CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

1 Corinthians Chapter 13 —

The Greatest Gift: Love

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

1 Corinthians Chapter 13 is one of the most famous chapters in the Bible.

It is read at weddings.

It is quoted on cards and plaques.

It is loved by believers and unbelievers alike.

But Paul did not write it as a wedding poem.

He wrote it to a divided church.

In Chapter 12, Paul taught that the Spirit gives many different gifts to the body of Christ.

He ended that chapter with these words:

“And yet I will show you a still more excellent way.”

Chapter 13 is that more excellent way.

It is the way of **love.**

The Corinthians had gifts.

Tongues.

Prophecy.

Knowledge.

Faith.

But they were using those gifts with pride, jealousy, and selfishness.

They had the gifts of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit.

Paul shows them that without love, even the greatest gifts are worthless.

Then he paints a portrait of love.

Love is patient.

Love is kind.

Love does not envy or boast.

Every phrase gently exposes a problem in Corinth.

Finally, Paul shows that love will outlast every gift.

Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge belong to this present age.

One day they will no longer be needed.

But love will last forever.

The word Paul uses for love is **agape.**

It is not mainly a feeling.

It is a self-giving love that seeks the good of others, even at a cost.

It is the kind of love God showed us in Jesus Christ.

The chapter moves through four movements:

- Without Love, Gifts Are Nothing (verses 1–3).
- The Character of Love (verses 4–7).
- The Supremacy of Love (verses 8–12).
- The Greatest of All (verse 13).

The central truth of 1 Corinthians 13 is:

Without love, every gift and sacrifice is worthless, but love—patient, kind, humble, and enduring—reflects the heart of God and will last forever.

I. A NOISY GONG

1 Corinthians 13:1 — The Tongues of Men and of Angels

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become as a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

Paul begins with the gift the Corinthians prized most.

"The tongues of men and of angels."

Even if someone could speak every human language and even the language of heaven—

"But do not have love."

Then all that speech is just noise.

"I have become as a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

Corinth was famous for its bronze.

Gongs and cymbals were used in pagan temple worship to make loud, attention-getting noise.

They were loud.

But they had no meaning.

No melody.

No message.

Just noise.

That is what impressive spiritual speech becomes without love.

Notice that Paul speaks in the first person: **“I.”**

He applies this to himself first.

Cross References

John 13:34

> I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

1 Peter 4:8

> Above all, keep loving one another deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Colossians 3:14

> And over all these, put on love, which ties everything together in perfect unity.

Spiritual Principle

Words without love are only noise.

Application

Before you speak, ask: **“Am I saying this in love?”**

II. I AM NOTHING

1 Corinthians 13:2 — Prophecy, Knowledge, and Faith

“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 move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”

Paul now lists the greatest gifts imaginable.

The gift of prophecy.

Speaking God's message.

Understanding all mysteries and all knowledge.

Knowing everything there is to know about God's plans.

All faith so that I could move mountains.

Faith strong enough to do the impossible.

These are wonderful gifts.

But if they are exercised without love:

“I am nothing.”

Not, **“My gifts are nothing.”**

“I am nothing.”

A person may be highly gifted and spiritually empty.

The Corinthians measured spirituality by gifts.

God measures it by love.

Cross References

1 John 4:7

> Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

1 Corinthians 8:1

> Now about food offered to idols: We know that “we all have knowledge.” But knowledge makes people proud, while love builds people up.

Matthew 17:20

> He told them, “Because your faith is so small. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Spiritual Principle

Without love, even the greatest gifts leave a person spiritually empty.

Key Truth

God does not measure us by our gifts.

He measures us by our love.

III. IT PROFITS ME NOTHING

1 Corinthians 13:3 — Even Great Sacrifice

“And though I give away all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”

Paul goes even further.

Now he speaks of sacrifice.

“Though I give away all my goods to feed the poor.”

Giving away everything you own.

Surely that must be love?

“And though I give my body to be burned.”

Dying as a martyr.

Surely that must be love?

Not necessarily.

A person can give to be praised.

