

## Let Us Study the Great Love Chapter

### (1 Corinthians 13)

#### Introduction:

1. Since tomorrow is commonly recognized as Valentine's Day, perhaps this is a good time for us to study "the great love chapter of the Bible."
2. Let us begin by examining . . .

#### Discussion:

#### I. THE CONTEXT OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13

- A. (ch.12-14) Paul was writing to the Christians in Corinth about their use of spiritual gifts.
- B. The 9 gifts are listed in 12:8-10.
- C. These gifts were designed to help in:
  1. spreading the Gospel
  2. edifying the church.
- D. Unfortunately, the Christians in Corinth were using their gifts in an unloving way.
  1. Paul used various parts of the body to illustrate this problem (12:15-16, 21).
  2. Using the gifts in this way was not the Lord's will (12:22-25).
- E. (12:31) Paul said he would show the Christians in Corinth "*a more excellent way*" of using their gifts.
  1. This more excellent way involved using spiritual gifts with love.
  2. Spiritual gifts no longer exist; however, we must still practice the teachings of this chapter because everything we do is to be done with love (16:14).
- F. With this information before us, let us turn our attention to ch.13 which gives . . .

#### II. 3 REASONS WHY THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY INCLUDES LOVE

- A. The 1<sup>st</sup> reason is given in vs.1-3 -- The more excellent way includes love because without it we are nothing.
  1. (vs.1) This principle applied to speaking in tongues.
  2. (vs.2) This principle applied to other spiritual gifts.
  3. (vs.3) This principle applies to all acts of benevolence and sacrifice.
  4. To help the Corinthians know whether they were using their gifts with love, Paul continued by showing them how true Christian love behaves -- this brings us to the next point.
- B. The 2<sup>nd</sup> reason is given in vs.4-7 -- The more excellent way includes love because of the way it behaves.
  1. (-) Love:
    - a. does not envy [is not jealous]
    - b. does not vaunt itself [does not brag or boast]
    - c. is not puffed up [arrogant]

- d. does not behave itself unseemly [in a way unbecoming of a child of God]
- e. does not seek its own [have to have its own way]
- f. is not easily provoked
- g. does not think evil [take into account a wrong suffered, hold a grudge]
- h. does not rejoice in iniquity [unrighteousness].

2. (+) Love:

- a. suffers long [is patient]
- b. is kind
- c. rejoices in the truth
- d. bears all things
- e. believes all things
- f. hopes all things
- g. endures all things.

3. After examining their love, the last point should have motivated the Corinthians to make any necessary corrections.

C. The 3<sup>rd</sup> reason is given in vs.8-13 -- The more excellent way includes love because it is everlasting.

1. Love never fails.
2. However, spiritual gifts would *"fail," "cease,"* and *"vanish away."*
3. This would occur when *"that which is perfect"* [complete] came (the new covenant of Christ -- James 1:25).
4. Let us see the point being made.
  - a. The Corinthians were not using their spiritual gifts with love.
  - b. The gifts would eventually come to an end.
  - c. If the Corinthians continued using their gifts without love, when the gifts no longer existed, what would remain? (Jealousy, pride, arrogance, etc.)
  - d. However, if the Corinthians repented and used their gifts with love, when the gifts disappeared, love would continue to reign supreme.
5. See vs.13.
  - a. One day, faith will become sight, and hope will become reality.
  - b. Love is the greatest because it will continue on and on.

Conclusion:

1. In John 13:34-35 Jesus commanded His followers to love one another.
2. Thankfully, we have "the great love chapter" to help us more fully understand the Lord's command.