

## The Truth of Your Love

### 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 14:2



~ Our previous report in our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God covered the endowment of spiritual gifts by the Spirit of God unto believers. We have a right to ask the Lord for the best gifts; and we should. Gifts are not something preordained, though — not by any means. I pray for certain things. However, this isn't some high-teaching of philosophical or intellectual bent. We try to keep it simple. See, the Lord told me to feed His sheep — not feed His elephants or monkeys. So, I only feed sheep out here on this safari. Christ's sheep hear His voice. The other animals don't.

The spiritual gifts we have received as believers are to be used exclusively for the edification, profit, and wealth of our church. Unfortunately, most people assign themselves a church and service without ever praying or asking God for direction on either — so, they remain completely confused and are ineffective — every time. Our previous report also spoke on tongues. We'll have more to say about tongues in this report, too; but, for the most part, let's just try to maintain proper and correct English on this safari so everyone can understand — and we sure are speaking to many different tongues today....

#### XII

***<sup>31</sup> But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.***

#### XIII

***<sup>1</sup> Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.***

~ There are many fine commentaries on chapter thirteen of first Corinthians. This is the great display of love in the Word of God. Some passages surpass my comprehension, so I suggest you ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart now. Wycliffe and the vulgate changed “love” to “charity” — so I changed it back. “Love” is the correct use of the word “agapao” here. Not charity.

Interestingly, “love” is not defined; and if we use this chapter to define love, we commit an egregious violation against the intent of Paul’s message. Sometimes, definition equates to destruction. If you tried to read the description of a rose bud as given by botanical literature professionals, for example, you won’t have the rose bud described like I know a rose bud from experience. That’s a fact of reality. The same goes for a description of the sunset, for example – it’s impossible to adequately articulate its beauty....

***<sup>2</sup> 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, and have not love, I am nothing.***

~ Chapter thirteen of first Corinthians is a documented display of God’s love; and there are linguistic mechanics we should learn if we are to comprehend it properly, correctly and completely. There are several words that mean “love” in Greek; but which are translated into one English word for “love.” The first Greek word is “Eros” — which means passion and lust; and is used in connection with Aphrodite, Venus and Cupid. The word in our modern times would be sex or erotica. “Eros” does not appear anywhere in the New Testament. The second word translated “love” is “Philia” — meaning ‘close friendship and affection’ — and this is human caring and compassion at its best. Third, we have “agapao” — which denotes love at its highest possible human level. The way I understand it in the New Testament, “agapao” speaks of divine love – from above; and it is only possible to attain when Christ is living through us, loving others through us, and moving through us in pursuit of His glory.

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Now, love isn't in our emotions; it is in our will. Love picks the object, and that's a very apt and correct definition of God. It's very spiritual, to be sure! Chapter twelve brought us the endowment of gifts, and chapter thirteen brings us the energy of gifts. They are always to be exercised in love. If you want to speak with the "*tongues of angels*" there is going to have to be some emotion in your heart, of course. Any language without love is just a noise without melody. Some people sing like a seraph but, without love, it's the hiss of hell! Genuine Godly love is the only thing that gives meaning, depth, and reality to our lives. The biggest problem with our busy-bee society is a desperate lack of love – including in fundamental circles....

***<sup>3</sup> And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.***

~ Verse one is the heart, verse two is the mind, and verse three is an act of the will. Love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit; and we have already been told we can ask for the best spiritual gifts. If we are sincere in our request, displayed by our intent to glorify Christ, then God will give us our hearts desires. When He does, it is important that we allow Him to live, love, move, and work through us to utilize those gifts for the maximum wealth of our church as a result of our love for them. Love is an act of the will, my friends. Don't kid yourself....

***<sup>4</sup> Love is patient and suffereth long, and love is impossible without kindness; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,***

~ Genuine love will always be content with what it has. Love recognizes there are unexplainable inequalities in life, and yet remains satisfied. There are many rich men who appear to be mightily blessed; but who don't love God. See, money is not a blessing. True love doesn't care about earthly treasures, my friends. John the Baptist said, "*.... I must decrease so that Christ might increase.*" John the Baptist loved Jesus. See, true love for Christ doesn't make a pride parade. Men who love God are *NOT* celebrities – we're servants.

