

# **Romans – Let's Do This!**

## **61- “What's Love Got to Do with It?”**

### **I Corinthians 13**

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / April 3, 2016*

Today we're digging into **I Corinthians 13**. Even though this is one of the most well-known chapters in the Bible, it's also a chapter that is often misunderstood or taken out of context.

#### **I. What's Love Got to Do with It?**

The short answer is everything. Paul makes it absolutely clear that without love it doesn't matter how spectacular the things you're doing look, it amounts to nothing.

The bombshell that Paul drops on them in **v. 1-3** is that you can have spiritual gifts in general, and even miraculous gifts in particular, and not even be a Christian at all! He says that's what it all amounts to without love.

You can give your money to the poor and still not love the poor at all. You can even sacrifice your body and still not love God, but be doing it for your own glory. That's not love! Biblical love is giving for the needs of another, expecting nothing in return.

**Matthew 7:21-23** <sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

LOVE rather than GIFTEDNESS is the greatest indicator of new birth.

**John 13:35** “By this will all know you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- Are you a loving person? Do you love people who are not easy to love? Do you love people who don't love you back?

It's when you probe around with questions like that, that you're getting to the heart of Christianity.

## II. What is Love?

To become a Christian is to be born again into a new realm. John and Peter both call it new birth because becoming a Christian is far more than just picking up a new code of ethics that you're going to work really hard to try and keep now.

That's religion, but it's a far cry from a relationship with Jesus Christ the very essence of love.

In **v. 4-7** Paul tells us what love is, but if you think he's giving us a 'check-list' or a set of behaviors you're completely wrong.

He personifies love because you have to meet love before you can ever give it. It has to first be an experience for the person.

"A Christian is somebody who had met love. Love has shattered them, then captured them, and now empowers them." **Tim Keller**

## III. All You Need is Love

Left to ourselves, love is NOT all we need! We need the Creator and originator of that love – and His name is Jesus Christ.

Here's what you need to understand about love: it is all you need, but it only becomes all you need when you find it personified in Jesus Christ.

When you search for it in other human beings and exchange it back and forth from one broken sinner to another, there are all kinds of lapses, points of confusion and misunderstanding.

So often our love is still driven by the desire to get love back in return or at least to get something back.

The only love that will ever measure up to the size of your great need as a thirsty, love-deprived sinner is the love that can only be found in the person of Jesus Christ!

**I Corinthians 13:4-8** "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never fails..."

By the time we get to **v. 7** we start to realize we can't do **all** these things. Paul intended to shatter us and drive us to the only ONE who can love this way – Jesus!

In **I Cor. 13**, Paul's pointing out the fact that love was a person – Jesus – who took on flesh and stepped into time and space for us.

Love is embodied by Jesus and what He did for us on the cross.

Turn to **Romans 5: 6-10** and **Romans 8:31-21, 38-39**.

That's the Good News or the Gospel message that God did for us what we could never do for ourselves.

The heart of the Gospel is God's LOVE poured out for us. His power and His holiness are not what drove Him to leave heaven, to take on flesh and to die for us. It was His love. That's why the essence of Christianity isn't power but love.

**John 15:13** "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

Everyone wants to be loved unconditionally- not for what we can do but for who we are. We demand it from everyone else around us and yet we fail continually to give it to others.

- Why do we persist in this impulse to get unconditional love from those around us?

**C.S. Lewis** says the reason this desire and demand is so universal is because it's rooted in a memory trace of the One who can truly love us like this. He goes on to say that most of what human beings call love is really hunger.

What we're so hungry for and trying to get out of other people can only be found in a relationship with Jesus Christ. We all need Christ and the only unconditional love that has ever walked this earth.