

I Corinthians, Chapter 13 - Handout - Lamont Lenox- Greater Holy Temple COCIC

L O V E - A G A P E - The highest noblest form of love which sees something infinitely precious in its object (Tyndale, New Bible Dictionary). Used in the New Testament in the case of love of God to man, love of man to God, love of man for his neighbor. For Christians, it is a love that is of the Holy Spirit which is in us, and is expressed through us to the extent that we allow. Agape is an attribute of God and a Christian virtue as given by the Holy Spirit (New Ungers Bible Dictionary). It is the complete opposite of selfishness.

The 13th chapter of I Corinthians, although still concerned with the notion of spiritual gifts introduced in chapter 12, is a bit of a digression on the subject of love, stressing the importance of the presence and motivation of love in the exercising of those gifts. We can divide the chapter into three (3) sections: verses 1-3, the preeminent value of love (charity) in all we do; verses 4-7, a substantive, though not exhaustive, list of elements comprising love, what it is and what it isn't; verses 8-13, the eternal permanence of love, especially in light of the temporal nature of other things such as spiritual gifts.

v. 1-2 Paul first begins with tongues or speech. Remember that speeches and great oratory was greatly valued in the Greek world of which Corinth was a product, and also in Corinth speaking with spiritual tongues, known or unknown, was considered the greatest spirit gift. Then he introduces the idea of prophetic utterances, and faith to perform miracles, none of which have value or give value to the performer without love (charity). Without love, these don't mean anything to God, they bring Him no glory. Paul had previously discussed these gifts in Chapter 12, verses 8 - 10.

v.3 Then Paul brings up the idea of self-sacrifice. If I give all my things away to feed the poor or if I sacrifice my life, and have not love, it brings me no advantage or reward. Love must be the primary motivation driving and underlying everything we do. And we must do it for the welfare of others and not for ourselves.

So, what is love? v. 4 - 7 - **LOVE IS**

Longsuffering (patient) - bearing even the changes, even the evils of life, with calm, unruffled, and with no retaliation. Submitting peacefully, with fortitude, to what God allows, understanding that tests we go through can build in us Christian character.

Kind (partnered with longsuffering) - benignity, gracious, agreeable, generous, showing favor, gentleness, tenderhearted, friendly, moral goodness. Zeal toward another in a good sense, showing favor or bestowing benefits, of good service to others.

Not Envy - ill will toward another because of his or her advantages, possessions, etc. The desire to have the advantages or possessions that belong to another. This can then lead to feelings of resentful dislike and even hatred for that person. Love would be glad that another is blessed.

Not Proud - Vaunteth not itself (sounds its own praises); is not puffed up (swollen head of pride, usually thinking themselves to be so much better than others)

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Love

(v5) Does not behave itself unseemly (there is a bit of a reference to subjects of chapter 11 concerning the appropriate coverings of the head for men and women, and proper conduct in the fellowship meal and the Lord's supper). But in general, we try to engage in no behavior that will not bring glory to God and reflect Christian character.

Seeketh not her own, but is concerned with the things and welfare of others. Love is SelfLESS.

Is not easily provoked - to anger, exasperation, disgust (Patience is working here)

Thinketh no evil - this means does not keep track (hold on to a list) of offenses (Forgiveness is working here)

Rejoices not in iniquity but rejoices in the truth - takes no delight in things and behaviors that are offensive to God, but rejoices with things that are of the truth and done in light.

(v8) Beareth all things (covers, protects I Peter 4:8, charity covers the multitude of sins; Proverbs 10:12 Love covereth all sins (overlooks the wrongs others do, Contemporary English)

Believeth all things - thinks well of others (unless there is absolute proof to the contrary)

Hopeth all things - positive and hopeful

Endureth all things - sustain the assaults of the enemy

v.8-13 - Love is constant, love is permanent.

Prophecy shall fail, tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish.

We know and prophecy in an incomplete way, the complete knowledge shall do away with the incomplete.

When a child, I spake and thought childishly, but when I became mature, childish things went away. Maturity does away with immature things.

Now we look through imperfect reflections in brass, but one day we shall see clearly just like face to face.

Now I know God in part, but then I will know Him just like He knows me.

Faith, Hope, Love abide, but the greatest is Love (faith and hope are parts of love)