

**THE BEAUTY OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**  
**STUDIES IN FIRST AND SECOND CORINTHIANS**  
1st Corinthians 13: 1-13  
**“USING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS WITH LOVE”**

**INTRODUCTION:** It is important to study 1 Corinthians 13 within its contexts. By itself, it is a wonderful reading for weddings. By itself, it is an excellent teaching on love. But within its context, Paul bills it as a “More excellent way” than spiritual gifts. Paul is continuing his teaching from Chapter 12. The Corinthian church was abusing the use of their spiritual gifts, causing divisions, arrogance and degrading others! Remember the gifts were meant to point to Jesus. They were esteeming some of their gifts and themselves higher than others! He is teaching we are to use our Spiritual gifts with love!

In Chapter 13, Paul discusses the use of spiritual gifts and how they should be used. He actually takes us on a spiritual journey from an immature church to a mature church!

**I. AN IMMATURE CHURCH (1st Corinthians 13:1-7)**

- A. As Paul teaches the Corinthian church that love is the more Excellent Way in ministering the Spiritual gifts, he is also addressing their immature behavior in handling the spiritual gifts. Paul had already called out their immaturity in Chapter 3: 1-3. Chapter 13 1-7 shows a contrast between love and the church’s immature behavior.
- B. It is also important to note that the King James Bible translation uses the word “Charity”. That word charity can be translated from the Greek word agape, which is a godly love.
- C. Speaking with the gifts of tongues (other languages), having the gifts of prophecy (foretelling and forthtelling the Word of God), the gift of knowledge (the ability to receive knowledge from the Holy Spirit), the gift of faith (intense trust in God), the gift of giving (sacrifice), but without love they are useless!
  - 1. We are taught of God to love one another. (1 Thess.4:9)
  - 2. Jesus showed us how to love. (John 13:34-35)
  - 3. The Holy Spirit gives us God’s love. (Romans 5:5)
- D). Paul addresses the immature church about their behavior while teaching what love is! The problem is that they were promoting themselves with their spiritual gifts instead of promoting God and edifying the church! (vss, 4-7)
  - 1. They wanted to speak over each other in the public meetings (1 Cor.14:29-32) – Love is patient and kind (vs 4a)
  - 2. They envied each other gifts and was puffed up and bragged about their own (1 Cor. 4:6) – Love does not envy, nor is it boastful! (vs. 4b)
  - 3. They were even suing one another in the courts of unbelievers! (1 Cor. 6:1-7) – Love is not rude, does not demand its own way, keeps no record of being wronged (vs. 5)
  - 4. They rejoiced in fornication as a man was going with his stepmom (1 Cor. 5) – Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth! ((vs. 6)
  - 5. In summary, in their immature behavior, they gave up, loss faith, loss hope and could not endure through trying circumstances. But love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance (vs. 7)

## **II. A MATURING CHURCH (vss. 8-11)**

- A. Paul is now showing a picture of a maturing church. They are not quite mature, Paul said for now we know in part and we prophesy in part. But we can see spiritual growth from verses 1-7 up to verses 8-10.
1. Love is eternal (vs. 8) – God is love. 1 John 4:7-8 NLT teaches 1 John 4:7-8 (NLT)
  2. In contrast, the gifts are temporary (vs. 8). Prophecies shall fail, tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish away.
  3. We must come to the realization that we do not have all of the answers (vs.9, 1 Cor. 8:1-3)
- B. Spiritual gifts are not toys (vs. 11) – Just as a child must mature, so should the church. The church as a whole should put away childish things.
1. The church should mature – Ephesians 4:11-16
  2. Individual believers should mature – 2 Peter 3:18

## **III. A MATURED CHURCH (vss. 12-13)**

- A. “Glass darkly (vs. 12a) – A glass darkly is referring to a mirror. The mirrors back then were made of polished brass. A person could not see themselves clearly.
- B. “now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (vs, 12b KJV) – The NLT translation reads “All that I know is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God knows me completely.”
- C. “Now abideth (remain) faith, hope and love..(vs. 13) – The other spiritual gifts will eventually be done away with, but faith, hope and love will always remain!
1. Faith – “Faith shows the reality of what we hope for: it is the evidence of things we cannot see”. (Hebrews 11:1 NLT)
  2. Hope – We were given this hope when we were saved. If we already have something, we don’t need to hope for it.” (Romans 8:24 NLT) This is known as the Blessed Hope.
  3. Love – Is the “More Excellent Way” (1 Corinthians 12:31). The greatest of these is love!

**God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who love live in God, and God lives in them. (1 John 4:16 NLT)**

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