

All You Need is Love

1 Cor. 13:1-13

When I was growing up, the Beatles wrote a song called, All You Need is Love. Later, they wrote, Love, Love Me Do, and many others. They were followed by songs like, I Can't Get No Satisfaction, and Don't Take Your Love to Town. In my father's day, it was, Love is a Many Splendered Thing, or Love Me Tender, or some other song trying to explain what true love is. Today it hasn't gotten any better.. Of the top ten songs on the radio today, how many are about love, either giving it or getting it. Look at the soap operas. How many story lines are wrapped around a **Love Affair**, or **Love Triangle**. We all have a built-in desire to love. But how do we show that love? To whom do we direct that love? What kind of love is best?

Lets remember that Paul wrote this in the middle of his discussion of Spiritual Gifts. Therefore we can conclude that the application of this chapter should be made to Spiritual Gifts and how it relates to worship. If that is true, then it sheds a little different light on the subject than you may have noticed before. In chapter 12, Paul lists several gifts that are given to Christians. Notice what he says in 1 Cor. 12:31. He tells us to "*desire the greater gifts*", and that he will "show us a better way" to get them. That way is LOVE. Now there are many things we can say about Love. I want to mention 4 specific things that make LOVE the best gift.

1. **The Supremacy of Love** - vs. 1-3 This is the value of love. First we must note the type of love Paul is talking about. It is agapé love that Paul wants us to think about. So what is the value of Love? First, Paul states that if we do not have Love, that we can speak with the best of the best and even speak with "tongues of angles", we are but a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. This is the way the pagans worshipped in Paul's day. Therefore, without Love, you cannot depend on your great oratory skills to get you anywhere. Second, Paul says that even if we prophesy great and mighty things, and know all of the mysteries of the age, and have the great faith that Jesus spoke of, but without Love, we have nothing and we are nothing. Third, he says that after all that, if we give all that we have to the poor, as Jesus commanded the rich young ruler, and then sacrifice you own body but without Love, we get no gain or credit. What a shame. All that effort and sacrifice, and no credit with God. How many of us fall into one of these areas?
2. **The Effectiveness of Love** - vs. 4-8 This is the virtue of love. These are the most difficult verses in all of scripture to me. They are a constant reminder of how we are to live and treat one another. They hold up a bright light to our actions and behaviors and expose the darkness. Stop and think

what Paul means in these verses concerning worship? What does he mean with regard to other Spiritual Gifts? How do these apply to everyday living? Can these things be said about you or me?

3. **The Permanency of Love** - vs. 8-12 This is the victory of love. Paul says that all the other gifts that are important and desirable and are practiced, are only a part of the big picture. All the other gifts will go away, except Love. Love alone will survive. Think about it. Love is the only gift you will take into heaven. No tongues, because you won't need them. No prophecy, because you will be the fulfilled prophecy. No preaching, all are saved there. No doing of miracles, who wants to compete with God. No healing, we will be healed already. No distinguishing of spirits, Satan will be cast into hell. Love is the only thing from this earth that is forever.
4. **The Completeness of Love** - vs. 13 This is the validity of love. This is so simple that it is profound. When all is said and done, Love alone is the greatest. It is Love that overshadows all other gifts and remains the one to be desired above all others. Love completes all the other gifts, and without Love, they lack more than they fulfill.

Paul has indeed shown us a better way, and that way is through LOVE.