



Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C  
Sunday School

Lesson 13 May 25, 2025

THE GREATEST GIFT IS  
LOVE

# SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



**Lesson 13 May 25, 2025**  
**THE GREATEST GIFT IS LOVE**



## **SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalm 133:1**

**School/Class:** But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

**School/Class:** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. **Psalm 119:105**

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## **SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

**School/Class:** He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

**School/Class:** As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

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## **SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

**School/Class:** For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

**School/Class:** For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

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## **SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**ALL:**

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. **2 Peter 3:18**

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- Bible Basis: 1 Corinthians 13
- Bible Truth: Love is needed to fully achieve the benefit of all spiritual gifts.
- Memory Verse: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" 1 Corinthians 13:13, KJV.
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: EXPLORE the meaning of love as seen in 1 Corinthians 13; FEEL appreciation for one another in love; and SEEK a variety of ways to express love.
- Background Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 3:14-21 – Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

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**1 Corinthians 13, KJV**

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.



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**1 Corinthians 13, KJV**

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

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**1 Corinthians 13, KJV**

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

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**1 Corinthians 13, KJV**

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

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## LIGHT ON THE WORD

The city of Corinth is a major trade city located on an isthmus that connects mainland Greece with the Peloponnesian Peninsula. Its location made Corinth a bustling trade and cultural center. As a result, there was a mixture of religious beliefs in Corinth. During the time in which Paul wrote, Corinth was a Roman colony. The ancient city of Corinth, known for its artistry, wealth, and rampant sexual immorality, was destroyed in 146 B.C. It was reestablished by Rome in 44 B.C. Under Roman rule, Corinth continued to be known for its wanton sexuality.

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## LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will accept that love is the primary requirement for societies attempting to make a dramatic influence on the world around them.

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# INTRODUCTION

## The Divine Love

1 Corinthians 13 is often misinterpreted, which leads to improper application. This is not a mere ode to the virtues of love. Paul is using these words to address specific issues in the Corinthian church: selfishness, division, abuse of gifts, and envying of others' gifts. The Greek term for love used in this chapter is agape. This word is closely associated with the Hebrew word khesed (KHESS-ed) which refers to God's covenant love for His people. Because of this association, agape became a key word for describing God's character and took on the meaning of a divine love that is deeply loyal. Believers should emulate this love, and Paul highlights its importance in this letter to the Corinthians.

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## BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will affirm with Paul that love is the guarantee of the manifestations of the Spirit for the building up of the church.

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## I. LOVE IS SUPERIOR TO OTHER SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Necessity of Love  
1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Paul began by demonstrating the superiority of love. The Corinthians held eloquence in especially high esteem and were somewhat preoccupied with the gift of tongues. However, even the most sophisticated gift of tongues, speaking the languages of men and angels, is just noise if not exercised in love.



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# I. LOVE IS SUPERIOR TO OTHER SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Necessity of Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

**1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

The word "charity" here means love, heavenly love, affection, goodwill, or benevolence. Agape love means the decentering of the ego. The person is no longer the center of their universe or ultimate concern; "the other" is now in the center. Love is a radical reordering of priorities and ultimate values. Without love, everything we do is for our own self-glorification and benefit.

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# I. LOVE IS SUPERIOR TO OTHER SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Necessity of Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

**1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

With love, what we do is for God and others. Love is not a feeling; it is what we do for others without regard for self. It is partaking in the very nature of God, because He is love (1 John 4:8). Spirit-inspired speech spoken in ecstasy, different languages, brilliant human rhetoric, or superhuman entities means nothing if it is not of God. Any intention whose source is not the God of love is in vain. If the Spirit of God animates the body, love holds it together. Tongues without love are only noise.

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# I. LOVE IS SUPERIOR TO OTHER SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Necessity of Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

The gift of prophecy or preaching is mere entertainment or scolding and has no effect if the speaker is not motivated by love. The gift of intellectual accomplishment without love leads to contempt and snobbery. The gift of great faith that achieves or sacrifices much can lead to false pride. Without love, none of these gifts edifies the body of Christ or pleases God.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

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# I. LOVE IS SUPERIOR TO OTHER SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Necessity of Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Benevolence and even self-sacrifice done with ill intention or with the wrong spirit might as well not be done at all. To give out of obligation, self-promotion, or even contempt is worse than not giving at all. It does not build up the body of Christ. Likewise, to seek persecution or make sacrifice for selfish intentions may very well hurt one's cause more than it helps. Paul has made it clear that agape love is more important than spiritual gifts.

**3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.**

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# I. LOVE IS SUPERIOR TO OTHER SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Necessity of Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

In this passage, he explains exactly what agape is. Love is that which connects us to God and one another. Like the blood that circulates through the body's veins carrying oxygen and nutrients from cell to cell, so love also brings us into a life-giving relationship to God and one another.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

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## **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

### **Love is Essential**

The use and exercise of the other spiritual gifts is pointless without love. Prophecy, though a desirable gift (14:1), is useless without love. Knowledge of the deepest mysteries of God has no value apart from love. Faith, even when great enough to move mountains, is nothing apart from love. Likewise, boundless generosity is not profitable without love. Willingness to suffer, even to the point of martyrdom, is worthless in the absence of love.

