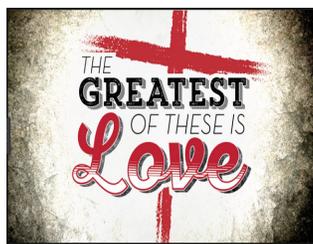


**“But the greatest of these is LOVE!”**

**Part 1: “If I have not love ...”**

**I Corinthians 13:1-13**



Introduction: Our goal is to rediscover GOD’s definition of love and to learn how we can do better at putting it into practice!

**LOVE is a spiritual gift from God to those who are united to Christ by His Spirit.**

“LOVE” is an ability to act in a certain way toward others.

### **I. The necessity of LOVE ...**

**I Corinthians 12:4-7,11:** “There are varieties of gifts ... to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (vss. 4,7).

God is speaking here TO members of the Body of Christ ABOUT the Body of Christ! (see 12:27).

**I Corinthians 13:1-3:** If I “have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal ... I am nothing ... I gain nothing!”

**John 15:12-13:** “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you ...” (vs. 12). See also Matthew 22:37-40

“LOVE,” by GOD’s definition, is not optional for Jesus’ disciples!

Love for GOD and love for one another go together and are necessary in order to fulfill God’s purpose for us in Christ Jesus.

### **II. The exercise of LOVE ...**

“Actions speak louder than words” when it comes to loving God and loving others!

**I Corinthians 13:4-7 ...**

The Greek word, “agape,” is focused on the intention to do good towards someone else, to do what is best for them.

THIS “love” goes into the world and into relationships with the awareness that there is brokenness, pain and hurt that needs healing.

THIS “love” eliminates comparisons that cause divisions ... there is no envying and no boasting (vs.4).

**II Timothy 2:24-25:** “The Lord’s servant must ... (be) kind to everyone, able to teach, ... correcting his opponents with gentleness ...”

The “love” GOD talks about begins with your attitude towards others whom God commands you to love.

**Philippians 2:1-4:** “ ... complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love ... in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ...” (vss. 2-3).

**Ephesians 4:15:** “Speaking the truth in love we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the Head, into Christ!”

What the world needs is THIS love ... a deep commitment to show love by your attitude and your actions.

### **III. The endurance of LOVE ...**

**I Corinthians 13:7-8:** “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things ... LOVE NEVER ENDS!”

The Gospel has always been about spiritual healing, about repentance and forgiveness and new life in Christ that enables us to live in this world ... with LOVE!!

PERFECT LOVE will exist in the new heavens and the new earth for those who are united to Christ by grace through faith in this life.

**LOVE is a spiritual gift from God to those who are united to Christ by His Spirit!**