A person can sacrifice out of pride.

Even the greatest acts of giving and suffering can come from wrong motives.

“But do not have love, it profits me nothing.”

God looks at the heart behind the act.

Without love, even the greatest sacrifice gains nothing in God's eyes.

Cross References

Matthew 6:2

> So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, so that people will praise them. I tell you the truth, they have already received their full reward.

Proverbs 19:17

> Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for what he has done.

Matthew 19:21

> Jesus answered, “If you want to be complete, go, sell what you own, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.”

Spiritual Principle

God values the love behind our actions more than the size of our actions.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Gifts without love are noise.

Knowledge without love is nothing.

Sacrifice without love is loss.

IV. LOVE IS PATIENT AND KIND

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Love Does Not Envy or Boast

“Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy. Love does not boast, it is not arrogant.”

Now Paul describes what love looks like.

He does not define love with a dictionary.

He describes it in action.

Love is patient.

The word means **long-tempered.**

It puts up with people for a long time without losing its temper.

Love is kind.

It looks for ways to do good to others.

Patience holds back from harm.

Kindness reaches out to help.

Love does not envy.

It does not resent the gifts or blessings of others.

The Corinthians were jealous of each other's gifts.

Love does not boast.

It does not show off.

The Corinthians loved to show off their gifts.

It is not arrogant.

It is not **puffed up**—the same word Paul has used again and again for the Corinthians.

Every phrase in this description is a mirror held up to the church.

Cross References

Galatians 5:22

> But the fruit the Spirit produces is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Proverbs 10:12

> Hatred stirs up fights, but love covers over every wrong.

James 3:14

> But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not brag about it or deny the truth.

Spiritual Principle

Love is shown in patience with others and kindness toward them.

Application

Who tests your patience?

How could you show that person kindness this week?

V. LOVE KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS

1 Corinthians 13:5 — Not Rude, Not Selfish, Not Easily Angered

“It does not behave rudely, it does not seek its own way, it is not easily provoked, it keeps no record of wrongs.”

Paul continues his portrait.

It does not behave rudely.

Love has good manners.

It does not act in shameful or disrespectful ways.

The Corinthians were behaving rudely in worship and at the Lord's Supper.

It does not seek its own way.

Love is not selfish.

It looks for the good of others.

This is the heart of everything Paul taught in Chapters 8–10.

It is not easily provoked.

Love is not touchy or quick to get angry.

It keeps no record of wrongs.

The word was used for an accountant writing in a ledger.

Love does not keep a list of every wrong done to it.

It does not hold grudges.

It forgives and lets go.

This is how God treats us in Christ.

He has removed our sins as far as the east is from the west.

Cross References

Philippians 2:4

> Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Proverbs 10:12

Hatred stirs up fights, but love covers over every wrong.

Psalm 103:12

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our sins from us.

Spiritual Principle

Love forgives instead of keeping score.

Application

Is there someone whose wrongs you are still keeping a record of?

Ask God to help you tear up the list.

VI. LOVE REJOICES IN THE TRUTH

1 Corinthians 13:6 — Not in Unrighteousness

“Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth.”

Love is not blind to right and wrong.

“Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness.”

Love does not take pleasure in sin.

It does not enjoy hearing about other people's failures.

It does not gossip with delight.

It does not cheer when others fall.

Remember that the Corinthians were proud while sin was tolerated in their midst.

That was not love.

“But rejoices in the truth.”

Love is glad when truth wins.

Love and truth go together.

True love does not excuse sin.

It rejoices when people walk in God's truth.

Cross References

2 John 1:4

> It gave me great joy to find some of your children living in the truth, just as the Father commanded us.

3 John 1:4

> Nothing gives me greater joy than to hear that my children are living in the truth.

Romans 12:9

> Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil, and hold tightly to what is good.

Spiritual Principle

True love never celebrates sin; it celebrates truth.

Key Truth

Love without truth becomes weak.

Truth without love becomes harsh.

God calls us to both.

VII. LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS

1 Corinthians 13:7 — Believes, Hopes, Endures

“It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Paul finishes his portrait with four great phrases.

