

Life Group Guide 1 Cor 13:1–13 “The Foundation of Spiritual Gifts” For the Sermon Preached on Feb 12 and For Use in Life Groups through Feb 19

Icebreaker Questions

What is your fondest Valentine’s Day memory?

Read the Biblical Text: 1 Cor 13:1–13

Pastor Richard’s Sermon Outline

- I. Love is the defining characteristic in the proper use of your spiritual gifts (vv. 1-3).**
 - a. Without love the use of spiritual gifts becomes a self-centered mess (vv. 1-3).
 - b. Three characteristics of those who have allowed the misuse of their spiritual gifts to become a self-centered mess.
 - i. You have allowed the misuse of your spiritual gifts to become a self-centered mess if you have more concern about the impact of your ministry on you rather than its eternal value for others.
 - ii. You have allowed the misuse of your spiritual gifts to become a self-centered mess if you rejoice more in what you do for God than what He has done for you.
 - iii. You have allowed the misuse of your spiritual gifts to become a self-centered mess if your joy is centered in your ministry and not in Him.
- II. Love enables the proper use of your spiritual gifts and effectively strengthens the work of the church (vv. 4-7).**
 - a. Without love the use of our spiritual gifts weakens the work of the church (vv. 4-7).
 - b. Three facts about why love enables the proper use of your spiritual gifts and how they strengthen the church.
 - i. Without love for others our spiritual gifts will remain unused and useless in the ongoing ministry of the church (1 Cor. 12:7, 27; Rom. 12:3-6).
 - ii. Without love for others our spiritual gifts will draw attention to ourselves or be used for personal gain (Acts 8:14-25).
 - iii. Without love for others our spiritual gifts will not be used for their intended purpose of strengthening the church (1 Cor. 12:7).
- III. Love is what adds value to the proper use of your spiritual gifts (vv. 8-13).**
 - a. Without love the use of our spiritual gifts will be ineffective and fail.
 - b. Three reasons love for others is required if the use of your spiritual gifts are to have any eternal value.
 - i. The lack of love for others when considering the proper use of our spiritual gifts can encourage us to put our purposes in place of God’s purposes.
 - ii. The lack of love for others when considering our spiritual gifts can limit how we follow the Holy Spirits direction in our ministry.
 - iii. The lack of love for others when considering our spiritual gifts can become an excuse for not serving when and where needed.

Observations of the Biblical Text

1. In vs. 1-3, what does Paul say is more important than having all the spiritual gifts and is even more important than martyrdom?

2. To what does Paul compare a person who practices every Christian virtue and all the spiritual gifts but does so *without love*?

3. In vs. 4-5, what does Paul say love is?

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4. According to v. 6, in what does love rejoice?

5. In vs. 7-8, what does Paul conclude about love?

6. What does Paul say will pass away in v. 8? Why? When will they pass away according to v. 10?

7. In vs. 11-12 to what does Paul compare our spiritual journey on this earth?

8. Paul compared faith, hope, and love in v. 13. Which of those three does he say is the greatest?

Interpretation of the Biblical Text

1. In vs. 1-3 Paul uses surprisingly strong language about love. What is his point? Does the list he gives here (tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith) look familiar? Why does Paul make this particular comparison? Is there any principle we can learn from this passage?

2. In vs. 4-8 Paul gives a description of the nature and actions of genuine love. What does Paul mean by each of these? How do these relate to the gospel? Work through them one by one.

3. In what way are the spiritual gifts listed in vs. 8-9 “partial”? What do you think Paul means when he says, “when the perfect comes”? What or who is that a reference to (note: there may also be some clues in v. 12)?

4. Why do you think that Paul declares love to be even greater than faith and hope? Why do you think Paul speaks so strongly about this?

Application of the Biblical Text

1. This week memorize 1 Corinthians 13:13: “Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love—but the greatest of these is love.”

2. Keep up with our annual Bible reading plan this week. If you have gotten behind, pick up where we are right now. You can always go back and read what you’ve missed as you have time.

3. Work your way back through the list of what love is and what love does. For each word or phrase about love, answer the following questions: **What is an every-day example of love being** _____ (e.g. patient, kind, not envious, etc.)? **What does it look like in my life when my love is not** _____ (e.g. patient, kind, is envious, etc.)?

4. If someone in your group or someone you were sharing the gospel with said, “The idea that there is a God out there who sees everything I do and knows me fully and entirely is terrifying,” how would you answer them? What good news could you offer them?