

**August 17, 2025**

**God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing**  
**The Book of 1 Corinthians – Part 12 Chapter 13**  
**A Call To The Preeminence & Priority of Love**

Today we continue on our multi-year journey through the New Testament where we are seeking to understand the historical, chronological and missiological of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church so that we in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church can keep the 'CHURCH LIVE & GROWING'. In the Book of 1 Corinthians we see where...

Paul **REMINDS** them of their **HIGH CALLING TO...**

1. Be Holy
2. Develop a Fellowship of Harmony & Love
3. Glorify God.
4. Have the Mind of Christ.
5. Be God's Sanctuary & Temple
6. Honor & Respect Faithful Spiritual Leaders
7. Live as Obedient 'Beloved Children' of our Heavenly Father.
8. Live Your Life With Integrity & Godliness.
9. Honor God in Our Relationships & Service
10. To Use Your Liberty In Christ in Loving Wisdom
11. To Make The Message of the Gospel a Priority Over Our Freedom and Rights.
12. To Follow the Example of Christ in How We Treat Others.
13. To Honor Christ in the way we worship.
14. To Use Your Spiritual Gifts For the Good of the Church and to the Glory of God.

**today in Chapter 13 we discover**

15. **To Place Love as the Priority in Everything We Do.**

**Context: A Church in Chaos**

The Corinthian church was gifted but fractured. They were obsessed with spiritual gifts—tongues, prophecy, knowledge—but lacked unity and humility. Paul's message is clear: **gifts without love are noise.** (Co-pilot).

Let's look at how Paul reminds them of their **Calling** in regard to Love.

**A Call to Corrective Action & Proper Attitude (1-3)**

*<sup>1</sup>If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>If I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.*

This chapter is one of the most beloved, read and preached on in the Bible. It is not only a beautiful work of poetry, some say it may have been a version of an early Christian hymn, it is also a practical and instructional guide that challenges our understanding of Love and its vital role in everything we do as a Christian. As R.C. Sproul noted, "Though it is the chief of all Christian virtues, we often ignore love and use our gifts destructively in the body of Christ".

**A Call to Prioritize Love Above All Else**

Paul begins by emphasizing that even the most impressive spiritual gifts—speaking in tongues, prophecy, knowledge, and faith—are meaningless without love: "*If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.*" — 1 Corinthians 13:1

This is not a dismissal of spiritual gifts, but a prioritization. Love is not optional—it is essential. Without it, our actions, no matter how grand, are hollow.

## A Call to Infuse Love in Everything We Do

Paul paints a vivid picture of noise without melody:

- Speaking in tongues without love becomes a clanging cymbal.
- Prophesying without love is just a hollow proclamation.
- Even the greatest acts of faith, giving, or martyrdom ring empty if love is absent.

God calls us to more than performance; He calls us to a transformed heart. (co-pilot)

## A Call to Understand Love as God Does (vv.4–7)

*<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, <sup>5</sup> does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

Paul doesn't define love abstractly, he paints it in action: Paul describes love not as a fleeting emotion, but as a deliberate, sacrificial choice.

The Greek word used is **agape**—a love that gives without expecting in return, that seeks the good of others even at personal cost. (Bereanbiblechurch.org)

- **Patient and kind:** Love waits and serves.

- **Not envious or boastful:** Love doesn't compete.
- **Not proud or rude:** Love honors others.
- **Not self-seeking or easily angered:** Love yields and forgives.
- **Keeps no record of wrongs:** Love releases the past.
- **Rejoices in truth:** Love celebrates integrity.
- **Always protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres:** Love never gives up.

This is not sentimental fluff—it's a blueprint for how Christians are called to live.

## A Call to Remain in Love (Love That Lasts vv.8–13)

*<sup>8</sup> Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; <sup>10</sup> but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. <sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror dimly but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. <sup>13</sup> But now faith, hope, love, abide these three, but the greatest of these is love, but the greatest of these is love. (NASB)*

Spiritual gifts are temporary. Prophecies will cease. Knowledge will fade. But love endures.

***“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (v.13)***

Why is love the greatest? Because it reflects the very nature of God. It's eternal. It's the essence of the Kingdom.

Faith will become sight,  
hope will find fulfillment,  
but love remains:

Faith connects us to God  
Hope sustains us in waiting  
Love binds us together and echoes into eternity

The greatest of these is love because it reflects the eternal heart of God.

### **A Final Call to Examination & Application**

Ask yourself: Why do I serve? To be seen, to be praised, or to pour out the love of Christ?

#### Cultivate Loving Habits

- Speak words that build up, not tear down.
- Practice patience in trials and conflicts.
- Sacrifice comfort to meet others' needs.

### **Application: Living the Love Chapter**

#### **This chapter challenges us to:**

- **Love Beyond Emotion**—choose love even when it's hard.
- **Love Beyond Convenience**—serve others sacrificially.
- **Love Beyond Boundaries**—extend grace to enemies and strangers. (Co-pilot) Proper infusion of Love brings Unity and Maturity Even Among Diversity
- **Love Beyond Our Current Time Frame** – Love will never end; it will be the very essence of our eternal existence with God and fellow believers.

#### **Our Take-Away: Model Christ's Love**

Jesus embodied the purest form of *agape* on the cross. As His followers, we bear His image when we choose to infuse love into every aspect of our life and ministry. Let's remember this verse from **1 John 4:19**... ***We love because He first loved us.*** Let's choose to make Love the Preeminent Priority in our life. Let's love as we have been loved!