

# Day 95, 1 Corinthians 13

by David Servant

---

*Love is the most important thing, and without it, even spiritual gifts amount to nothing.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 8:3, 1 Corinthians 13:1-4, 1 Corinthians 13:8, 1 Corinthians 13:12

**Topics:** "Agape Love", "Spiritual Gifts"

---

## Description

David Servant delves into the famous chapter on love in 1 Corinthians, emphasizing how Paul's words were a direct rebuke to the Corinthian church where love was lacking. Paul highlights that without love, spiritual gifts and good deeds are meaningless, challenging the Corinthians to prioritize love above all else. He warns against selfish motives behind seemingly unselfish actions and stresses the importance of genuine love that rejoices in truth and bears all things. Despite the belief that spiritual gifts would cease with the completion of the Bible, Paul reminds that our knowledge remains partial until Jesus reigns, humbling us to acknowledge our limited understanding.

---

## Transcript

It is fun to read this famous chapter, so often recited in sermons about love, within its context of the entire Corinthian letter. It appears that everything that Paul wrote to define love has some direct application to a situation in Corinth, where love was definitely lacking.

For example, when we read the very next chapter in 1 Corinthians, we'll learn that speaking in tongues had superseded love in the Corinthian church. Some were speaking with other tongues in a selfish manner. Paul's lovely and poetic words that are often read at wedding ceremonies---"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal"---were a stinging rebuke to the Corinthians. Truly, there is little that is more obnoxious than a Pentecostal gong or Charismatic clanger! All noise, no love!

Similarly, Paul puts spiritual gifts, with which the Corinthian believers were so enamored, into their proper perspective. One might possess the gift of prophecy, amazing revelation, and even mountain-moving faith, but without love, he amounts to absolutely nothing (13:2). Such words no doubt deflated many Corinthian egos as they were first read. Love is the important thing.

Paul also points out the fact that not all that appears to be loving is love. One can do "unselfish" things for selfish reasons, including giving to the poor and making great personal sacrifices, if such things are done for the praise of others. Paul reiterates what Jesus taught; there will be no reward for such "good deeds."

The selfish "lover" profits nothing (13:3).

Let's imagine we are Corinthians as we read Paul's definition of love. Here is more of what we might hear:

"Love is patient, so it waits for everyone to show up at the Lord's Supper before eating. Love does not brag, and it is not arrogant about favorite Christian leaders, saying, 'I am of Paul' and, 'I am of Peter.' Love does not seek its own, and so it is willing to forgo eating meats sacrificed to idols if a fellow saint with a weak conscience might be caused to stumble. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, such as when it knows that a man in the church is living in an immoral relationship with his stepmother. Rather, love rejoices in the truth. Love also bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things, so those of you who are always complaining about each other need to stop grumbling!"

Some say that Paul's foretelling that tongues would cease, along with the other spiritual gifts that he mentions such as the word of knowledge and prophecy, was fulfilled when the last book of the Bible was written, because Paul wrote, "we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away" (13:8-10). Supposedly, we no longer need spiritual gifts since we have the complete Bible.

The truth is, however, that even with the complete Bible, we still "know in part," and we continue to "see in a mirror dimly" (13:9, 12). Only when Jesus is reigning on this earth will that no longer be true. And that is comforting to those of us, like me, who are perplexed about so many things now. Think of how different your understanding was when you were a child compared to how it is now as an adult. Similarly, when you are in the future kingdom, you will look back at your earthly life and say to yourself, "How very little I understood!" Now it is as if we are looking at everything in a mirror's reflection, and under dim light! Everything is backwards and indistinct, and we're only seeing a small fragment of the entire picture. We know so very little that there is no room for pride, as Paul wrote a few chapters earlier, "If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:3).

I know so little. I am D---U---M dum! But don't laugh at me! You're a dummy reading a commentary written by another dummy!

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/day-95-1-corinthians-13/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**