

The Spirit, the Body, and the Gifts: Love and the Gifts (Part 2)
1 Corinthians 12:31b-14:1

I. Love: Follow Up

A. John Hay

1. John Hay, after last Sunday's sermon: perhaps it might be good to define "love" since the meaning of love is often different between the world's definitions and the Bible's definitions.
 - a. Nothing like asking easy questions.
 - b. That must be why he laughed when I asked him if he wanted to preach this part of the sermon.
2. John is right.

B. If we are going to answer the question, "What role does love play in spiritual gifts" it is a good idea to start by defining what we mean by love

1. Reasons
 - a. because there are two separate definitions and they are vastly different.
 - b. Because some of what Christians today call love really isn't and their attempts to fulfill Christ's command to "love one another" really don't
2. Cultural Definition: Illustrate the difference between "love" as the culture in the world understands it and "love" as God reveals it
 - a. Huffington Post:
 - b. 16 Characteristics of Real Love Mar 09, 2015
 - (1) Love. It makes the world go 'round, right? Well, at least that's the how the saying goes. But is it true? It should be, but so many people confuse love with things like jealousy or possessiveness. True love isn't either of those things. But these 16 things are. So **here are the characteristics of REAL love:**
 - (a) Sure, we all want people to behave the way we want them to. We want them to be more affectionate. Or more outgoing. Or smarter. Or more ambitious. All of these things are expectations. Expectations are just your requirements for "acceptability" of loving someone.
 - (b) But true love has no expectations. It simply loves "as is."
 - (c) FALSE: True love, as revealed by God, expects that it's application transforms the heart and therefore the life choices of the beloved
 - (2) Love means saying goodbye to expectations.
 - (a) Sure, we all want people to behave the way we want them to. We want them to be more affectionate. Or more outgoing. Or smarter. Or more ambitious. All of these things are expectations. Expectations are just your requirements for "acceptability" of loving someone.
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 - (3) Love doesn't play the victim role or blame others.
 - (a) Love doesn't think others are "out to get them." Love doesn't think their loved ones are wrong. Love

works together. It takes responsibility. It forgives and allows other people's actions to be their journey. Love doesn't take things personally.

- (b) FALSE: Love, as God reveals it, knows that we are wrong in our nature and thinking and actions and does what is necessary to save us from the consequences of our wrongness!
- (4) Love doesn't require you to continue a relationship.
 - (a) You may love someone very much, but you may not be compatible with them. Or they may drive you crazy with their continued disregard for your feelings. You can still love them, but that doesn't mean you have to be with them. Love doesn't mean that you have to stay, and stay and stay. You can leave the relationship and love them anyway.
 - (b) FALSE: God repeatedly reveals "love" as the basis for His commitment to never leave us or forsake us.
- (5) 6. Love is the absence of fear.
 - (a) You can put all emotions on a continuum. On one end, you have love. Then appreciation. After that, it's joy, happiness, contentment and satisfaction. On the opposite end of the continuum of love is fear. Other fear-based emotions include, hatred, insecurity, jealousy or greed.
 - (b) TRUE: God reveals that "perfect love casts out fear." This one they got right.

3. Biblical Definition

- a. Jesus (who actually more time demonstrating love than talking about it!)
 - (1) **Matthew 5:43-46 (ESV)**
 - (a) ⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?
 - (b) Love gives everyone the opportunity to be loved because that's what God does
 - (2) **Matthew 6:24 (ESV)**
 - (a) "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You

cannot serve God and money.

- (b) Love chooses God above all other choices
- (3) **Matthew 24:12 (ESV)**
 - (a) *And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.*
 - (b) True love responds to the condition of the soul toward God
- (4) **Mark 12:30-33 (ESV)**
 - (a) ³⁰ *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.* ³¹ *The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.*
 - (b) True love exists to honor God and reveal Him to others
- (5) **John 14:15 (ESV)**
 - (a) *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*
 - (b) True love sets and meets conditions.
- b. Paul (1 Corinthians 13)
 - (1) The relationship of love and spiritual gifts
 - (a) The absence of love negates the presence of gifts 13:1-3
 - i) Tongues but no love? Nothing
 - ii) Prophecy but not love? Nothing
 - iii) Knowledge but not love? Nothing
 - iv) Faith but not love? Nothing
 - v) Generosity but not love? Nothing
 - (b) Love possesses quantifiable measurements 13:4-8a
 - i) Patient
 - ii) Kind
 - iii) Content
 - iv) Humble
 - v) Self-controlled
 - vi) Thoughtful
 - vii) Gracious
 - viii) Calm
 - ix) Reasonable
 - x) Holy
 - xi) Heavenly
 - xii) Longsuffering
 - xiii) Trusting
 - xiv) Hopeful
 - xv) Enduring
 - xvi) Eternal

- (c) Love characterizes the mature 13:8b-12
4. Divine love differs greatly from love as the world perceives it.
 - a. Christians do well to understand the nature of the difference.
 - (1) Cultural love focuses on the experience and benefit to the lover
 - (2) Divine love focuses on the person and character of God.
 - b. **When Jesus commands his disciples to love, he commands them to be and live in such a way that in every relationship of their lives God Himself is clearly seen and honored for Who He truly is.**

II. Remaining Questions

A. Questions

1. What does the relationship of love and gifts Paul describes have to do with us?
2. What are some ways we can put this higher gift into practice?

B. What does any of this have to do with us?

1. That which is highest/greatest is love. 13:13-14:1
 - a. The word “greatest” is the same word Paul uses in 12:31b translated “highest.”
 - b. Love is the true “mega” gift!
 - c. **The expression and application of genuine, divine love is the greatest, highest gift the church can give to one another.**
2. When Paul says, “The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in a tongue . . . so that the church may be built up,” demonstrates that applied love builds the church through applied gifts. (14:8)
 - a. 14.1 & 14.12 carry the same message: devote yourselves to building up the church
 - b. Many tear down the church because the church focuses on the ethics of others rather than its own ethical development
 - c. We do need to conduct ourselves in the world for God’s glory but not in such a way that the church is sabotaged.

C. What are some ways we can put this higher gift into practice?

1. Stop gossiping.
 - a. Talk to one another not about one another.
 - b. If you must talk to someone about someone else, let God be your listener as you intercede for the other person. Guaranteed to squelch gossip!
2. Make the effort to get to know the brothers and sisters around you.
3. When a brother or sister identifies a burden in their life with which you can assist, do not withhold from your brother what they need if it is in your power to give it.
 - a. No one can do everything
 - b. Everyone can do something