

The Importance of Love – 1st Corinthians 13:1-3

The reason love is so important
is because everything we do is worthless without it.

Introduction on Love:

Love is the clearest description of God's character
& and so, it needs to be found in us.
(1 John 4:16 & John 13:35)

What kind of love are we talking about in 1st Corinthians 13?

Why is love so important to Paul?

Examples of gifts that are worthless without Love...

1) The Gift of Tongues (v. 1)

2) The Gift of Prophecy (v. 2)

3) The Gift of Knowledge (v. 2)

4) The Gift of Faith (v.2)

5) The Gift of Charity (v. 3)

6) The Gift of Martyrdom (v. 3)

Questions to consider...

1) Why do we prize the gifts over the fruits of the Spirit like love?

2) Is it possible to have this kind of love without God?

3) How do I have this type of love in my life?

Discussion Questions:

1. What is agape love, and how does it compare to the other types of love in the world?
2. What is the difference between spiritual gifts and the fruits of the spirit? Can someone have spiritual gifts but not have any fruit? If I use my spiritual gifts without the fruits of the spirit, what is the effectiveness of that fruit on myself and others around me? How do I grow in my spiritual fruits or in other words how do I grow spiritually? (Hint read Gal 5:22 & Col 3:16)
3. How would you characterize the church in Corinth in terms of use of their spiritual gifts and spiritual fruit?
4. What is Paul's main point in 1st Cor 13? Why is this a breath of fresh air for the reader (due to all that precedes this chapter)? Why is this chapter so important for the chapters that will follow?
5. How is 1st Cor 13 an explanation for, "the most excellent way" (1 Cor 12:31)?
6. What was so prestigious about 'tongues of men'? Is this reference to 'tongues' the phonetic sounds we hear in the charismatic movement or are they in reference to the speaking of foreign human languages (whether known or unknown to the speaker) in Acts 2? Even though this was a coveted gift, what was its usefulness without love?
7. What type of prophecy are we talking about in this chapter (is it the telling of the future or is it the preaching of God's Word)?
8. What types of mysteries and knowledge are being referenced here? Why would it be shocking to call them nothing?
9. Why was the type of charity described in v. 3 so surprising in Paul's day? How can charity be considered selfish? Is all charity selfish?
10. How can martyrdom be accomplished without love? Where do we see similar practices in other religions and even in the priesthood? Is Paul warning us against all of this?

Application Questions:

1. How can I do all the things mentioned in this passage in a way that honors God? Is this something I can honestly do without God? If not, then how can this spiritual fruit of love show up in my life?
2. How do we walk in the Spirit every single day?
3. Do we as a culture prize the spiritual gifts over and above the spiritual fruits of God? Why is that?
4. Which gift mentioned as an example from Paul in this section was surprising to you? In other words, which gift did you find surprising to be on this list? How can this teach you to re-evaluate your understanding of these gifts in relation to the fruit of love?
5. How as a Christian can I know whether I am doing something out of my own selfishness or by God's selfless agape love?