

“LOVE, THE SUPREME MOTIVE”
1 Corinthians 13:1-3

INTRODUCTION

God wants to bless us, but a believer's happiness isn't really the issue. Seeking happiness often just leads to selfishness. The Lord wants believers to develop in maturity and character! In Corinth there was too much individualism. They were too carnal! That church looked more like the city of Corinth than Heaven! In **chapter 12, verse 31**, Paul indicates that he will present to them a better approach. **Chapter 13** is that approach! It's love! This is the fruit of the Spirit, the mark of spiritual maturity. While this is one of the most popular chapters in the Bible, it may be one of the least experienced.

A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

The more excellent way is the way other than Corinth's way! They were fixated on people, gifts, and personal preferences, and settled their disputes in open court. Our chief reason for living should be love! The greatest commandments are to love God and love our fellow man. Love is not a gift, but a fruit of the Spirit, **Galatians 5:22**. Love is the direct result of the *quality* of a relationship with Jesus. He wants us to *abide* with Him in order to bear fruit, **John 15:5**. This goes beyond mere belief! This is agape love, sacrificial love with no conditions. This is the supreme mark of Christianity. So many want what is contained in this chapter, but so few experience it!

The Corinthians were impressed by good speakers. They loved style over substance. This is what Paul was up against. In **verse 1**, “sounding brass” was not an instrument, but just striking a piece of brass. The “tinkling cymbal” was actually 2 half globes of metal clanged together. These were rather empty sounds!

Our speech is what is in view here in this verse. Other scriptures addressing the tongue are **James 3:5, 6; Psalm 19:14; Psalm 141:3**.

In **verse 2** there are great qualities to be admired: the gift of prophecy, understanding scriptures and mysteries, as well as faith that could move mountains...or a great confidence in the Lord. With all of these qualities, but no love, we are nothing! Gifts are important, Bible knowledge is important, but how I use these is *more* important.

Very benevolent people are greatly admired. In **verse 3** it mentions that we may even give our own lives for a particular cause. The motives of our actions are important, however! Not every giver does so with a pure heart. Sometimes giving can be just for what we can get in return...like a tax write off! Jesus indicates that we should be careful not to do things just for show (**Matthew 6**). Without love, there is no benefit, no profit or reward. It is possible to do something great and not be rewarded at the Bema seat of Christ. That's a very sobering reality. Here's a great guide for all of our actions, **Colossians 3:23, 24**.

CONSIDER

Sometimes in the church there may be conflict between members. This may be due to a misunderstanding or a miscommunication. We need to love even if we feel that we have been slighted or offended. As the scripture indicates, we reap what we sow. Do you want friends? Then be friendly! Want love? Then be loving! Jesus loved us even when we were His enemies. Let us *abide* in Christ so we can love others the way, **John 13:34**. Love is the more excellent way which needs to govern all of our actions and attitudes!

PRAY

- * That each member of the body would actively use the gift granted to him or her.
- * That members of the church would experience the love of chapter 13. May this grow among us!