

## 1 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

### **1 Corinthians 13**

**1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.**

**2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.**

**3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.**

**4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,**

**5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;**

**6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;**

**7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.**

**8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.**

**9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.**

**10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.**

2 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

**11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.**

**12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.**

**13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.**

**Intro:** God has been good to His people! He has given us more than we ever deserved. Think of it!

He provided a means of salvation that will save the vilest sinner. He has given us so many precious promises, and He stands by every one of them.

When a person comes to Jesus for salvation, the Holy Spirit gives them spiritual gifts so that God might use them for His glory in His kingdom work,

**1 Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.**

All the spiritual gifts have their place in the work of the body of Christ.

They all serve to edify the body and to glorify the Lord. We each have been gifted in a special, unique fashion by the Holy Spirit.

Some gifts like tongues and healing have been blown out of proportion. Other gifts, like giving and helps have not been given nearly enough attention.

### 3 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

The greatest, most essential gift that God gave His church, the gift that contains the most divine power is the gift of His love working in us and through us.

- His love was **placed within us** when we were saved by His grace: **“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” (Romans 5:5 KJV)**

- His love, **working in us**, and displayed one to another, is the greatest testimony we have to a lost world:

- **“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:35 KJV)**

- **When we walk in love one for another, we are walking in obedience to the Lord: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” (John 13:34 KJV)**

- **When we walk in love one for another, we prove that we are saved by His grace: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” (1 John 3:14 KJV)**

One of the problems in the church at Corinth, was that they were manifesting nearly every spiritual gift in existence, but they were not walking in love one for another.

The Corinthians loved the flashy gifts.

They loved tongues, prophecy, and other gifts that made them look spiritual in the eyes of others.

**God was more interested in them coming to the place where they loved one another like He loved them.**

#### 4 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

- **Chapters 12-14** were written to combat the problems that existed in Corinth related to the spiritual gifts and their usage in the church.

While we think of these chapters as standalone chapters, they really should be read together.

- **Chapter 12** talks about the spiritual gifts and how they are given to us and why they are beneficial to the whole body of Christ.

**Chapter 12** speaks about how the body of Christ is strengthened and blessed when individuals use the gifts they have been given by the Lord.

- **Chapter 14** deals with the misuse of the sign gifts like tongues and healing. Contrary to popular belief, **chapter 14** does not encourage the use of tongues, it actually discourages the use of tongues church and calls the church of Corinth to deeper maturity in their walk with the Lord.

- In the middle is **Chapter 13**. It follows on the heels of **chapter 12**, which closes with this statement in **verse 31**: **“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” Read it this way: “You are coveting the best gifts, but I show you a much better way”.** **Chapter 13 talks about What Matters Most.**

- What Matters Most is not whether you possess some flashy gift or not.

- What Matters Most is not how smart you are.

- What Matters Most is not how wealthy, not how popular, not how famous, not how well liked, you are.

- What Matters Most is how well you love.

- **When you learn to love like Jesus loves, you have discovered What Matters Most.**

## 5 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

- This passage is all about What Matter Most.

I want to preach about What Matters Most.

Let me share a few details of What Matters Most.

### **I. V. 1-3 LOVE'S DISTINCTION**

#### **1 Corinthians 13**

**1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.**

**2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.**

**3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.**

The whole idea of these verses is that love is distinct from, and superior to, anything we can be or do! Regardless of what we do, if it is not infused with, and carried out through, the love of God, it is a colossal waste of time.

#### **A. V. 1 Love Is Higher Than The Sensational -**

**1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.**

You may be a great speaker, but that is no substitute for love. No matter how great your oratory, how beautiful your speech, how brilliant your rhetoric, **without love** you are simply a clanging cymbal.

Have you ever been to a cymbal solo?

I can assure you it is not very exciting.

## 6 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

No matter what you say, nor how you say it, nor how accurate it may be, without love it is just noise.

**Without love, talk truly is cheap.**

You see, great oratory can move a person's emotions.

Great rhetoric can move a person's mind.

