

Messy

Part Fifteen: *love*

August 14, 2022

Last week, we looked at 1 Corinthians chapter twelve where Paul gives an overview of spiritual gifts. In chapter twelve we learned... the Holy Spirit gives every Christian special abilities to help them help others. We also learned that some of the spiritual gifts were temporary, and some are permanent. And we also learned the spiritual gifts are dependent on each other. As our physical body has different parts that need to work together to accomplish tasks, so our church has different people with different spiritual gifts that need to work together to accomplish our church's mission.

After he gives an overview of spiritual gifts in chapter twelve...

- **In Chapter Thirteen, Paul explains the importance of love to the Corinthians.**

Everything a Christian does should be done in love (1 Cor. 16:14). Christians do not have to manufacture love; they only have to share the love they have been given. Paul tells us in Romans 5:5 that, *"God dearly loves us, and He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love."*

1st – Paul says spiritual gifts are worthless unless they are used in love. Vs. 1-3

Why were the Corinthians not using their spiritual gifts with love? The Christians in Corinth were following their sinful natures instead of the Holy Spirit. You must follow the Spirit to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26). Christians cannot properly use their spiritual gifts unless they have the fruit of the Spirit - the first and chief being love. Through the fruit of the Spirit God gives the motivation and power to minister the gifts of the Spirit.

2nd - Paul describes what love does and does not do.

Vs. 4-7

Paul does not describe what love is in verses 4-7; he describes what love accomplishes. Understand, Paul doesn't see love as a noun; he sees it as a verb. When Paul says, *"Love is patient and kind,"* he is not saying, *"Love feels patient and has kind feelings."* He is saying, *"Love practices patience and does kind things."* Paul wants us to measure our lives against the active love he is describing.

3rd - Paul says spiritual gifts will end, but love will never end.

Vs. 8-13

Every spiritual gift is linked in some way to building up the church to maturity, so it makes sense that spiritual gifts will end when the Church is raptured up to Heaven and made perfect like Jesus. In verses 11-12, Paul compares spiritual gifts to childish things that we grow out of. He also tells us that now we can only see and understand a part of what God is doing in and through us. But, one day when we become like Jesus, we will see everything clearly and completely (Philippians 3:17-21).

After Paul tells the Corinthians that spiritual gifts will end, he says, *"Three things will last forever - faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love."* Love is the greatest because God is love (1 John 3:18), and faith and hope are expressions of the love we have from Him and for Him.

Here is today's lesson...

Christians need to exercise their spiritual gift(s) with love.