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Christians should always stress courtesy and manners in love, too. We should never be rude or offensive or act like strange individuals. Emily Post said, “... *if you do not exercise manners at a meal it would be better if you put a knife to your throat.*” Well, that doesn’t sound very nice, but we have a whole lot of unlovely religion — and it isn’t good, either. Ask yourself: why are you doing what you’re doing? What are your motives? Does anything you’re doing have a connection to a genuine love for Christ and the furtherance of the Gospel? That’s the secret of service, by the way.

There is a disgusting vulgarity about boasting of self, of course. We had better be careful what we boast about. The first murder motive began with envy as Cain killed his brother. Envy just happens to be the tragic sin in ministry today, too – it is a vile affection and is most depraved – as someone has said. The true example of genuine love for us today can be found in how Jonathan loved and respected David as rightful king of Israel, but Jonathan didn’t envy David....

***<sup>5</sup> Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;***

***<sup>6</sup> Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;***

~ Being ‘*provoked*’ is the vice of virtues; and many of us have a big problem with that one. We’re not to be suspicious people, though; again, most of us are guilty of this in our totally paranoid society in which we live. True love is permanent; and always receives victory. Love never fails, friends.

Elizabeth Browning wrote a poem entitled ‘*I loved once*’ in which she says, “... *they never loved who dreamed that they loved once.*” Another line says, “... *love looks beyond the bounds of time and space, love takes eternity in its embrace.*” Love is never defeated, it is never disillusioned or disappointed. God’s love for us is permanent, too. Christ will never cease to love us; irrespective of how far away from Him we may get. You may build a

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building so tight you never see the sunshine; but you can't keep the sun of God's love from shining....

***<sup>7</sup> Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.***

***<sup>8</sup> Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.***

***<sup>9</sup> For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.***

***<sup>10</sup> But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.***

~ There is coming a moment in our future when time is going to stop, and eternity is going to begin. Everything around us in our life will suddenly be no more. Do you have riches? – You aren't going to lose your riches; but your riches are going to lose you! The assured findings of science that was taught when I was in school is not taught anymore – it is totally outdated. They have a new science today, as we all know. When God calls us home, our scientific know-how isn't going to count for anything. Worldly knowledge vanishes; but mankind labels it “*progressive thinking*”....

***<sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.***

***<sup>12</sup> For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.***

~ This is comforting as Paul tells us we're definitely going to know our loved ones in Heaven. I think when we get to Heaven we're going to look around and notice many people missing who we thought for sure would be there. Those who are missing aren't going to be missed very much, though; in fact, you won't miss them at all. What's more is when we get to Heaven,

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I am going to truly love everyone. I think there are very few people we truly love down here on earth. However, that *won't* be the most amazing part of Heaven. What *will* be truly amazing is that everyone there is going to love me! *THAT* will sure be different! Everything we see we truly see so very, very darkly down here....

***<sup>13</sup> And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.***

~ When the Lord Jesus Christ takes us to be with Him in the New Jerusalem, there isn't going to be any more need for "hope." We have learned how hope is a prophecy that will have been fulfilled *IN THAT DAY*. When we are physically in His presence, we're not going to need "faith," either. Love is going to abide, friends. Our Spiritual Safari ends on a reverently high vista of truth in this report. Whatever we do, let's do it in love for the glory of God. Love is not an abstract term we can't define definitively. Paul is writing a biography of the love the Lord Jesus Christ has for us....

## **XIV**

***<sup>1</sup> Follow after love, and desire spiritualities, but rather that ye may prophesy.***

***<sup>2</sup> For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.***

~ Alright, there were no 'unknown tongues' at the time in which we are studying – this word means *glossolalia*; if you're speaking in a tongue then someone had better know what you're saying, "brother" and "sister;" how about serving up a few side witnesses with that tongue dish? On the Day of Pentecost, ".... each man heard them speaking in their own language." That's a little bit different. You might want to check up on it. If you're

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sincere, then may God richly bless you; and we'll go on together from here.  
If not, I'm sure you stopped reading a *LONG* time ago ~

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