It bears all things.

The word can mean **covers** or **protects.**

Love does not expose others' faults unnecessarily.

It shields and supports.

It believes all things.

Love is not suspicious.

It gives people the benefit of the doubt.

This does not mean love is foolish or naive.

It means love looks for the best rather than assuming the worst.

It hopes all things.

Love does not give up on people.

Even when things look bad, love keeps hoping that God will work.

It endures all things.

Love keeps going.

It holds on through hardship, disappointment, and pain.

Cross References

1 Peter 4:8

> Above all, keep loving one another deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Romans 8:25

> But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Colossians 1:11

> We pray that you will be made strong with all the power that comes from His glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience with joy,

Spiritual Principle

Love never gives up on people.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Love covers, trusts, hopes, and endures—because that is how God loves us.

VIII. LOVE NEVER FAILS

1 Corinthians 13:8 — Gifts Will Cease

“Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will vanish away.”

Now Paul shows why love is greater than gifts.

“Love never fails.”

Love never falls down.

It never comes to an end.

It lasts forever.

But the gifts are different.

Prophecies will cease.

Tongues will be stilled.

Knowledge will vanish away.

These gifts are for this present age.

They are tools for building up the church while we wait for Christ.

One day they will no longer be needed.

The Corinthians were building their identity on gifts that will not last.

Paul calls them to build their lives on love, which will never end.

Cross References

Romans 8:35

> Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, hardship, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger, or violent death?

1 Peter 1:25

> but the word of the Lord lasts forever. And this word is the good news that was announced to you.

Psalm 119:89

> Your word, LORD, lasts forever. It stands firm in the heavens.

Spiritual Principle

Gifts are temporary, but love is eternal.

Key Truth

Build your life on what will last forever.

IX. WE KNOW IN PART

1 Corinthians 13:9 — Partial Knowledge

“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.”

Paul explains why gifts are temporary.

“We know in part.”

Even our best knowledge of God is incomplete.

“We prophesy in part.”

Even true prophecy gives only part of the picture.

The Corinthians thought they knew so much.

Paul reminds them that all human knowledge, even Spirit-given knowledge, is partial.

This should make us humble.

No one has all the answers.

We see only part of God's great plan.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 8:2

> If anyone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.

Job 26:14

> These are only the edges of His works. How faint is the whisper we hear of Him! Who then can understand the thunder of His power?

Romans 11:34

> Who has ever known the mind of the Lord? Who has ever been His adviser?

Spiritual Principle

All our knowledge of God in this life is partial, and that should keep us humble.

X. WHEN THE PERFECT COMES

1 Corinthians 13:10 — The Partial Will Be Done Away

“But when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.”

Paul looks ahead.

“When the perfect comes.”

The word **perfect** means **complete** or **mature.**

What is **“the perfect”**?

Bible students have understood this in different ways.

Most believe it refers to the return of Christ and the eternal state, when we will see Him face to face, as verse 12 describes.

Some believe it refers to the completion of the New Testament Scriptures.

Others believe it refers to the full maturity of the church.

Churches that differ about whether some gifts continue today often differ on this verse.

But all agree on Paul's main point.

“The partial will be done away.”

What is incomplete now will one day be replaced by what is complete.

Our partial knowledge will give way to full knowledge.

Cross References

Hebrews 8:13

> By calling this covenant “new,” God has made the first one old. And what is old and aging will soon disappear.

Revelation 21:4

> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain, because the old things have passed away.

Philippians 3:12

> I do not mean that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect. But I keep pressing on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Spiritual Principle

What we have now is partial, but God will one day bring what is complete.

Key Truth

The best is yet to come.

XI. WHEN I WAS A CHILD

1 Corinthians 13:11 — Putting Away Childish Things

“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

Paul uses an illustration.

A child speaks, thinks, and reasons like a child.

That is normal.

A child's speech is simple.

A child's understanding is limited.

But when a child grows up, he leaves those childish ways behind.

