

MAIN POINT: The God who is love pours out his love into our hearts by his gift-giving Spirit, and we are to pursue love and lovingly utilize those gifts within the body of Christ.

I. PAUL'S INITIAL COMMAND (1 Cor. 12:31)

- Because of their disordered view of the Spirit's gifts, Paul calls the Corinthians to desire the greater gifts (i.e., prophecy) and pursue the most excellent way of love.

GOOD THINGS BECOME VAIN THINGS WITHOUT LOVE (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

- The gift of tongues, prophecy, understanding, faith, and self-sacrifice are all vain if not performed in and seasoned by the love of God in Christ by the Spirit.

A NEVER-ENDING KIND OF LOVE (1 Cor. 13:4-8a)

- Paul describes this love by way of seven positive affirmations and nine negations:
 - It **is** patient and kind, rejoices with the truth, and bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things.
 - It **is not** envious, boastful, arrogant, rude (i.e., behave improperly), irritable, or resentful, and **does not** insist on its own way, rejoice at wrongdoing, or end.

SOME GOOD THINGS HAVE EXPIRATION DATES (1 Cor. 13:8b-10)

- Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge are all partial and point to a goal, and when that perfect goal comes, the partial's expiration date will have arrived.

A NEVER ENDING KIND OF LOVE (1 Cor. 13:11-13)

- Life in this age is like maturing through childhood, and the age to come is like reaching the goal of mature adulthood, but the most excellent way of love continues from now into forever.

II. PAUL'S CONCLUDING COMMAND (1 Cor. 14:1)

- Because of what Paul has said in 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13, the Corinthians are to pursue love and especially desire prophesy.

Suggested Reading:

God's Love by R. C. Sproul

Next Week's Text: 1 Corinthians 14:1-25

**Questions/Discovery Points for
Life Groups/Families**

Please Read I Corinthians 12:31-14:1

1. What and to whom has Paul been addressing in 1 Corinthians 12, and what and to whom will he go on to address in 1 Corinthians 14? How does understanding 1 Corinthians 12-14 as a whole help us understand the primary (though not only) application of 1 Corinthians 13?
2. With Question #1 in mind, are there other contexts in which 1 Corinthians 13 is applicable? Why can this chapter be more broadly applied beyond merely the body of Christ?
3. Paul speaks of both the importance and nature of love in vv. 1-8. Spend some extended time discussing the importance and nature of love within the different spheres in which you live, move, and have your being (i.e., the church, the family, and society more broadly).
4. How does the hope of the age to come and the glory that will be revealed at the coming of Christ inform our pursuit and utilization of spiritual gifts today?
5. Why can Paul say that love is greater than even faith and hope in v. 13?