

May 31, 2015



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks
Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

Lesson Leaders:

**James Haymon
Jose Cisneros**

Class Leaders:

**Inreach: Pat Hester
Outreach: Joyce Kirkland
Secretary: Mary Clark
Deacon: C M Hester**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
A little love can make a big difference

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Lord, when I learn that someone is hurting, Help me know what to do and to say; Speak to my heart and give me compassion, Let Your great love flow through me today.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

(1 John 4:7 NKJV)

(From "Our Daily Bread", June 26, 2005)

Series: GOD DEMANDS JUSTICE

UNIT: Amos Rails Against Injustices

NEXT WEEK

**God Passes Judgment
(Amos 2:4-8)**

The Greatest Gift is Love

1 Cor 13:1-13

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson reminds us that **The Greatest Gift is Love**. The **study's aim** is to understand how the more excellent way is love and to know that a spiritual gift benefits the Church when it is used in love. The **study's application** is apply the understanding that to use our gifts in love is what make them worthwhile.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

Our world chatters about spirituality. While religion has negative connotations for many, spirituality is widely seen in positive terms. "I'm not religious, but I am very spiritual," say many. If we were to accept such a distinction for the sake of argument, we would still have to ask how we can distinguish authentic spirituality from the inauthentic kind. What makes a person truly spiritual? To get the answer to that question, we need to begin with a conceptualization of spirituality. The apostle Paul has done just that for us. His conceptualization is grounded in a **most essential expression of God's character: love**. The Christians to whom Paul wrote the letter we call 1 Corinthians had come to equate knowledge with spirituality (1 Corinthians 8:1-3). They also had associated certain Holy Spirit given abilities, such as the ability to speak in tongues, with spirituality (14:1-5). Do such things make a person spiritual? Paul's answer is a qualified no. Things such as knowledge or the ability to speak in other languages are indeed gifts from the Holy Spirit (12:8, 10), but these gifts by themselves do not make a person spiritually superior. In fact, the very idea of being spiritually superior is unspiritual! In the midst of that discussion of spiritual gifts—but really in the midst of all the discussions of church problems at Corinth—Paul offered an extended, lyrical discourse on godly love. This text, our lesson for today, is in many respects the climax of 1 Corinthians. The Corinthian church was rife with problems and divisions.

With God's kind of love, Paul said, the rivalries infecting the Corinthian church would disappear.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Paul's great chapter on love, or "charity," as the Greek word *agape* is translated here, comes in the midst of a lengthy discussion of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12,14). There was much confusion and much error about the gifts in the Corinthian church. Some gifts apparently were considered of much greater importance, and those who possessed such gifts were given preeminence in the church. Others were despised for having "lesser" gifts. The apostle corrected this notion in I Corinthians 12, where he compared the church to the human body to show how all the various gifts work together to make the church function as it should. In the midst of this discussion, Paul stepped aside to speak of love in I Corinthians 13. Why did he introduce the topic of love at this point? Love is the glue that brings unity to a church made up of various personalities and spiritual gifts. In fact, he said that the gifts themselves are of no value apart from Christlike love (vss. 1-3). He then described the attributes of love, making it clear that a loving person does not elevate himself above others. He elevates everyone else above himself. Paul also stated that love "never faileth" (I Cor. 13:8). The gifts the Corinthians so valued, however, are partial and temporary and will be done away with. They will be set aside like the things of childhood, but love will endure. Paul's whole argument brought perspective to the petty jealousies and pride of the Corinthian Christians. The things they most valued would disappear, but the truly important virtues of faith, hope, and love "abideth," or remain. *(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

PRIORITY OF LOVE (13:1-3)

Seek the greater gift love (1)

Seeking love always is seeking the building up of others (1 Cor 8:1)

In seeking, we must be willing to follow its way (1 Cor 14:1)

We must try to excel in the gift of love so as to help others (1 Cor 14:12)

Everything we do should be done in love (1 Cor 16:14)

Gifts without love (2)

Gifts without love can become a stumbling block to others (Rom 14:15)

Gifts in themselves is nothing, only faith and love working through the gifts (Gal 5:6)

Gifts are only effective if they are done out of a pure heart and good conscience toward God (1 Tim 1:5)

Giving without love (3)

Giving in the wrong way is mistreating God (Matt 25:45)

Giving without love is not edifying others (1 Cor 14:17)

We must excel in love to excel in giving (2 Cor 8:7)

One must give in love to please God (Phil 4:18)

PRACTICE AND DESCRIPTION OF LOVE (13:4-7)

Love is humble (4)

Love as a servant and rely on the Holy Spirit for power (2 Cor 6:4, 6)

To be able to bear with others, it takes humility through love (Eph 4:2)

As God's chosen people, Christians should be covered with humility and love (Col 3:12)

Loving humility shows godly wisdom (James 3:17)

Love is unselfish (5)

Love says to seek the good of others (1 Cor 10:24)

Seek the good of others to aid in their salvation (1 Cor 10:33)

Christians should always be concerned for each other out of love (1 Cor 12:25)

To have the same attitude as Jesus is to love unselfishly (Phil 2:3-5)

If we don't show love to others, we don't have the love of God in us (1 John 3:16-17)

Love rejoices in truth (6)

Rejoicing in the truth is clinging to what is good (Rom 12:9)

Godly repentance leads to love and rejoicing in the truth (2 Cor 7:9-16)

One of the most important things is that truth is spread (Phil 1:18)

Effective and faithful service out of love brings rejoicing (Phil 2:17-18)

Faithfulness to the truth brings joy and good reputations (3 John 3)

Love is patient (7)

Show love through patience with the weak (Rom 15:1)

Perseverance shows our trust and love of God (2 Thess 1:4-5)

Patience through love combats pride (Eccl 7:8)

Follow the patience of biblical saints as examples (James 5:10-11)

PERMANENCE OF LOVE (13:8-13)

Love never fails (8)

It is the love of God that provides us hope that we can then pass on to others (Rom 5:5)

It is God's love that really NEVER fails (Rom 8:35)

We should think of love as a debt to others and therefore never stop providing (Rom 13:8)

Love is complete and perfect (9-12)

Love is complete in that it can cover a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8)

Love never does harm (Rom 13:10)

Love should be rooted and grounded in God which makes it eternal (Eph 3:17, 19)

Love helps our maturity in God and is perfect when all things work as God desires (Eph 4:15-15)

Love binds into perfect unity (Col 3:14)

Greatness of love (13)

Loving God and others is the greatest commandment (Mark 12:29-31)

All of God's law is summed up in love (Gal 5:14)

God gives love through the power of His Holy Spirit therefore it is great (2 Tim 1:7)

Love proves we have been born of God (1 John 4:7-9)