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# **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

## **Love is Essential**

Love is essential. Spiritual gifts are nothing without love; they can even be destructive when not practiced in love. Love is what enriches the gifts and gives them value. Therefore, spiritual gifts must be founded and exercised only in genuine love for God and His people.

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## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE

Love is Amazing  
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

In the King James Version, agape is translated "charity" When we think of charity, we usually think of giving to others, an active expression of Christian love. This was not the limit of the meaning of "charity" in King James' time, however. Back then, "charity" was understood as it related to the similar word "cherish." To show charity to someone was to show that you cherished them. This includes, but also goes far beyond, giving alms, as Paul further explained. Love is incompatible with ill will. It does not seek its own honor, profit, or pleasure. Instead, love focuses on the well-being of others. It is not quarrelsome or vindictive. Instead, love "thinketh no evil," meaning that it keeps no account of wrongs.



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## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE

Love is Amazing  
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Love "suffereth long", or endures patiently the errors, weaknesses, and even meanness of people. Love makes us slow to anger or slow to repay hurt for hurt. It will suffer many things for the sake of the relationship. Love is kind; it shows kindness whenever possible. Love does not "envieth"; it does not earnestly covet another's good fortune. Love does not get angry at another's success. Love does not "vaunteth", or brag, about oneself. It is not boastful or stuck up. Love does not have a swollen head and is not "puffed up", snobbish, or arrogant. A loving person esteems others higher than themselves.

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## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE

Love is Amazing  
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

Love is never rude; it is full of grace and charm. It does not go around hurting others' feelings. It always uses tact and politeness whenever possible. Love never demands its rights, but seeks its responsibilities toward others. It is not self-centered or self-assertive. Love does not fly off the handle. It does not lose its temper. It is not easily exasperated at people. Love does not keep the books on the wrong done to it. Love does not keep score in order to repay wrong for wrong. It forgives the evil that people do to it. It does not carry a grudge.

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## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

Love is Amazing  
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love does not like to hear about the moral failures of others. It does not get pleasure out of the misfortune of others. There is a sick joy from witnessing or hearing gossip about the misdeeds of others. We often judge our own righteousness and well-being as measured by the failings of others. However, love is happy to hear the truth (or what is right), no matter how painful. Love rejoices when what is true, correct, and righteous wins the day regardless of how that may impact it directly.

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## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE

Love is Amazing  
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

**7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.**

If God is love and He created all things good, then love also is the progenitor of all things good. Love is our participation in God's nature. Thus, love is the only foundation for Christian community and relationships. Love, like God, is eternal. It "beareth" the errors and faults of others. Love does not expose one's weakness because it does not rejoice in the misfortune of others. Yet it does not excuse sin or wrongdoing, because it equally rejoices in truth. Instead, as Christ bore our sin on the Cross, we take on the weakness and faults of others as though they were our own.

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## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE

Love is Amazing  
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

**7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.**

Love believes the best, trusts in the object of its love, has confidence in them, and gives credit to the object of love that may not be self evident except through the eyes of love. Love can bear all things because it believes all things with the special insight that only a loving relationship can bring. Love "hopeth" with joy, full confidence in eager expectation the salvation of the Lord to come. It bears all things because it believes with only the insight of God the maker, thus it can wait for the true nature of people to reveal itself. Love trusts in the eventual reconciliation with God. It "endureth" and continues to be present; it does not perish or depart in spite of errors, faults, or wrongs done.

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## **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

### **Love is Transforming**

In verse 7, Paul wrote that love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. His use of language implies that love always does these things. Love "beareth all things." It covers and protects. Love "believeth all things." It has faith in others and is always willing to give the benefit of the doubt. Love "hopeth all things." It does not despair but is always hopeful for the growth and development of other believers. Love "endureth all things." This communicates a strong sense of enduring temptation or testing.

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# **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

## **Love is Transforming**

Love does not retaliate or reject but is patient. Paul highlights the character of love as it should be expressed by Christians. His descriptions of love are active, indicating that love is something one does, not merely an emotion. As Christians who have received the love of God, we are to love others. The indwelling Holy Spirit empowers us to demonstrate this kind of love.

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### III. LOVE ENDURES

Love is Forever  
1 Corinthians 13:8-13

Love surpasses all the other spiritual gifts because they will pass away, but it endures forever. Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge are limited (v. 9). Further, a time will come when those gifts will not be necessary. They are given by the Spirit for the building and maturation of the church. We will not need such things in heaven but will experience love there.



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### III. LOVE ENDURES

Love is Forever  
1 Corinthians 13:8-13

**8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.**

Love is eternal; it never comes to an end. It is absolutely permanent. Whereas all the gifts in which the Corinthians pride themselves are transitory at best, love is transcendent. Love exists only in and for relationship yet is more than the sum of its parts; like life itself, it is always renewed, even in the age to come. The gifts, on the other hand, have no such guarantee. They were given by the Spirit as instruments to be used in this age.