In the same way, our present gifts and knowledge belong to the childhood of the church.

When Christ returns, we will grow into full maturity.

There is also a gentle rebuke here.

The Corinthians were acting like children.

In Chapter 3, Paul called them **“infants in Christ.”**

Their pride, jealousy, and fascination with flashy gifts were childish.

Love is the mark of maturity.

Cross References

Ephesians 4:14

> Then we will no longer be like children, tossed back and forth by the waves and blown around by every new teaching, by people's tricks and clever schemes to deceive.

Ephesians 4:15

> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow up in every way into Christ, who is the head.

Hebrews 5:14

> But solid food is for the mature, who by constant practice have trained themselves to tell the difference between good and evil.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual maturity is shown by growing in love and putting away childish pride.

Application

What childish attitudes do you need to put away?

XII. FACE TO FACE

1 Corinthians 13:12 — Then I Will Know Fully

“For now we see through a glass dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I am fully known.”

Paul uses another picture.

“Now we see through a glass dimly.”

In Paul's day, mirrors were made of polished metal.

Corinth was famous for making them.

But even the best mirror gave only a blurry, unclear image.

That is how we see God now.

Truly, but not clearly.

“But then face to face.”

One day, we will see God directly.

No more blurry reflections.

Face to face, as Moses spoke with God.

“Now I know in part, but then I will know fully.”

Our knowledge will be complete.

“Even as I am fully known.”

God already knows us completely.

Every thought.

Every fear.

Every sin.

And He loves us anyway.

One day, we will know Him as fully as He now knows us.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 3:18

> And all of us, with unveiled faces, see the Lord's glory as if in a mirror, and we are being changed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

1 John 3:2

> Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been shown. But we know that when Christ appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He really is.

Numbers 12:8

> With him I speak face to face, plainly and not in riddles. He sees the form of the LORD. So why were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?

Spiritual Principle

One day believers will see God face to face and know Him fully.

Key Truth

You are fully known by God.

And you are fully loved.

XIII. FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:13 — The Greatest of These

“And now remain faith, hope, and love, these three. But the greatest of these is love.”

Paul ends with three things that remain.

Gifts will pass away.

But these three remain.

Faith—trusting God.

Hope—confidently waiting for what God has promised.

Love—giving ourselves to God and to others.

All three are essential.

But Paul says:

“The greatest of these is love.”

Why is love the greatest?

When we see God face to face, faith will become sight.

When we receive what God promised, hope will be fulfilled.

But love will continue forever.

And most of all, love is the very nature of God.

God is not faith.

God is not hope.

But **God is love.**

Cross References

Galatians 5:6

> For in Christ Jesus, being circumcised or not circumcised does not matter. What matters is faith working through love.

Colossians 1:4

> because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people—

1 John 4:8

> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Spiritual Principle

Love is the greatest because it will last forever and because God is love.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Faith looks up to God, hope looks ahead to glory, and love reaches out to others—and love will never end.

XIV. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 13

1. Love Is Essential

Without love, I am a noisy gong, I am nothing, and I gain nothing.

Principle:

Spiritual gifts, great faith, generosity, or even sacrifice are worthless without love.

2. Love's Qualities

“Love is patient and kind.”

Principle:

True love is patient, kind, humble, forgiving, and rejoices in the truth.

3. Love Outlasts Gifts

“Love never fails.”

Principle:

Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will one day fade, but love will endure forever.

4. Spiritual Maturity

“When I became a man, I put away childish things.”

Principle:

Growing in love is a mark of maturity, putting away childish pride and selfishness.

5. Our Hope of Fullness

“Then face to face.”

Principle:

Now we know in part, but one day we will know fully when we see Christ face to face.

6. The Greatest Gift

“The greatest of these is love.”

Principle:

Faith and hope are vital, but love surpasses them all, for love reflects the very heart of God.

XV. THE PORTRAIT OF LOVE

Verses 4–7 give fifteen descriptions of love.

What Love Does

- Love is patient.
- Love is kind.
- Love rejoices in the truth.
- Love bears all things.
- Love believes all things.

