

“The Better Way!”

1 Corinthians 13:1-13
East Berlin Community Church
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Introduction

- There is the “Hard Way” or the “Better Way” of doing things.
- Review of our study on *“Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts”*
 - Spiritual Gifts are *“God-given, special capacities for serving others”*
 - Every believer has a particular function to perform, and all are necessary for the functioning of the church.
 - Our spiritual gift determines our niche in the ministry of the church, the body of Christ.
 - As we explore the possibilities, experiment with as many as we can, examine our feelings and desires, evaluate our effectiveness, and listen to the confirmation from others, we can discover how God has gifted us.

The Better Way!

A. The “Hard Way” of Ministry. The way of

1. Unhealthy Competition
2. Unrelenting Criticism
3. Unresolved Conflicts

B. The “Better Way” of Ministry-- Unconditional Love

- 1 Corinthians 12:31-- *“But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.”*

1. Without love, the Spiritual gifts do not work. –1 Corinthians 13:1-7

a. Paul states his case through exaggerations.

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-3-- *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, an understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and although I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”*

b. Love is the atmosphere in which spiritual gifts work best.

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7-- *“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”*

- 1) Suffers long or is patient.
- 2) Kind
 - Ephesians 4:32-- *“be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”*
- 3) Does not envy
- 4) Does not parade itself, is not puffed up.
- 5) Does not behave rudely.
- 6) Does not seek its own
- 7) Is not provoked
- 8) Thinks no evil, or Keeps no records of wrong
- 9) Does not rejoice in iniquity but rather in the truth
- 10) Protects... Trusts... Hopes.... Perseveres.

c. **Church functions best in an atmosphere of Love.**

1) **By our love, people will know that we are Christ's disciples.**

- John 13:34-35-- *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

2) **Love is the lubricating oil which lessens the friction, the heat, and helps the church to function smoothly.**

2. **Love will outlast all of the Spiritual Gifts -- 1 Corinthians 13:8-13**

- 1 Corinthians 13:8-13-- *"Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For we now see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."*