A great speech can move a person's will,

**but only great love can move a person's heart.**

Oratory can move one to tears, **but only love can move one to Jesus.**

The bottom line is this: these were the same instruments used in heathen worship.

Therefore, the person who exercises his tongue in a spiritual fashion yet does not do so with the love of God in him, that person is no better than a heathen worshiper.

**In fact, his worship is man centered and not God centered!**

### **B. V. 2 Love Is Higher Than The Spectacular –**

**<sup>2</sup> And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.**

This verse mentions several spectacular abilities. But, even if a person was able to do all of these things and he did not have the love of God in his heart, he was nothing!

### **C. V. 3 Love is Higher Than The Sacrificial –**

**<sup>3</sup> And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.**

## 7 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

We can give away everything we own.

We can even give up our bodies on the altar of martyrdom, but if we do so without love in our hearts, **it is a waste of time and it does not profit us one bit.**

The emphasis is clear!

When love is absent, the Christian is no better than a heathen, **v. 1**; He is nothing, **v. 2**; and He can expect nothing, **v. 3**.

Regardless of what others may think of us, our abilities, or our gifts, without love, it is all a spectacular waste of time!

### **I. LOVE'S DISTINCTION**

### **II. V. 4-12 LOVE'S DESCRIPTION**

**<sup>4</sup> Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,**

**<sup>5</sup> Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;**

**<sup>6</sup> Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;**

**<sup>7</sup> Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.**

**<sup>8</sup> Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.**

**<sup>9</sup> For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.**

**<sup>10</sup> But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.**

8 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

**11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.**

**12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.**

In these verses, Paul gives an in-depth description of love. He reveals all of its characteristics to us. These are truths that we need to be reminded of continually.

#### **A. V. 4-6 Love's Features -**

**4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,**

**5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;**

**6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;**

Paul shows us the many sides of true, godly love. As if love were a great and brilliant diamond, he holds it up before us and reveals its many facets. As he does, the Person of God is revealed in each gleam of light from the surface of love.

#### **1. V. 4 Suffereth Long -**

**4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,**

This word means **“patient endurance under provocation.”** The literal meaning of the word is **“long-tempered”**.

9 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

**This characteristic of love reveals the truth that love does not retaliate!**

Stephen is an example of this type of love - **Acts 7:54-60.**  
The greatest example is that of the Lord Jesus - **Luke 23:34;**  
**Isa. 53:7.** This kind of love endures all attacks.

One of Abraham Lincoln's most outspoken political enemies was a man named **Edwin J. Stanton.**

Stanton called Lincoln a "low cunning clown" and the "original gorilla". He even said this, "It is ridiculous for people to go to Africa to see a gorilla, when they could find one easily in Springfield, Illinois."

To Lincoln's credit, he never responded to these insults. Yet, when he was elected President, Lincoln chose Stanton to be his Secretary of War.

When asked why, Lincoln said, "**Because he is the best man!**"

Later, when Lincoln had been assassinated, Stanton stood by the coffin which contained Lincoln's body and said through his tears, "**There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen.**" **Patient love in action won this man over in the end!**

**2. V. 4 Is Kind -**

**<sup>4</sup> Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,**

This word refers **to "active goodness that goes forth in behalf of others"**.

Genuine love is never hateful or mean, but it respects others and reaches out to them.

The supreme example of this kind of love is God. He is kind to people despite their treatment of Him,

**Romans 2:4 <sup>4</sup> Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**

**3. V. 4 Envieth Not - True love is "not jealous" over the abilities, successes, or possessions of others. Instead of being jealous when others prosper or excel, love is pleased when they do well.**

Jealousy is one of the vilest sins that we harbor in our hearts! It was Eve's jealousy of God that motivated her to take the forbidden fruit.

It was jealousy that put Daniel in the lion's den.  
It was jealousy that put Joseph in that pit!  
Yet, godly love is never jealous. Rather, it is pleased when others succeed!

**4. V. 4 Vaunteth Not Itself -**

Literally, this phrase means "**does not make a parade**".  
Love does not brag!  
It does not draw attention to itself, or to what it is doing.  
Love does not have to the center of attention.

