
1 Corinthians 13 is one of the most famous chapters in all of the Holy Scriptures:

It is about "ONE" Christian grace, "ONE" Fruit of the Spirit, "ONE" Beautiful, Excellent, and God-Like Christian virtue that should be PROMINENT in your life if you are a Christian. It is LOVE!

But as I pray you will see, not a common earthly or worldly love.

I believe Paul placed this truth between chapters 12-14 as an intermission in his letter to admonish and reprove the church at Corinth, and to instruct them in what he called (12:31) "a more excellent way".

This "more excellent way" was, no doubt, what they lacked; they were full of knowledge, they could speak and preach the truths of Christ, and the Spirit of God had gifted many in the church; but in all of what THEY possessed, what they lacked (AS A CHURCH) was charity ~ love.

The Spirit of God (here) led Paul to direct their minds and hearts toward what they "did not" ask him about, but what they so desperately needed as the people God! Paul here defined THIS uncommon, special LOVE to them, and he is teaching us.

Beloved, we, as a church may be correct in all of our doctrine and practice, but if we do not possess this radically different "love" which comes from God, if "love" is not the primary motive for all that we do as a church, we are of no value to God. We are simply making religious, gospel noise.

Christianity without love is of no value, it is orthodox religion that loves itself rather than Christ!

Whenever any seasoned Christian hears 1 Corinthians 13, "LOVE" immediately comes to mind. (Weddings, greeting cards, etc.)

Before we enter upon this Holy Ground of 1 Corinthians 13, I would direct your hearts to scriptural definitions of the English word "love" from (4) different Greek words used in the Bible.

The scriptures describe natural love, brotherly love, general love for all, and sacrificial love, or that "otherworld love" that comes from God.

Natural Love/Natural Affection: Greek: "Storgos": This love and affection develops "naturally" in families, between parents, children, and close and intimate friends.

As many of us know, sin wreaks havoc in families, in which "close and intimate family relationships" are no more; to the point where there is no more "natural love and affection".

The scriptures speak of those that are so affected by sin as being "Astorgos" rather than "Storgos".

"Astorgos" is the Greek word which describes those who are NOW WITHOUT NATURAL LOVE or AFFECTION for their kindred; HEARTLESS, with no more natural love for those whom they previously loved. (Astorgos). Romans 1:28-32, 2 Timothy 3:1-5

Understand that "Natural Love" may fail.

Brotherly Love: Greek: "Phileo": Similar to natural love ("Storgos"), it exists between those who have mutual interests and have developed warm affections and fondness for each other. "Phileo love" in fallen humans thrives on responses, and when this type of love IS NOT returned "in kind" it will not continue. This is a "feeling love". John 11:3, 36, 20:2, 15:19

Consider: Romans 12:9-10: "Let love (agape) be without dissimulation (let it be sincere love). Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned (philostorgos) one to another with brotherly, (fraternal) love (Philadelphia); in honour preferring one another"

General love for all: Greek: Philanthropia: "Philanthropists" devote themselves to doing good for all, without exception. Acts 28:1-2

This love describes God's kindness toward man in general: Titus 3:4

Sacrificial or Disinterested Love, or that "otherworld love" that can only come from God: Greek: Agape: This is the highest form of love; it is love in its perfection and beauty. It is not based on emotions, but it is a purposed and deliberate love. Agape is a sacrificial and intentional love; it is not based on feelings or attraction! Agape will deny itself for the one that is loved. Christian, you are loved by God because God purposed to love you! Deuteronomy 7:6-8, 1 John 4:10

THIS child of God is the "love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us". It MUST be "in you" child of God!

Agape DESCRIBES God's Love for us! Since it originates in God, it can only come from God, and it MUST be given by God.

1 John 4:7-8: God IS "AGAPE" LOVE!

The Apostle John helps us understand more about this "Agape Love".

1 John 3:1-2: "Behold, what manner of love?"

LOOK at this great and wonderful love! "WHAT MANNER" means, from where does this love originate? From what land or country is it from?

LOOK at it and BEHOLD this great love, says John, BEHOLD its excellence, its quality, its perfection, and its beauty! BEHOLD; LOOK at its breadth, and length, and depth, and height! HOW DO YOU LOOK AT IT, Christian? If you would truly SEE IT, you MUST BEHOLD it in "The Person of Christ"!

Ephesians 3:14-19, 4:1-2, 5:1-2, Galatians 5:22

THIS LOVE is foreign to this world; it is not natural, inherent or innate to ANY natural born son/daughter of Adam; none of us are "earthly born" with it, only those "born of the Spirit" or "born from above" have it.

Other loves may fail, but NOT THIS LOVE, it never fails..... Understand therefore that the commands of Christ to "agapao" without "God-Given Love" is impossible. You cannot ACTIVELY "agapao" your enemies, and "agapao" those that hate you without this God Given "Christ demonstrated" Love or "agape" in you! That why the lost do not and cannot do it! John 13:34-35

Consider these Biblical truths in regard to "Agape" Love:

It is the greatest in the trinity of graces mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:13: Faith, Hope, Love. AGAPE will never fail!

Colossians 3:14: Put on "charity" or "love" which is the bond of perfectness.

1 Timothy 1:5: Paul told Timothy, "Charity" is the end (or aim and design of God's) commandments. "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned"

Peter wrote: We are to ADD "Charity" or "love" to our faith. "Charity" or "love" should be growing, and abounding in each of us as children of God. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

2 Thessalonians 1:3: "Your faith is growing exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth"

And then, Peter wrote: 4:8: "And above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins"

"Agape love" IN YOU will change who you are: How can "The Life of God IN YOU, not change you"? 1 John 4:9-16

And so NOW, as we return to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, we should have a better understanding of this otherworld "agape" love, of which Paul speaks:

Speaking Biblical truths in "other languages"; the highest form of speaking, if it has no love in it, it is worthless noise.

I have the GIFT of prophecy, but NO AGAPE. I am nothing. I understand ALL of the secrets of God, I have ALL knowledge, I can remove mountains with ALL MY FAITH; it's nothing apart from AGAPE.

I have given ALL my goods to feed the poor and I sacrifice myself and my body for God: But if I do it without AGAPE, it profits me nothing. I could be giving MY ALL, but ALL for the wrong reasons! For ME and NOT because of my love for God!

If EVERYTHING that we do in the NAME of Christ is NOT motivated by our love to Christ, all of it is of no value to the Lord.

If you're in Christ, you are born-again by the Spirit of God:

If this is true of you, it is ALSO TRUE OF YOU that the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given to you.

IF THAT BE TRUE OF YOU, you to be One who "loves" intentionally and not for what you can get in return. And yes, you are to love your enemies and those that hate you, and despitefully use you and persecute you. For that is HOW GOD LOVED YOU! Romans 5:6-11, John 3:16

GFBC, does "agape" come forth from you to ANY who would walk through those doors?