

The Power of Love

Intro:

1. Jn 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
2. What kind of love is that? It's a love that gives regardless of the cost!
3. Do you love that way - or is your love qualified?
4. Does someone have to be worthy of your love before you give it?
5. If you actually expressed God's type of love - what kind of power would you have in your life?

1 Corinthians 13:1-6

I. v1-3 - Love Gives Power to the Spiritual Gifts!

A. v1 - Love gives power to **the gift of tongues**.

1. This gift gave some Christians the ability to speak so that others could understand in their own languages. ILL: **The Day of Pentecost (Act 2:1-13)**.
2. Today some claim this is a language that can't be understood but enhances their prayer life.
3. BUT - in the absence of love, it becomes only a source of pride & boastfulness.
4. This may be referring to the heathen worship practices of Dionysus & Cybele.
 - a. They blared away on brass instruments - no music, just noise.
 - b. They continually banged on cymbals. ILL: **Kids learning to play a brass instrument blare on them & little kids go for the cymbals when in reach!**

B. v2 - Love gives power to **the gift of prophesy**.

1. This gift foretold the future & to speak for God supernaturally.
 - a. Promised in **Matt 10:19-20 - But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.**
 - b. In Acts we have Phillip's daughters & Agabus - (**Act 21:8-10**).
 - c. Today - we tend to associate this gift with powerful preaching.
2. BUT - prophesy or powerful preaching, no matter how eloquent or true, without love doesn't profit God.
 - a. I knew of a very eloquent & forceful preacher who was so obnoxious his life counterbalanced his witness!
 - b. I also knew a minister who loved people so much they listened to him because they respected him so much.

C. v2 - Love gives power to **the gift of intellectual knowledge**.

1. This gift can be very important in helping us understand God's word & His way.
2. People who can get advanced academic degrees & recall what they have learned can pass on truth & understanding to the rest of us.
3. BUT - intellectual knowledge without love can be very cold, snobbish & prideful.
4. Remember when you are witnessing or when some of you teach & preach, people are more impressed by your love for them than they are your knowledge.

D. v2 - Love gives power to **the gift of faith**.

1. The Lord said, **Because you have so little faith. 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. - Matt 17:20**
2. ILL: **The woman in Okinawa whose prayer moved a mountain with a bulldozer.**
3. BUT - even if you have enough faith to open your own mountain moving company, without love it would be useless to God.

E. v3 - Even if you give your life as a total sacrifice, if it doesn't have love, it does little good!

1. ILL: **The Buddhist monks in Korea who torched themselves.**
2. How about the terrorists who strap bombs to themselves?

II. v4-6 - Love Gives Power to Practical Living

- A. **v4** - Love means **patience** (μακροθυμέω) = lit. "slow to express your temper".
1. There's such a high rate of family abuse in our country today.
 - a. Dads - do you fly off the handle when the kids get out of hand?
 - b. When one trial after another hurls it's flaming arrow, do you complain & fuss?
 - c. Or - do you raise your shield of faith & attack with your sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:16-17)
 2. Remember **v7** - real love, God's love, "always perseveres"!
- B. **v4** - Love means **kindness**.
1. King Philip of Spain was the most religiously devout man of his day. He started the Spanish Inquisition!
 2. Are you zealous for your faith? Good! But so was King Philip!
 3. When that woman was caught in adultery, would you have executed her like the Law demanded or said with Lord Jesus, "Go now and leave your life of sin". - (John 8:1-11)
- C. **v4** - Love means **not being jealous**.
1. Preachers like me have a tendency to compare themselves with the big influential ones in large churches.
 2. Are you jealous of the successes of other people because they are better than you are?
 3. I was! My prayer became, "Lord, please help me mature in my faith that I might become like them"!
- D. **v4** - Love means **not bragging** or being inflated with your own importance.
1. **Rom 12:3** - Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.
 2. How humble are you, really? What do you think about your own abilities & achievements?
 3. Your prayer not only needs to be, "Lord, build me up & encourage me when I need it", but also "Lord, help me to look at myself realistically"!
- E. **v5** - Love means **acting with grace** & not insisting on your own rights.
1. **Grace** (χάρις) = showing unmerited favor, kindness, good will.
 2. When you make decisions - is your primary concern what advances your own interests, or what pleases God & helps others?
 3. Where does your freedom in Christ end & your responsibility to others begin? **The New Testament Meat Eating Question:**
 - a. **Kosher laws were made obsolete (Col 2:13-14)**
 - b. **Rom 14:15** - If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.
 - c. **Rom 15:1** - We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.
 - d. **Rom 14:21** - It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.
 - e. **I am responsible for what others think of me & my Christian faith!**
 4. Sacrificing your own desires, even though you are within your rights, becomes an expression of sacrificial love - God's love!

Let's do something besides just talk about love!
Start doing something about it!
Love will put power in your life!