

# Use Your Gift With Love!

1 Corinthians 13

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 610–612.



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of FAITH  
Hebrews 11:1



- The only way spiritual gifts can be used creatively is when Christians are motivated by love.
- Paul explained three characteristics of Christian love that show why it is so important in ministry.

# Love Is Enriching (vv. 1–3)

## 1 Corinthians 13:1–3 (NKJV)

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 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.

- Paul named five spiritual gifts: tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith, and giving (*sacrifice*). He pointed out that, without love, the exercise of these gifts is *nothing*.
- Tongues apart from love is just a lot of noise! It is love that enriches the gift and that gives it value.
- Ministry without love cheapens both the minister and those who are touched by it; but ministry with love enriches the whole church.  
“Speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15).

- Christians are “taught of God to love one another”.

## 1 Thessalonians 4:9 (NKJV)

But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

- God the Father taught us to love by sending His Son.

## 1 John 4:19 (NKJV)

We love Him because He first loved us.

- God the Son taught us to love by giving His life and by commanding us to love each other.

## John 13:34–35 (NKJV)

**34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

**35** By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- The Holy Spirit teaches us to love one another by pouring out God's love in our hearts  
*Romans 5:5 (NKJV)* Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- The most important lesson in the school of faith is to love one another. Love enriches all that it touches.

# Love Is Edifying (vv. 4–7)

## 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (NKJV)

4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- “Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth [*builds up*]” (1 Cor. 8:1) .

## 1 Corinthians 8:1 (NKJV)

Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

- The purpose of spiritual gifts is the edification of the church (1 Cor. 12:7; 14:3, 5, 12, 17, 26).
- This means we must not think of ourselves, but of others; and this demands love.



- The Corinthians were impatient in the public meetings, but love would make them long-suffering.

## 1 Corinthians 14:29–32 (NKJV)

**29** Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

**30** But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.

**31** For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

**32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

- They were envying each other's gifts, but love would remove that envy.
- They were “puffed up” with pride (*1 Cor. 4:6, 18–19; 5:2*), but love would remove pride and self-vaunting and replace it with a desire to promote others.

# 1 Corinthians 4:6 (NKJV)

Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

# 1 Corinthians 4:18–19 (NKJV)

18 Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.

19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power.

# 1 Corinthians 5:2 (NKJV)

2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.



*“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another”.*

## **Romans 12:10 (NKJV)**

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;



- At the “*love feast*” and the Lord’s Table, the Corinthians were behaving in a very unseemly manner. If they had known the meaning of real love, they would have behaved themselves in a manner pleasing to the Lord.
- They were even suing one another! But love “seeketh not [its] own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” (1 Cor. 13:5). The phrase *thinketh no evil* means “does not keep any record of wrongs.”

- One of the most miserable men I ever met was a professed Christian who actually kept in a notebook a list of the wrongs he felt others had committed against him.

**Forgiveness Means  
That We Wipe The  
Record Clean And  
Never Hold Things  
Against People.**



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## Ephesians 4:26 (NKJV)

“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

## Ephesians 4:32 (NKJV)

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.



# Love Does Not Rejoice In Iniquity, Yet The Corinthians Were Boasting About Sin In Their Church.

*(1 Cor. 5)*



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- Love “shall cover the multitude of sins”.

## 1 Peter 4:8 (NKJV)

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

- Like Noah’s sons, we should seek to hide the sins of others, and then help them make things right.

# Genesis 9:20–23 (NKJV)

**20** And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard.

**21** Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent.

**22** And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.

**23** But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

- Read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 carefully and compare this with the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22–23. You will see that all of the characteristics of love show up in that fruit.
- This is why love edifies: it releases the power of the Spirit in our lives and churches.

# Love Is Enduring (Vv. 8–13)

## 1 Corinthians 13:8–13 (NKJV)

8 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.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

# Love Is Enduring (Vv. 8–13)

**11** 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.

**12** For now we 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.

**13** And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.



- Prophecy, knowledge, and tongues were not permanent gifts. *(Knowledge does not mean “education,” but the immediate imparting of spiritual truth to the mind.)*
- These three gifts went together.
- God would impart knowledge to the prophet, and he would give the message in a tongue. Then an interpreter *(sometimes the prophet himself)* would explain the message. These were gifts that some of the Corinthians prized, especially the gift of tongues.

- These gifts will fail (*be abolished*) and cease, but love will endure forever; for “God is love”.

## 1 John 4:8 (NKJV)

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

## 1 John 4:16 (NKJV)

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.



- The Corinthians were like children playing with toys that would one day disappear.
- You expect a child to think, understand, and speak like a child; but you also expect the child to mature and start thinking and speaking like an adult.
- The day comes when he must “put away childish things” *(1 Cor. 13:11)*.

# 1 Corinthians 13:11 (NKJV)

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.



- In the New Testament (*which at that time was not completed*) we have a complete revelation, but our understanding of it is partial. (*if you think otherwise*)

## 1 Corinthians 8:1–3 (NKJV)

1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

- There is a maturing process for the church as a whole (*Eph. 4:11–16*) and also for the individual believer (*1 Cor. 14:20; 2 Peter 3:18*).

## Ephesians 4:11–16 (NKJV)

**11** And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

**12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

**13** till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

**14** that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

**15** but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

**16** from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

# 1 Corinthians 14:20 (NKJV)

Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

# 2 Peter 3:18 (NKJV)

but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

- We will not be fully completed until Jesus returns, but we ought to be growing and maturing now.



- Children live for the temporary; adults live for the permanent. Love is enduring, and what it produces will endure.
- Note that all three of the Christian graces will endure, even though “faith will become sight and hope will be fulfilled.”
- But the greatest of these graces is love; because when you love someone, you will trust him and will always be anticipating new joys.
- Faith, hope, and love go together, but it is love that energizes faith and hope.

- Unfortunately, some of the emphasis today on the Holy Spirit has not been *holy* (*because it has ignored Scripture*) and has not been spiritual (*because it has appealed to the carnal nature*).
- We must not tell other believers what gifts they should have or how they can obtain them.
- This matter is in the sovereign will of God. We must not minimize gifts, but neither should we neglect the *graces* of the Spirit. In my itinerant ministry, I have run across too many local church problems created by people who were zealous for the gifts, but careless of the graces.

# Unity—Diversity—Maturity

*And Maturity Comes Through Love*



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