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### III. LOVE ENDURES

Love is Forever  
1 Corinthians 13:8-13

**8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.**

Paul anticipated that these gifts would no longer be needed when the next age occurs, marked by the return of Christ and fulfillment of the reign of God. They will pass away with the old age. Love, on the other hand, is essential, not instrumental; it will never pass away. In contrast, when all prophecy has been fulfilled, tongues will no longer be necessary as a language; signs, missions, and knowledge will vanish because there will be no more mysteries.

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### III. LOVE ENDURES

Love is Forever  
1 Corinthians 13:8-13

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

Love like God, is complete. On the other hand, we are imperfect creatures who can only comprehend reality – both material and spiritual – in an incomplete manner. Therefore, we can only preach or prophesy in an imperfect and partial way. For Paul, the kingdom of God was near, but not yet. It was not fully revealed in this age, so our knowledge and prophecy of it could only be partial.

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### III. LOVE ENDURES

Love is Forever  
1 Corinthians 13:8-13

**10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.**

The "perfect" (Gk. teleios, TEL-ay-os) maturity or completeness will come with the end of this present, imperfect age and the beginning of the new, perfect age – namely the "eschaton" (Gk. ES-khah-ton, last, uttermost). Paul describes the times the Corinthians lived in as transitory at best. Thus, they should not make gods or idols out of the gifts they esteem so highly, because their gifts are both imperfect and temporary.

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### III. LOVE ENDURES

Love is Forever  
1 Corinthians 13:8-13

**11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.**

Paul uses the metaphor of the maturing spiritual human being who grows from childhood to adulthood. The spiritual gifts become mere toys or childish things in people who do not love. Paul, who had called the Corinthians "babes in Christ," chided them once again to grow up and put away their toys, in this case, using their gifts for the wrong reasons (1 Corinthians 3:1).

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### III. LOVE ENDURES

Love is Forever  
1 Corinthians 13:8-13

**12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.**

Mirrors were a primary industry in the city of Corinth. Mirrors made in Corinth were made of finely polished silver and bronze. The image was often concave and distorted, much like the amusement park house of mirrors. Thus, we see only dimly through the distorted reflections of our own limited apprehensions. However, when Jesus returns and God makes His dwelling place among His people, we will see face to face (Revelation 21:22-23), When we look through a mirror, we see only a reflection of ourselves and have only a knowledge that is filtered through our senses, However, when we come face-to-face with another, we see clearly but are also seen. We not only come to know but also are known by another.

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### III. LOVE ENDURES

Love is Forever  
1 Corinthians 13:8-13

**13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.**

After everything that has been said, we come to the conclusion of the matter. Spirit gifts are transient, given to a particular community, for a particular purpose, and for the particular time. It is childish to esteem them too highly. However, by faith we are saved according to the grace of God. In hope, we wait upon the return of Jesus and the coming of the reign of God. All this is due to God's love for us. These are what remain when one matures in Christ. Love has revealed itself completely in the revelation of Jesus Christ in His life, death, and resurrection. Thus, we can love the Holy One. Jesus says, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John15:12-13). Love is the greatest.

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# LIGHT ON THE WORD

## Imperfect Gifts

Corinth was well known for its bronze artistry and bronze mirrors. Paul's illustration in verse 12 was particularly meaningful for the Corinthians. We exercise our gifts imperfectly. Our knowledge is imperfect, like seeing indirectly, as if through a bronze mirror. However, imperfection will give way to perfection, enabling us to see perfectly. In the perfection of heaven, we will experience love eternally. Because love is eternal and is superior to the other spiritual gifts, it is childish to focus on spiritual gifts in the absence of love. Not only is faith superior to the spiritual gifts, but also faith and hope. Just as in heaven we will no longer need prophecy or tongues, we will also no longer need faith (because we will see God) or hope (because all hopes will be fulfilled; cf. Romans 8:24). Since love outlasts all these good things, it is the greatest.



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## BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will experience love as the  
difference in living a faithful life of obedience  
to God.

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## BIBLE APPLICATION

The Holy Sprit is the source of all the spiritual gifts and He decides which gifts each person will have (1 Corinthians 12:11). The spiritual gifts are given to strengthen other believers (1 Corinthians 12:7), not to gain personal status and position. The gifts themselves should not be our primary focus. Love is an essential element in the exercise of spiritual gifts. It is good to desire spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1). However, love is superior to every gift. Prophecy, knowledge, and the demonstration of great faith must all reflect a genuine love and affection for people. Websites and bookstores abound with assessments to help people discover their spiritual gifts. While the understanding and use of spiritual gifts is important, we must always exercise them in love.

## STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: We will develop spiritually in our ability  
to express and live in Christian love.

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## STUDENT RESPONSES

Spiritual gifts cannot be effective if not used in love. Grow in your relationship with Christ. Show His love to those around you. Demonstrate the love of God as you use your spiritual gifts to help others grow and mature.

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# Prayer

Dear God,

In times like these, we need to know Your powerful and wonderful love. Thank You for loving us as we grow in loving the church and others.

In Jesus' Name we pray.

Amen.

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Next Sunday  
June 1, 2025  
Lesson 1  
Gift of Languages  
1 Corinthians 14