



♥ LOVE ♥

Do You Know What It Is?

Sunday 2/3 at 8:00 & 10:45 | Monday 2/4 at 7 PM

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany – 2019

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Today is part 3 of a 6-part series on Paul's first letter to the Christians in Corinth; first, *he taught them*; then, five years later, *he wrote to them!*

To put things into perspective for this sermon:

- The right words – *are good!*
- The right words plus the right actions – *are better!*
- The right words plus the right actions when both are motivated by true love – *are best!*

1. **Actions plus Love = Excellence:** ^{12:31b} **...And I will show you a still more excellent way.** // Those words are at the end of chapter 12, *but they point ahead to chapter 13!* In chapter 12 we learned these important things about Christians: They **◆**have the Holy Spirit, **◆**confess that Jesus is Lord, **◆**show the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, **◆**have

been given a spiritual gift for the common good, and
♦have been made members of the one body of Christ! But what does every Christian need to have and exercise in order to act in an excellent way? **The answer is love!** So when a person – *motivated by love* – takes action, *the result is truly excellent!*

2. **Amazing minus Love = Nothing:**

- a. ^{13:1} **If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.** // We may think, sometimes, that our words are good – thus “*of men and of angels,*” but, *when they are spoken without love,* they are not good in the ears of those who hear! *Such a person is just making noise!*
- b. ² **And if I have [the gift of prophecy], and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.** // In part 1 of this series Paul’s list of Spirit-given gifts included ♦knowledge, ♦faith, and ♦prophecy; *for a person to have one or more is amazing!* However, *for the person who has them all, but does not exercise them with love, he is nothing!*
- c. ³ **If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.** // Imagine taking all you have; then giving it away, *all of it;* then going even much further *by offering yourself as a human sacrifice!* Those are VERY extraordinary things, but if they are done without love, *the person doing them profits nothing!*

3. **What Love Is and What Love Is Not:** As we go through this section, let us ♦rejoice in God’s love for us and ♦grow in showing true love to others!

- a. **⁴ Love is patient...** // Love is not demanding; instead, *love is willing to wait!*
- b. **[love is] kind;** // Love does not give evil for evil; instead, *love holds back the evil and is gentle!*
- c. **love does not envy;** // Love is not jealous; instead, *love is content!*
- d. **[love does not] boast;** // Love does not brag; instead, *love allows others to draw their own conclusions!*
- e. **[love] is not arrogant...** // Love is not puffed up – *look at me*; instead, *love does not express its importance!*
- f. **[love is not]⁵ rude.** // Love does not act disgracefully; instead, *love is polite!*
- g. **[Love] does not insist on its own way;** // Love does not seek to control another person; instead, love asks, “What do you think?” *Then love gladly responds to the thoughts of the other person* (See this article: “[4 Words That Will Predict Your Marriage](#)”)!)
- h. **[Love] is not irritable...** // Love is not short-tempered; instead, *love exercises self-control!*
- i. **[love is not] resentful;** // The Greek text literally says that love does not take into account the evil. So love does not take revenge; instead, *love forgives!*
- j. **⁶ [love] does not rejoice at wrongdoing [unrighteousness], but rejoices with the truth.** // Love is not happy when people do wrong things; instead, *love is happy when people follow God’s Word of Truth!*
- k. **⁷ Love bears [thus accepts] all things, believes [is convinced in regard to] all things, hopes [expects] all things, endures [stands its ground regarding] all things.**

4. **The Longevity of Love in Comparison to Other Things:**

⁸ Love never ends.

- a. **Temporary things:** **As for prophecies, they will pass away** *[when they are fulfilled]; as for tongues, they will cease* *[and have now been replaced with the NT]; as for knowledge, it will pass away* *[when we fully know – when Jesus returns].* **⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part,** ¹⁰ **but when the perfect comes** *[when Jesus returns], the partial will pass away.* **¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways** *[so childish ways are temporary].* **¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly** *[like a very old mirror reflecting a very poor image], but then face to face* *[when Jesus returns].* **Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known** *[when Jesus returns].* // Much of what we know now is temporary, but let us keep looking forward to the great blessings yet to come – by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ!
- b. **Love never ends:** **¹³ So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.** // When we see Jesus, *faith will end*; when all of God's promises are fulfilled, *hope will end*; **love never ends!**

This Week's Sermon Challenge: Based on verses 4-7, write a definition of love; then put that definition into practice in at least one way!

Let Us Pray: Dear Father, TY for loving us in the Person of Your Son; *help us to show true love to others!* In Jesus' name!