- Love hopes all things.
- Love endures all things.

What Love Does Not Do

- Love does not envy.
- Love does not boast.
- Love is not arrogant.
- Love does not behave rudely.
- Love does not seek its own way.
- Love is not easily provoked.
- Love keeps no record of wrongs.
- Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness.

Key Truth

Love is not mainly a feeling; it is a way of treating people.

XVI. A MIRROR FOR THE CORINTHIANS

Every quality of love in verses 4–7 answered a problem in Corinth.

They Were Impatient

They rushed ahead at the Lord's Supper.

Love is patient.

They Were Jealous

They envied one another's gifts.

Love does not envy.

They Were Proud

They were puffed up about their knowledge and leaders.

Love is not arrogant.

They Were Rude

They behaved shamefully in worship.

Love does not behave rudely.

They Were Selfish

They insisted on their rights even when it hurt others.

Love does not seek its own way.

They Took Each Other to Court

They kept score and fought over wrongs.

Love keeps no record of wrongs.

They Tolerated Sin

They were proud while sin went unchecked.

Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

1 Corinthians 13 was not written to decorate a wedding; it was written to heal a church.

XVII. JESUS IS LOVE IN PERSON

One helpful way to read verses 4–7 is to put the name **Jesus** in place of the word **love.**

Jesus is patient and kind.

Jesus does not envy.

Jesus does not boast; He is not arrogant.

Jesus does not behave rudely; He does not seek His own way.

Jesus is not easily provoked; He keeps no record of wrongs.

Jesus does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth.

Jesus bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Jesus never fails.

Every line fits perfectly.

That is because Jesus is love in human form.

Now try reading it with your own name.

It does not fit so well.

That shows us how much we need Christ's love to grow in us.

Key Truth

The portrait of love is a portrait of Jesus, and the Spirit is shaping us to look like Him.

XVIII. WHAT 1 CORINTHIANS 13 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Jesus Commanded Love

"Love one another. Just as I have loved you."

Jesus Showed Perfect Love

Every quality of love in verses 4–7 is seen perfectly in Him.

Jesus Gave His Body in Love

He did what verse 3 describes, and He did it with perfect love.

Jesus Will Be Seen Face to Face

"Then face to face."

Jesus Reveals That God Is Love

In Christ, we see the God whose very nature is love.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

We learn what love is by looking at Jesus.

XIX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why does Chapter 13 come between Chapters 12 and 14?

Chapters 12 and 14 are about spiritual gifts.

Chapter 13 shows the more excellent way that all gifts must be used—love.

Question 2

What kind of love is Paul describing?

Paul uses the word agape.

It is a self-giving love that seeks the good of others, even at a cost.

It is the kind of love God showed in Christ.

Question 3

What does Paul mean by "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal"?

Loud noise with no meaning.

Spiritual speech without love is just noise.

Question 4

Can someone give to the poor or suffer for their faith without love?

Yes.

People can give or sacrifice out of pride or a desire for praise.

Without love, it gains nothing before God.

Question 5

What is the difference between patience and kindness?

Patience holds back from harming others when they test us.

Kindness reaches out to do good to others.

Question 6

What does it mean that love “keeps no record of wrongs”?

Love does not hold grudges or keep a list of how others have hurt it.

It forgives, as God has forgiven us.

Question 7

Does “believes all things” mean love is gullible?

No.

It means love gives people the benefit of the doubt and looks for the best instead of assuming the worst.

Question 8

Why will prophecy, tongues, and knowledge pass away?

They are partial gifts for this present age.

When the perfect comes, they will no longer be needed.

Question 9

What is “the perfect” in verse 10?

Most Bible students believe it refers to Christ's return and the eternal state.

Some believe it refers to the completed Scriptures or the maturity of the church.

All agree that what is partial now will one day be made complete.

Question 10

What does it mean to see “through a glass dimly”?

Ancient mirrors gave a blurry image.

In this life, we know God truly but not fully.

One day we will see Him face to face.

Question 11

Why is love greater than faith and hope?