**5. V. 4 Is Not Puffed Up -**

Love is "not arrogant or proud".  
It realizes that all it has, and all that it is, has been given to it by God.  
No matter how great our talents or how spectacular our gifts, everything we are the result of divine grace.

Thus, love is humble because it remembers where it was before grace found it. It realizes where it would be apart from the grace of God.

11 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

## **6. V. 5 Does Not Behave Itself Unseemly -**

**<sup>5</sup> Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;**

Love is “never rude”, but it always treats others with compassion, consideration and respect! Love controls the emotions.

It is not friendly one day and rude the next. Genuine love always makes Jesus look good!

## **7. V. 5 Seeketh Not Her Own -**

True love is “never selfish and self-centered”, but it is actively interested in what will profit others. It never looks at itself first, but it always considers another ahead of itself.

Jesus is the prime example of this attitude in action, |

**Matthew 20:28; Luke 22:42.**

This is how each of us is to be. **“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:” (Philippians 2:3–5 KJV)**

Love ever gives.

Forgives, outlives,

And ever stands

With open hands.

And while it lives,

It gives,

For this is love's prerogative--

To give, and give, and give.

- John Oxenham

### **8. V. 5 Is Not Easily Provoked -**

True love “keeps no record of evils done to it”, but it willingly endures all slights and injuries.

This characteristic of love reminds us that love does not demand its own rights! It is willing to yield to the will of another.

True love only responds in anger to that which angers God! All other things are handled through active, complete, immediate forgiveness, **Ephesians 4:32.**

**Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

**ILL.** Stephen Olford tells of a Baptist pastor during the American Revolution, Peter Miller, who lived in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, and enjoyed the friendship of George Washington.

In Ephrata also lived Michael Wittman, an evil-minded sort who did all he could to oppose and humiliate the pastor.

One day Michael Wittman was arrested for treason and sentenced to die. Peter Miller traveled seventy miles on foot to Philadelphia to plead for the life of the traitor.

“No, Peter,” General Washington said. “I cannot grant you the life of your friend.”

“My friend!” exclaimed the old preacher.

“He's the bitterest enemy I have.”

“What?” cried Washington.

“You've walked seventy miles to save the life of an enemy? That puts the matter in different light. I'll grant your pardon.” And he did.

Peter Miller took Michael Wittman back home to Ephrata--no longer an enemy but a friend.

### **9. V. 5 Thinketh No Evil -**

Love “takes no worthless inventory”.

Two thoughts are in mind here.

**First**, genuine love does not attribute evil motives to people. The actions of others are not seen in their most negative light. Love always thinks the best of others.

**Second**, genuine love does not dwell what others may have done.

#### **Real love does not:**

- 1.) Remember injury
- 2.) Believe all it hears about another
- 3.) Look for fault in others!

If this attitude were practiced in the church, it would solve nearly all of any church's troubles.

Someone once said, **“It is natural to love them that love us, but it is supernatural to love them that hate us.”**

### **10. V. 6 Rejoiceth Not In Iniquity -**

**<sup>6</sup> Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;**

Love does not rejoice in sin; whether it is its own sins, or the sin of others. Love hates sin!

Love does not rejoice when another falls into sin!

Whether we will admit it or not, there is a part of us that is glad when another believer falls because we think it makes us look better.

That is why we just have to tell someone else about it.

True love does not gossip or rejoice when another believer falls, but it hurts with the injured member!

14 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

### **11. V. 6 Rejoiceth In The Truth -**

While love hates all forms of evil, it loves the truth!  
It rejoices when truth is proclaimed and when truth wins the victory.

Love is glad for the truth, even when the truth hurts.  
Love is glad when truth wins the day!

### **B. V. 7-12 Love's Fortitude -**

**<sup>7</sup> Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.**

**<sup>8</sup> Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.**

**<sup>9</sup> For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.**

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**<sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.**

**<sup>12</sup> For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.**

Ill. These verses tell us of love's staying power.  
Love is a remarkable thing that never waivers nor fails!

