

Reedy Fork Baptist Church

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: “Essentials”

SCRIPTURE IN RESPONSE: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

1 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.

2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,¹⁰ but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

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

10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.

11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.

12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

I. Key Words:

- Essentials
- Faith
- Hope
- Love

II. People, Places, & Time:

- Apostle Paul
- Corinth
- Corinthian Church

III. Background:

Chapters 12 and 14 discuss spiritual gifts (like speaking in tongues, healing) given by the Holy Spirit, but Paul explains their temporary nature.

Chapter 13 elevates love (agape - self-sacrificing love) as essential for using any gift effectively, describing its qualities (patient, kind, not self-seeking).

1 Corinthians 13:13 concludes Paul's famous "love chapter," contrasting temporary spiritual gifts (prophecy, tongues, knowledge) with enduring virtues: faith, hope, and love, stating love is the greatest because it's eternal, unlike faith (which becomes sight) and hope (which becomes reality) in eternity, serving as the ultimate Christian ethic and lasting expression of God's nature.

Verse 13 serves as a capstone, contrasting gifts that "will pass away" (13:8) with the permanent triad of faith, hope, and love.

IV. In Depth:

1. Lesson Emphasis #1: Introduction: The Context of Love.

- Chapter 13 as a Bridge: This section follows teachings on spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12) and precedes the discussion on prophecy (1 Cor 14), placing love as the essential way to use gifts.
- The Problem in Corinth: The church valued impressive gifts, but lacked selfless love, leading to division and misuse of gifts, notes this YouTube video.

2. Lesson Emphasis #2: The Three Essentials Virtues (1 Corinthians 13:13a)

- "Now these three remain...": Identifies faith, hope, and love as essential, lasting qualities for believers.
- Faith: Our trust in God and His promises (the evidence of things unseen).
- Hope: Our confident expectation of God's future promises and presence.
- Love (Agape): A selfless, active, sacrificial commitment to the good of others, modeled after Christ.

3. Lesson Emphasis #3: Love's Supremacy (1 Corinthians 13:13b)

- "But the greatest of these is love": Love transcends faith and hope.
- Why Love is Greatest:
- Faith turns to Sight: In heaven, faith (believing what's unseen) becomes sight (seeing God).
- Hope Becomes Fulfillment: Hope (expecting the future) is realized when we are with the Lord.
- Love Endures Forever: We will love God and others eternally; it's the very nature of heaven.
- Love as the Foundation: Spiritual gifts (prophecy, tongues, knowledge) are temporary, but love is eternal and makes all service meaningful.

4. Lesson Emphasis #4: Application: Living the "More Excellent Way"

- Love as Action: Love isn't just a feeling; it's patient, kind, humble, not self-seeking, and seeks the truth (1 Cor 13:4-7).
- Love in Community: Apply love to resolve conflicts, build up the church, and serve one another (1 Cor 16:14).

V. Make It Happen

- What is the biblical meaning of essential?
- Why is faith essential for our journey?
- Why is hope essential for our journey?
- Why is love the greatest of these three essential?

VI. Follow the Spirit:

What will you do as a result of this lesson?