

1 Corinthians

Wisdom & Unity

Meeting the demands of
Christian life and living



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Starting where
you are:

Any questions?



1 Corinthians 12:1 – 14:40—On Spiritual Gifts

“Now concerning” (12:1) suggests a transition to another issue brought to Paul’s attention—spiritual gifts. Paul’s response, in chapters 12-14, offers believers lenses through which to view spiritual gifts. Paul’s main concern is that believers receive with gratitude and employ with grace the Spirit’s endowment for their benefit.

This portion of the letter highlights the significance of the love that should undergird the understanding and use of spiritual gifts. The graces of the Spirit are vital for the continued well-being of individuals and the community.

Outline: 1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40

- 1 Cor 12:1-13 ☐ Unity through the Spirit
- 1 Cor 12:14-31 ☐ Diversity in the Spirit
- 1 Cor 13:1-13 ☐ Maturity because of the Spirit
- 1 Cor 14:1-40 ☐ Wisdom in demonstration of the Spirit

This outline adapted from Warren Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary.

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1 Corinthians 13:1-13 – On Spiritual Gifts, pt. 2

A primary indication of spiritual growth is one's growth in love. Jesus viewed love as so vital to interpersonal relationships, that He named it as the second of God's commandments, and described it as "like unto the first," which was to love God. By applying this tenet to believers in Corinth, Paul viewed love as vital for persons who were maturing in Christian faith.

Spiritual growth and maturity are demonstrated through love.

Outline: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

- Maturing love enriches (13:1-3)
- Maturing love functions (13:4-7)
- Maturing love endures (13:8-13)

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A Maturing Church

Spiritual gifts grow the Church
through the mature(-ing) exercise of
love for other people.

Gifts (words) to know in this chapter:

- **Tongues:** language; speech trait distinguishing nation from nation.
- **Prophecy:** gift of communicating and enforcing revealed truth; divinely empowered forthtelling or foretelling.
- **Mysteries:** God's hidden truths, or details thereof, knowable through God's revelation.
- **Knowledge:** accurate applied-knowledge that is validated by the relationship that produces it (not the same as education).
- **Faith:** gift of God that comes by hearing God's word (Rom 10:17) and enables belief and the hope of that belief (Heb 11:1).
- **Love:** (aga,ph: agapé) affection toward another, benevolence, good will.
- **Hope:** expectation of what is sure (enables trust and have confidence).

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Maturing Love Enriches (13:1-3)

13:1-3. Spiritual maturity as a conscious determination.

Enriching oneself, and therefore one's community, is a matter of choice. One must determine how effective and, therefore, beneficial they desire to be for themselves and others. Using a contrary view, Paul aims to convince believers to strive to enrich others by lovingly employing spiritual gifts.

- **Contrary view:** Possessing gifts without the exercise of love leads to uselessness.
 - Presumed primary gifts (e.g., tongues) would be reduced to **little value**.
 - Potential effectiveness of gifts would be rendered **non-distinct**.
 - Pursuit of, or devotion to, one's calling/purpose would be **without reward**.

Maturing Love Functions (13:4-7)

13:4-7. Love described by how it operates relationally.

The way to understand love in relationship to spiritual gifts, is by recognizing how it functions in our interpersonal relationships.

- **Positive associations (Love is...)**

- * Forbearing
- * Kind/gentle
- * Bears all (conceals errors)
- * Believes all (to have faith in another)
- * Rejoices with truth
- * Hopeful
- * Persevering

- **Negative associations (Love is not...)**

- * Jealous/heated/angry
- * Self-centered
- * Puffed up (braggadocious)
- * Rude/indecent
- * Intemperate (irritable)
- * Keeping score of wrong
- * Pleased by injustice/unrighteousness

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Maturing Love Endures (13:8-13)

13:8. The permanence of love over against spiritual gifts.

Love will endure because “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8, 16). This contrasts with non-permanent gifts which, though edifying, are *from* God and not necessarily *indicative* of God.

- Love **never fails** (or falls under, as in condemnation or loss of virtue).
- Prophecies (a gift, e.g., of a prophet) will **be made idle**, inactive, done away with, abolished.
- Tongues (a gift, e.g., of an evangelist/missionary/prophet) will **be caused to cease** (**pau,sontai** : pausontai).
- Knowledge (a gift, e.g., of an interpreter) will **be idled**, inactive, made of no effect.

Each action is in the indicative mood, an expression of fact, suggesting that certain of the spiritual gifts will end as their role in the spread of the Gospel diminishes.

Maturing Love Endures (13:8-13) cont'd.

13:9-12. Progress toward perfection.

- Appreciate what the spiritual gifts afford us today (9).
- Anticipate that the imperfect will give way to the perfect (10).
 - **te,leioj** (teleios) □ perfect, consummated goal, aim.
 - Ex.: a telescope that extends, or unfolds, one section/stage at a time until it functions to its full capacity.
- Acknowledge prior stages of growth (11).
- Accept that there is still more room for growth (12).

Maturing Love Endures (13:8-13) cont'd.

13:13. Until **that** day:

- pi,stij (pistis) □ faith: gift of God that comes by hearing God's word (Rom 10:17) and enables belief and the hope of that belief (Heb 11:1).
- elpi,j (elpis) □ hope: expectation of what is sure (permits on to trust and have confidence).

The gift of faith and the grace of hope are virtues we need to endure. One day, however, faith will become sight and hope will be made manifest.

When that day comes, love will continue. It will endure “and what it produces will endure.” (Warren W. Wiersbe, “1 Corinthians 13-14” in *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, p. 611)

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'til we meet again:

- Reflect on today's lesson**
- Pray about today's lesson**
- Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-19**



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