### **1. V. 7 Beareth All Things -**

Love patiently endures and overlooks the faults in others.  
The word "beareth" literally means "to cover".

## 15 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

Instead of parading the failures and faults of others before all the world, love covers them over and continues to love in spite of those things!

**This is how God loves us, Romans 5:8.**

**Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

**ILL** During the 17th century, Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, sentenced a soldier to be shot for his crimes. The execution was to take place at the ringing of the evening curfew bell.

However, the bell did not sound.

The soldier's fiancé had climbed into the belfry and clung to the great clapper of the bell to prevent it from striking.

When she was summoned by Cromwell to account for her actions, she wept as she showed him her bruised and bleeding hands.

Cromwell's heart was touched and he said, **"Your lover shall live because of your sacrifice. Curfew shall not ring tonight!" Love beareth all!**

## **2. V. 7 Believeth All Things –**

**<sup>7</sup> Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.**

Love always places the best possible interpretation on everything that happens.

It does not always seek the most negative answer, but it believes that good will triumph in any situation.

Basically, love trusts, love believes, and love has confidence in the one loved.

### **3. V. 7 Hopeth All things -**

Love always expects the best possible outcome.

Love refuses to accept failure. Love is the eternal optimist!

Love always holds out hope that things will work out right in the end.

### **4. V. 7 Endureth All Things -**

This is a military term and means that **“love does not give up the fort”!**

It stands its ground and continues in spite of everything that can be thrown against it.

It continues in spite of persecution and ill treatment.

Love bears the unbearable, believes the impossible, holds on the incredible and never gives up.

The word stop does not exist in the vocabulary of love!

### **5. V. 8-12 Charity Never Faileth –**

**<sup>8</sup> Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.**

**<sup>9</sup> For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.**

**<sup>10</sup> But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.**

**<sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.**

**<sup>12</sup> For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.**

## 17 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

When everything else in this world has passed away.  
When everything that is held us such high esteem is gone.  
When knowledge and spiritual gifts no longer matter, love will still exist. It is the great constant throughout eternity.

There are times when love may lose a battle.  
In that the object of one's love may never return that love.  
Yet, while it may lose a battle here and there, love has already won the war.

**The idea here is not about success. The idea is one of endurance.**

When other things have been removed from view, there will still be love!

It does not give in, give up or give out.  
Love that is real is love that lasts!

### **I. Love's Distinction**

### **II. Love's Description**

### **III. V. 13 LOVE'S DURABILITY**

III. The Bible says that three things abide: Faith, Hope and Love.

Yet, faith and hope are encompassed inside of love, v. 7.

Therefore, the greatest of all things a believer can possess is love!

If our love is right, then faith is no problem!  
If our love is right, then our hope is in the right place.  
When our love is right, then we are right!

What makes love so great?

Well, love is the defining characteristic of Who God is, 1 John 4:8.

**1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.**

When the Bible wanted to describe God in one sentence, it said, **"God is love."** God does not have faith!

After all, who would God place His faith in?

God does not have hope! What would One Who controls everything possible have to hope for?

**Yet, God is love!** Therefore, we are never more God-like than when we learn to love like God.

To be like God, we must learn to love like God!

When we can do this, our world will be altered for His glory!

**Conc:** For just a moment take all the things you valuable today and lay them aside.

Forget about your talents, your intelligence, your gifts, your potential, your achievements, and anything else you want to mention.

Now, forgetting all those other things, how well do you love?

● **Do you love God more than anything else in this world, Matthew 22:37-38 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the first and great commandment.**

● **Do you love others like God loves them, Matthew 22:39-40 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**

19 WHAT MATTERS MOST – (How is your love life?)

Someone said:

**What is love?**

It is silence--when your words would hurt.

It is patience--when your neighbor's hurt.

It is deafness--when a scandal flows.

It is thoughtfulness--for other's woes.

It is promptness--when stern duty calls.

It is courage--when misfortune falls.

Is there room for improvement in your love life?

Or, so you have it all figured out?

If you need to talk to Him about your love life, the time to do it in right now.

Who wants to ask Him to help you love like He loves?

INV.