Faith will become sight, and hope will be fulfilled.

But love will continue forever.

And God Himself is love.

Question 12

What should 1 Corinthians 13 change about the way Christians live today?

1 Corinthians 13 should cause believers to live:

- Valuing love above every gift.
- Patient with difficult people.
- Looking for ways to be kind.
- Free from envy and boasting.
- Putting others first.
- Forgiving instead of keeping score.
- Never giving up on people.
- Looking forward to seeing Christ face to face.

XX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians 13 asks several important questions.

Am I Using My Gifts with Love?

Or am I just making noise?

Am I Patient?

With my family, my coworkers, and my church?

Am I Kind?

Do I look for ways to do good to others?

Do I Envy Others?

Am I glad when others are blessed?

Do I Insist on My Own Way?

Or do I put others first?

Do I Keep a Record of Wrongs?

Is there someone I need to forgive?

Have I Given Up on Someone?

Does love call me to keep hoping?

Am I Growing in Love?

Am I more loving this year than last year?

XXI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

"Love Is the Measure"

The world measures people by many things.

Talent.

Intelligence.

Achievement.

Generosity.

The Corinthians measured people by spiritual gifts.

Who spoke in tongues?

Who had knowledge?

Who had the most impressive faith?

But God uses a different measure.

He asks one question:

Did you love?

A person may have every gift and still be nothing.

A person may have few gifts and still be rich in love.

At the end of life, gifts will not matter.

Achievements will fade.

Knowledge will pass away.

But love will remain.

This creates a powerful principle.

The most important thing about you is not what you can do.

It is how you love.

Principle:

At the end of all things, love is what will remain, because love is what God is.

XXII. FINAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians Chapter 13 was written to a gifted church without love.

They spoke in tongues but were noisy.

They had knowledge but were puffed up.

They had faith but were divided.

They had everything except the one thing that mattered most.

Paul showed them the more excellent way.

Not more gifts.

Not more knowledge.

Love.

Patient love.

Kind love.

Humble love.

Forgiving love.

Enduring love.

The love of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 13 therefore reminds us:

Never think gifts are more important than love.

Never use knowledge without love.

Never give without love.

Never keep a record of wrongs.

Never give up on people.

The church does not need more noise.

It needs:

Patient people.

Kind people.

Humble people.

And people who love like Jesus.

The same love still calls us:

Tell people that God is love.

Tell people that He showed His love in Jesus.

Tell people that they are fully known and fully loved.

Tell people that one day they can see Him face to face.

And until that day:

Keep the faith.

Hold on to hope.

Walk in love.

For the greatest of these is love.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that You are love.

Thank You that You showed Your love to us in Jesus Christ.

Thank You that He is patient and kind with us.

Thank You that He keeps no record of our wrongs.

Thank You that His love never fails.

Thank You that we are fully known by You and fully loved.

Forgive us when we have used our gifts without love.

Forgive us when we have been impatient and unkind.

Forgive us when we have envied others or boasted about ourselves.

Forgive us when we have insisted on our own way.

Forgive us when we have kept a record of wrongs and refused to forgive.

Pour Your love into our hearts by Your Holy Spirit.

Make us patient with those who test us.

Make us kind to those who need it.

Make us humble, forgiving, and full of hope.

Help us put away childish things and grow up in love.

Teach us to love as Jesus loves.

Keep us faithful until the day we see You face to face.

And may faith, hope, and love fill our lives, and may love be the greatest of them all.

“And now remain faith, hope, and love, these three. But the greatest of these is love.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“And now remain faith, hope, and love, these three. But the greatest of these is love.” — 1 Corinthians 13:13

Central Truth

Without love, every gift and sacrifice is worthless, but love—patient, kind, humble, and enduring—reflects the heart of God and will last forever.

1 Corinthians 13 in One Sentence

Paul shows a gifted but divided church that every gift and sacrifice is worthless without love, describes love as patient, kind, humble, forgiving, and enduring, and declares that while gifts will pass away, love will never fail, for the greatest of faith, hope, and love is love.