

“The Most Important Thing...”
1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:3

Introduction: God gifts the church with great variety (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

- A. God gives various gifts (v. 4).
- B. God gives various ministries (v. 5).
- C. God gives various effects (v. 6).
- D. God gives gifts for the common good (v. 7).

I. No matter how great my gift, if I do not exercise it in love, then it is useless (vs. 1).

- A. Without love, the ability to speak eloquently in all human languages is useless.
- B. Without love, the ability to speak eloquently in angelic languages is useless.

(Hebrews 10:23-25)

II. No matter how great my ministry and effect, if I do not fulfill it in love, then I am nothing (v. 2).

- A. Prophecies are empty without love:
 - 1. Even if they can explain all mysteries
 - 2. Even if they contain all knowledge
- B. Faith is empty without love:

Even if it can remove mountains

- C. This is a principle that applies to any gift.

(1 Corinthians 14:1-6, 10-12, 18-19)

III. No matter how great my sacrifice, if I do not exercise it in love, then it is useless (vs. 19-21).

- A. Without love giving all possessions is of no profit.
- B. Without love sacrificing the body is of no profit.

Application: No matter how great the gift, how great the ability that comes with that gift, or how great the work, if it is not done in love, it is of no profit.

Scripture References and Notes

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

⁴ Now there are varieties of **gifts**, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are varieties of **ministries**, and the same Lord. ⁶ There are varieties of **effects**, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*. ⁷ But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

varieties

- διαίρεσις (diairesis)
- to distribute
- emphasis is on God's sovereignty

gifts

- χάρισμα (charisma)
- that which is freely and graciously given
- a gift of grace, an undeserved favor; i.e. free gift.

ministries

- διακονία (diakonia)
- performance of a service
- active service, done with a willing (voluntary) attitude.

effects

- ἐνέργημα (energéma)
- activity as expression of capability, *activity*

Hebrews 10:23-25

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

1 Corinthians 14:1-6, 10-12, 18-19

¹ Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. ² For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries. ³ But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. ⁴ One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵ Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but *even* more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying. ⁶ But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?

¹⁰ There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no *kind* is without meaning. ¹¹ If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. ¹² So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek to abound for the edification of the church.

¹⁸ I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; ¹⁹ however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

1 Corinthians 16:14

Let all that you do be done in love.