

Wednesday Word ~ “But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And yet, I am going to show you a far better way.” (1 Cor. 12:31 *NASB*).

The words found in 1 Corinthians 13 are those of a great theologian. He stressed such doctrines as justification, sanctification, and glorification. This chapter is one of his masterpieces. It is on the greatest of all themes – *Love*.

We must notice the introduction in order to get the message.

First Corinthians 12:31 says “Eagerly desire the greater gifts” (*NIV*). These words refer to gifts mentioned in the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 12 – teaching, preaching, healing, and administration – but in this one phrase, Paul stated there was something greater than any of these.

Several kinds of love are good. There is parental love for children, children’s love for parents, one’s love for country, the love between a husband and wife, but the greatest of them all is Christian love.

We need to recognize the supremacy of Christian love.

The supremacy is discovered by contrast (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Paul listed the things the Corinthians thought were great. Others think the same thing. But when these things are compared to Christian love, love is more important. Some of these important things are public speaking, sacred learning, mighty faith, general sharing, and Christian martyrdom. We can all make our own lists, such as material things that include money, power, pleasure, culture, and health; and spiritual things that include tithing, church attendance, Bible reading, and visitation.

The supremacy is realized in love itself (1 Cor. 13:4-8). Love is described by the way it works and as being like the Lord Jesus himself.

The supremacy is also found in its permanence (1 Cor. 13:8-13). Love lasts when other things do not, and the older it gets, the sweeter it is.

We need to think about the relationship of love.

Each Christian is challenged to strive for Christian love (1 Cor. 14:1). To attain this Christian love, we must keep sin out and cultivate love. We must live close to the cross on which Jesus died.

Each Christian is challenged to practice Christian love. This starts with those to whom we are the closest and moves out to all people of the world. It starts with relatively small and simple things, then ultimately envelops the mighty and complicated.

I challenge you to read and reread 1 Corinthians 13 and then make it your business to love like this.

All to the glory of God.