

What is Greater than the Greatest of Spiritual Gifts?

Series: "Spiritual Gifts," Part 3 of 6, 1 Corinthians 13:1-4

Brian's Song. _____

LOVE IS MORE EXCELLENT THAN ANY SPIRITUAL GIFT

1. **Love is Greater Than the Gift of _____.**
(1 Cor 13:1 NIV) *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.*
2. **Love is Greater Than the Gift of _____.**
(1 Cor 13:2 NIV) *If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*
3. **Love is Greater Than the Gift of _____.**
(1 Cor 13:2 NIV) *If I . . . can fathom all mysteries . . . but have not love, I am nothing.*
4. **Love is Greater Than the Gift of _____.**
(1 Cor 13:2 NIV) *If I . . . can fathom . . . all knowledge . . . but have not love, I am nothing.*
5. **Love is Greater Than the Gift of _____.**
(1 Cor 13:2 NIV) . . . *if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*
6. **Love is Greater Than the Gift of _____.**
(1 Cor 13:3 NIV) *If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*
7. **Love is Greater Than the Gift of _____.**
(1 Cor 13:3 NIV) *If I surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

Greek Words for Love.

- Eros* = _____ Love
Philia = _____ Love
Storge = _____ Love
Agape = Self-_____ Love

AGAPE LOVE IS LOVE IN ACTION

1. **Love is _____.**
(1 Cor 13:4 NIV) *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

2. **Love is _____.**
(1 Cor 13:4 NIV) . . . *love is kind.*

3. **Love does not _____.**
(1 Cor 13:4 NIV) . . . *It does not envy . . .*

4. **Love does not _____.**
(1 Cor 13:4 NIV) . . . *it does not boast . . .*

5. **Love is not _____.**
(1 Cor 13:4 NIV) . . . *it is not proud . . .*

“It’s People I Can’t Stand.” _____

Sermon-based Small Group Discussion Guide

Week of November 1, 2009

1 Corinthians 13:1-4

Icebreaker: Name one of your favorite love songs as a teenager.

1. What events or experiences come to mind when you hear 1 Corinthians 13 read aloud?
2. Right in the middle of Paul's longest discussion of spiritual gifts for believers, he stops to talk about love. In what ways do you think that love relates to spiritual gifts?
3. When Paul says he will show us "the most excellent way," is he overstating his case? Why?
4. Is love the only ultimate test of authentic Christianity (for example see Galatians 1:8-9)?
5. Using himself as an example, Paul says that if he speaks in tongues but has not love, he is like a resounding gong or clanging symbol? What does he mean?
6. In verses 2 and 3, Paul teaches that if we use any of our spiritual gifts and have not love, we are nothing and we gain nothing. Isn't that a little strong? Why?
7. Is it possible to abuse spiritual gifts? How? How do you think the Corinthians were abusing them?
8. Do you think Paul is depreciating spiritual gifts in verses 1-3? Why?
9. Application: What if Paul were writing to the American Church? Discuss these statements:
 - a. You Christians who prove your spirituality by how much theological/biblical knowledge you've crammed into your heads, I tell you that without love, that knowledge proves nothing.
 - b. If your worship style (traditional, contemporary, blended, etc) is not done in love, then you are spiritually bankrupt.
 - c. If your acts of mercy, even though they be many, are not done in love, you gain nothing.
10. The words Paul uses to practically describe love (vs.4) are not sentimental but behavioral. What does that tell you about love?
11. Verse 4 includes two positive descriptors and three negative descriptors for love. What does that tell you about love?
12. How are each of the following words characteristic of love?
 - a. Patient
 - b. Kind
 - c. Not envy
 - d. Not boast
 - e. Not proud
13. Has your understanding / experience of love changed over time? Explain.

Prayer

Pray for the discovery and loving use of spiritual gifts at St. Paul's.
Pray for one another.