

“The Love Chapter!”

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Message by Michael J. Barnard

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Teaching Aim: To demonstrate the importance of [agape] love when it comes to our spiritual walk and the use of our spiritual gifts. To realize, agape love is the glue that holds the body of Christ together. To understand the need for our spiritual gifts will come to an end but love will last forever. To realize we are currently seeing through a mirror darkly but in eternity we will see God “face to face!”

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The importance of love to the Christian testimony (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

1. What, if any difference, is there between “*the tongues of men*” and “*the tongues of angels*” (**vs. 1**)? Can you give an example from Scripture where “tongues” refers to the languages of men? (**See Acts 2:1-12**) Why was Pentecost such a strategic time for this gift to be exercised? (**See Exod. 34:22-23; Deut. 16:16**) Note: Pentecost is also called “*the Feast of Weeks*”.

2. Some feel Paul was referring to an actual “*angelic language*” in **verse 1**, others believe he was speaking hyperbolically (*using exaggeration to create an emphasis of his point*). In other words, some scholars believe Paul was saying, “*Even if there is such a thing as a heavenly language for angels, without love it is nothing but noise!*” Do you think Paul meant that there is a literal language of angels? What language do we find angels using in the Bible when they spoke with people? (See **Gen. 18:1-5; Zech. 1:7-11; Luke 1:26-28; 2:8-14**)

3. In **verse 2**, Paul hypothetically describes individuals who are extremely gifted with spiritual gifts; what is his point? What Greek word did Paul use for love throughout **chapter 13**? (See Interlinear Bibles and/or Commentaries) What is the significance of this Greek word and how does it relate to God’s loving us today? Why should we as believers demonstrate this kind of love to others? (**See 1 John 4:10-11**) According to Paul, what is the most spiritually gifted person without love (**vs. 2**)?

4. In what way is a “*religious person*” different from the person who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (**vs. 3**)? Are Christians the only ones who give gifts to the poor or do we find people who are not Christians donating to the poor as well? Are Christians the only ones who have been burned by flames for their faith or have people of other religions as well? When are a person’s actions “*merely religious*” acts? (**See Acts 17:22-23; Jam. 1:26-27**) Do we receive spiritual rewards for acts done with the wrong motivation (**vs. 3**)? (**See 2 Cor. 5:10**) What is God’s reaction to legitimate acts of agape love? (**See Rom. 12:1-2**)

Part II: Paul describes what agape love is and is not (1 Cor. 13:4-8a)

1. What makes “*patience*” and “*kindness*” so important in demonstrating agape love to others (**vs. 4**)? Why is it important for us as Christians not to “*envy*” others? What did Paul mean when he said, “*love does not parade itself*” and “*is not puffed up*”? Why are pride and arrogance inconsistent with agape love?
2. In what way is “*rudeness*” inconsistent with agape love (**vs. 5**)? According to **verse 5**, should we think of ourselves or others first? Do you find it hard to think of others before you think of yourself? Who is the ultimate picture of agape love in action? (**See Rom. 5:8-9**) What did Paul mean when he said agape love, “*is not provoked*”? (See Dictionary) Why is it important for Christians to “*not think evil*” of others? Are you guilty of thinking evil of others?
3. Have you ever rejoiced in the fall of another believer because of their sin? Why is this kind of behavior inconsistent with agape love (**vs. 6**)? What should cause a believer to “*rejoice*”? (**See John 14:6; 17:17**) Where does “*all truth*” ultimately lead?
4. Paul’s phrase, love “*bears all things*,” can also be translated, “*love covers all things*” (**vs. 7**). In what sense will agape love lead to covering the shortcomings of others? Why would a Christian want to do this?

5. People frequently let us down, but will God in His love (**vs. 8a**)? (**See Rom. 8:35-39**) In what way does love never fail? Read **verses 4-8** and substitute the name of Jesus every place where you see the word love. How did Jesus do at loving? (**See 1 John 4:8**) Now read the verses again and substitute your own name in place of love. How are you doing at loving others? What areas in your life do you need to improvement?

Part III: Spiritual gifts will come to an end but love lasts forever (1 Cor. 13:8b-13)

1. In **Verse 8** Paul lists the spiritual gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge. What truth did Paul reveal about these spiritual gifts? Why do you think God will bring an end to them?
2. According to **verse 10**, when will these spiritual gifts no longer be needed? What are the main interpretations of Paul's statement, "*when that which is perfect has come?*" (See Commentaries)
3. What are some ways that you've matured as you have moved from childhood to adulthood (**vs. 11**)? Name some specific ways that you've grown spiritually over the past year.
4. Describe some of the differences between looking at a person in a mirror and looking at them "*face to face*" (**vs. 12**). Why is the mirror a good illustration of our limited understanding of spiritual things? According to **verse 12**, why is our knowledge of heavenly things limited today? When Paul speaks of "*then*," is he referring to "*the completion of the Word of God*," "*the Second Coming of Christ*" or "*the Eternal State*?" What does **verse 12** teach about our future knowledge of the Lord?
5. Describe how faith, hope, and love are working together in your life today (**vs. 13**). (**See 1 Thess. 1:1-3**) What makes agape love the greater of the three? How will agape love continue to manifest itself in the eternal state? (**See 1 John 4:8**)

6. List five ways you can better reflect the “*agape love*” of God to the world around us. Note: “*Agape is a self-sacrificial love, fully committed to the welfare and good of others!*” What do you think the world would be like if every Christian lived a life marked by agape love? (**See 1 John 4:7-21**)

MINER'S CORNER ~ Manna to live by!

- Agape love is a decision that is followed by God honoring actions; it is not merely a feeling!
- Agape love is a self-sacrificial love, fully committed to the welfare and good of others!
- Agape love is the glue that holds the body of Christ together, especially when it comes to Christians using their spiritual gifts!
- A communicable attribute of God is His love. As we grow closer in our relationship with Christ, this agape love should become more evident in our lives; God is love! (**1 John 4:8**)
- Spiritual gifts are only temporary in nature until the eternal state; but love lasts forever!
- Now we see in part, but then (*the eternal state*) we shall see God “*face to face!*”
- Just as God loves us, so we ought also to love one another! (**John 15:12-13**)