

**What is Love? – Higher Than Acts of Spiritual Power**

*1 Corinthians 12:1, 7-11, 27-31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Luke 10:17-20; Matthew 7:21-23*

**Aiming Higher**

Last week Jesus told us the greatest thing we can do is:

\_\_\_\_\_ God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, AND  
\_\_\_\_\_ our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:28-31)

Here and elsewhere in Scripture we clearly see that LOVE is \_\_\_\_\_ to a Christian life.

But that forces us to ask an important question: what is love?

The Apostle Paul helps us with an in-depth \_\_\_\_\_.

**The LOVE Chapter (1 Corinthians 13)**

Often read at \_\_\_\_\_, this passage is often viewed as heartwarming, inspiring, and fairly clear.

But what Paul is actually saying is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to the people of Corinth and us.

He's saying *spiritual abilities are insufficient evidence of true faith*. Or, in other words...

*You can perform great demonstrations of spiritual power in Jesus' name and still not be saved.* (Matt 7:21-23)

This was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to 1<sup>st</sup> Century Corinthians and is to modern Americans today.

Our \_\_\_\_\_ culture, like that in Corinth teaches us to show off and prove ourselves.

Paul tells us our efforts to do so are like a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal:

He's saying we are like \_\_\_\_\_ trying to get the attention of a god that doesn't exist.

**Earnestly Desire the Higher Gifts**

In a world full of self-centered sinners LOVE is the greatest \_\_\_\_\_.

Did Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the world because of his spiritual power? Or because of his love?

His spiritual power wowed some who became \_\_\_\_\_, and enraged others. Neither were unique.

But his love on the \_\_\_\_\_ created a movement of love and service that took over the world.

Jesus loved us SO much he gave up the \_\_\_\_\_ love of his Father to save us.

Some have more impressive gifts than others. Focusing on this fosters jealousy and arrogance.

Nothing \_\_\_\_\_!

But focusing on Christ's love for us and all people fosters a stable, secure \_\_\_\_\_ that can love others.

*No matter what spiritual gifts, skills, or abilities we have or lack, we can all change the world with LOVE.*

Where has a competitive spirit taken hold in your life? Do your gifts make you feel superior to others? Or less than others? \_\_\_\_\_

How does Christ's love for you reframe those thoughts and feelings? \_\_\_\_\_

What is God saying to you today? \_\_\_\_\_

What are you going to do about it? \_\_\_\_\_