

AGAPE LOVE & SPIRITUAL GIFTS

All three of the following passages on spiritual gifts are followed by instructions on the importance of agape love to their function: Rom.12: 9-13; 1 Cor.13: 1-8; Eph.4: 15-16.

1 Cor.13:1-8 has been referred to as the most beautiful to read and the most difficult to live.

We have chosen 1 Cor.13:1-3 as our lesson text to teach on the importance of AGAPE LOVE to the function of spiritual gifts.

1 Cor.13:1-3 is characterized by the special phrase – “but do not have agape love.” It is used three times to divide seven spiritual gifts into three sections (13:1) 1 gift; (13:2) 4 gifts; and (13:3) 2 gifts).

Identify the 7 gifts on these blank lines: _____, _____, _____, _____,
_____, _____, and _____.

At the end of each section a special warning is issued with the phrase –“but do not have agape love.” Write the three warnings on the lines below.

13:1 _____.

13:2 _____.

13:3 _____.

How important did Paul believe agape love was to the function of spiritual gifts? It was Paul who said, “AGAPE LOVE NEVER FAILS but some gifts will be done away and some will cease.” (1 Cor.13:8-12)

“But now abides faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is agape love.” (13:13)

This lesson will study FIVE aspects of the AGAPE LOVE AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

1. Paul is teaching that agape love should be the motivational factor behind the function of every spiritual gift.

- Rom.12: 9 – “Let agape love be without hypocrisy.”
- 1 Cor.12: 31 – “I show you a still more excellent way (agape love).”
- Eph.4: 15 - “But speaking the truth in agape love.”

Agape love was the motivational factor in God sending His son to be the Savior of the world (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10).

It was the motivational factor in the Son becoming the sacrifice for the sin of the entire world (1 John 2:2; Eph.5: 25).

It is the motivational factor in the Holy Spirit taking up resident in the body of every Church age believer (Rom.5: 5-8; 1 John 4:19; 1 Cor.6: 19).

“Pursue agape love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts.” (1 Cor.14:1)

2. Spiritual gifts are divinely designed to function as an expression of agape love based on the character of the one with the gift and not the one receiving the function of the gift (1 Cor.13: 1-8).

Spiritual gifts have been designed to minister without prejudices or respect of persons or personality hang-ups or other types of mental attitude sins (1 Cor.13: 4-8).

“Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature.”
(1 Cor.14: 20)

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.” (1 Tim.5:21)

3. Agape love operates under the filling ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Gal.5:16, 22-23).

Therefore spiritual gifts are able to function under the most extreme circumstance and personal conflicts (1 Cor.8: 1; 13:4-8; Eph.4: 2-3). *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”* (Eph.5:1-2)

4. Agape love allows spiritual gifts to function under the 9 virtues of the royal honor code of the church of Jesus Christ (Col.3:12-15).

Write the 9 virtues of the royal honor code of the new man in Christ on the blank lines: _____,
_____, _____, _____, _____, _____,
_____, and _____ (Col.3: 5-11)

“Let all that you do be done in love.” (1 Cor.16:14)

“And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who agape loves God should love his brother also.”
(1 John 4:21; John 13:34-35)

The Corinthian church had all the spiritual gifts yet their function was hindered by the lack of agape love (1 Cor.1: 7; 12:25; 13:1-3).

5. Agape love is the par excellent way for spiritual gifts to edify the church body (1 Cor.12: 12-31).

“But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.” (1 Cor.12:31)

“Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts.” (1 Cor.14:1)

“So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church.”
(1 Cor.14: 12)

In 1 Cor.13, Paul taught that the church of Jesus Christ was edified by the diversity of gifts and by the unity of love.

“But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”
(Eph.4:15-16)