

LOVE IS NOT A SPIRITUAL GIFT

(1 Cor.13) has been referred to as the most beautiful chapter to read on **God’s Agape Love** and the most difficult to live!

(1 Cor.13:1-3) teaches the importance of **God’s Agape Love** to the function of spiritual gifts. God’s Love is not a spiritual gift. But it is the key to the function of spiritual gifts!

Spiritual gifts require the indwelling ministry of The Holy Spirit (1 Cor.6:19-20/ 12:1-7) (pneumatikos) and God’s Agape Love is one of the fruits of The Indwelling Holy Spirit (Gal.5:16, 22-23).

This lesson will study five aspects of Love is not a Spiritual Gift.

1. All four of the major passages on Spiritual Gifts connect God’s agape love to the function of Spiritual Gifts: (Rom.12:3-9; 1 Cor.13:1-8a, 13; Eph.4:10-16; and 1 Pet.4:8-11).

(Rom.12:9) “Let **love** be without hypocrisy.” (Rom.12:3-9)

(1 Cor.13:13) “But now faith, hope, **love**, abide these things three; but the greatest of these is **love**.”
(1 Cor.13:1-8a)

(Eph.4:15-16) “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 what 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.4:10-16)

(1 Pet.4:8) “Above all, keep fervent in your **love** for one another, because **love** covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Pet.4:8-11)

2. (1 Cor.13:1-3) is characterized by an important phrase in each verse - “But do not have love.”

(1 Cor.13:1-3) ¹“**If** I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² **If** I have *the gift of* prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and **if** I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ And **if** I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and **if** I surrender my body ^[a]to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Note that seven gifts are listed by five ‘ifs’ (if/ ean/ 3cc = maybe) in (1 Cor.13:1-3). Note also that the Greek term (ean) establishes sets.

13:1	if _____	
13:2	if _____	and if _____
13:3	if _____	and if _____

(1 Cor.4:9) ⁹For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

Note a warning given with the gifts in each verse.

13:1

13:2

13:3

3. Paul is teaching important doctrinal principle that God's agape love is the motivational factor of the function of all Spiritual Gifted ministries.

- **God's agape love was the motivational factor** of God sending His Son to the Savior of the world (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10).
- **God's agape love was the motivational factor** of the Son willingly becoming the sacrifice for the sins of the world (John 1:29; 10:17-18; 1 John 2:2; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 5:25).
- **God's agape love must be the motivational factor** in the ministry of our Spiritual Gifts one to another. "Pursue love yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts." (1 Cor. 14:1)

4. Spiritual Gifts are divinely designed to function as an expression of God's agape love based on the character of the one with the gift and NOT on the one receiving the ministry of the gift (1 Cor. 13:1-8a, 13).

Spiritual Gifts must function under the filling ministry of the Indwelling Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16-17). They do not function in carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-3) [spiritual - Spirit - u - all].

Evidence of carnality is personal sin in the Christian Way of Life (CWL) (1 Cor. 1:7, 11; 3:1-3; 1 John 1:9)

- Mental Attitude Sins
- Sins of the Tongue
- Overt Sin

(1 Cor. 13:11) "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man (spiritual mature), I did away with childish things." (Eph. 4:22-24)

(1 Cor. 14:20) "Brethren, do not be childish in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, **but in your thinking be mature.**"

5. In 1st Corinthians, chapters 12-14, Paul is teaching that God's agape love is the par excellent way for Spiritual Gifts to function in order to edify the church body of believers.

The Corinthian church was aware of the importance of spiritual gifted ministries; yet the function of these gifts **was hindered** by a lack of God's agape love of the Indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 1:7; 12:25; 13:1-8).

Spiritual Gifts should operate within the church body, even under the most difficult of circumstances and suffering for Christ situations. (Rom. 12:9-21; 1 Cor. 13:4-8a; Eph. 4:1-3, 17-32; 1 Pet. 4:1-4, 12-19).

(Eph. 5:1-2) "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; **and walk in love, just as Christ also love you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.**"