a matter will be realized.
 - The ancient preacher John Chrysostom said this is the word used of the man who is wronged, and who easily has the power to avenge himself, but will not do it out of mercy and patience. Do you avenge yourself as soon as you have the opportunity?
 - After patience is run its course Love is still... KIND.
- **KIND** - It is a gentle warm tender sympathy towards others. It is a sweetness that is easily imposed upon but that such imposition is graciously received.
- **NOT JEALOUS** - (not envious) a feeling of discontent or covetousness with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc
 - "*Envy accomplishes nothing except hurt*" (Guzik)
 - Cain and Able **Genesis 4**;
 - Joseph and his brothers **Genesis 37:11.28**;
 - Jesus put on the cross **Matthew 27:18** "*For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy*"
- **DOESN'T BRAG** - (parade itself) Love does not have to be in the limelight to act. It can fulfill its goal without the need of recognition.
- **NOT ARROGANT** - (not puffed up) making claims or pretensions to superior importance or rights; It is not centered in pride. Love accomplish the opposite, it gives to others superior importance.
- **DOES NOT ACT UNBECOMINGLY** - (is not rude) Love is not discourteous or impolite. Love is well mannered
- **DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN** - Love is OTHERS FOCUSED. Paul writes about this quite a bit.
 - **Romans 12:10** "*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor*"
 - **Philippians 2:3-4** "*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others*"
- **NOT PROVOKED** - Love is not easily annoyed or irritated. It is not quickly angered. In fact the NASB and the NKJV, say it IS NOT provoked. It isn't provoked after longsuffering. It is simply NOT provoked.
- **DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A WRONG** - (thinks no evil) Love does not store up records of wrongs. It does not believe in 3 strikes and your out.
 - Clarke says that this love does not invent evil. It never supposes that a good action has a bad motive.
- **DOES NOT REJOICE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS** - When younger my brother would stub his toe. I would laugh at it situation as he cried in pain. This isn't love. Same is true when a man is rightly executed for a crime and people celebrate his death. The execution may be justified but it isn't a time for rejoicing.

- **REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH** - Love celebrates, honors truth.
 - John 8:32 "Truth shall set you free."
 - John 17:17 Jesus said of God, "Your word is truth."

The next four traits uses the phrase "ALL THINGS". This is where we will find difficulty. We can bear some things, we can believe some things, we can hope some things and we can endure some things. But the standard of love for the Christian is all things.

- **BEARS ALL THINGS** - bearing things can be translated to "cover"
 - 1 Peter 4:8: *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*
 - Love does not proclaim the errors of good men.
- **BELIEVES ALL THINGS** - This isn't believing a lie or obvious deception. Love gives the benefit of doubt to others. Very much like innocent until proven guilty.
- **HOPES ALL THINGS** - Love is optimistic. It isn't pessimistic. Thinking that the worst is going to happen. It looks to the potential the future possibilities.
- **ENDURES ALL THINGS** - This love has sustaining power. It doesn't quit being patient, or kind, or rejoicing in truth, or bearing things, or believing, or hoping. It just doesn't quit.

- It is easy to replace the word LOVE with JESUS. We can see the truth that Jesus has demonstrated all these traits.
- It is a little more difficult when we as followers of Christ who claim to follow Him, replace the word LOVE with OUR NAME.
- We need to remember that this LOVE PASSAGE is in the context of Paul teaching on Spiritual Gifts. The sign of maturity is not spiritual giftedness but the show of LOVE.

1Cr 13:8

1) The Endurance of Love vs 8-13

Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

- Here we see the contrast between the endurance of Love to the endurance of spiritual gifts.
- Love NEVER fails but Gifts WILL CEASE
- Paul is correcting the Corinthians so they will see that it isn't our giftedness that is the work. Love is the Work of God. The gifting are the tools.

1Cr 13:9

For we know in part and we prophesy in part;

1Cr 13:10

but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

- Some people have taught that when the perfect comes is a reference to the Bible. And now that the Bible is complete that a few of the gifts are no longer needed. THIS IS WRONG.
- Most commentators agree that the perfect coming is the second coming of Jesus Christ and our permanent presence we will enjoy with Jesus.
- Acts 2:17-20 "AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy. I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME."
 - The Spirit and the gift of prophecy is poured out in the LAST DAYS. These last days are understood to be from the Day of Pentecost until Jesus Return.
 - The passage goes on to say until Blood Fire and Smoke and sun turned to darkness.
- Acts 2:39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."
 - Promise for those afar off. Further off than Paul's writings.
 - To those the Lord is calling. I sure hope the Lord is still calling people to Himself.

1Cr 13:11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

1Cr 13:12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

- In verse 11, Paul is not saying that the mature Christian does not need spiritual gifts. Again, he is referring to the coming perfect state of the permanent presence of Jesus. THEN, those gifts are no longer needed.
- Corinth was famous for polished bronze mirrors. The best in the world. But they were still dim reflection. Paul is using an illustration understandable to the Corinthians.
- We through the gifts of the Spirit can see dimly, a partial reflection of what we will experience when we are no longer hindered with the distractions of this life and be fully in His presence FACE TO FACE.
- I WILL KNOW FULLY JUST AS I ALSO HAVE BEEN FULLY KNOWN - there are many benefits to heaven. No more sorrows, no more sickness, being reunited with loved ones for eternity, but one of the most wonderful is to be able to know God without error, confusion or doubt. To be able to truly know Him. This will make our worship more intimate and perfect.

1Cr 13:13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

- 1 Thessalonians 1:3 *"Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father."*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:8 *"But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation."*
- Galatians 5:5-6 *"For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love."*
- 1 Peter 1:21-22 *"Who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart."*
- Colossians 1:4-5 *"Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel."*
- 2 Timothy 1:12-13 *"For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."*
- The Greatest of these is Love.
 - Love endures and will continue to grow
 - Love is an Attribute of God

If we lose love we lose everything.

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