

Without LOVE, It Is Not LIFE
An Introduction to I Corinthians 13

Love is the *sine qua non* of Christianity. The Latin phrase *sine qua non* means “**without which, not.**” The Jesus follower is known by LIFE and LOVE. “*By love, all will know that you are My disciples*” (John 13:35).

The People to Whom Paul Wrote I Corinthians 13. Corinth was an ancient city of Greece. It was built on the north side of the Acrocorinthus, a massive rock which rises 1900 feet above the plain. Corinth was a Roman colony, and its citizens were mostly Roman in Paul’s day. However, the population of Corinth was greatly augmented by Greeks and people from the Levant, the latter including a considerable Jewish community. Paul came to Corinth during his second missionary trip (AD 49-52), recorded in Acts 16-20., Paul stayed in the city and worked with a couple of Jewish tentmakers named Priscilla and Aquila. Every Sabbath, he preached to Jews and proselytes in the synagogue. Silas and Timothy soon joined Paul. The Jews opposed their message. Paul went to the Gentiles, and by God’s grace a church was soon formed.

The Problems that Led to Paul Writing I Corinthians 13. All churches have problems. The problem in Corinth included envy over leadership positions within the church, sexual immorality in the church, pressures from the outside city culture, and in I Corinthians 12, Christians pointing their finger at others. The city was multi-cultural; society was immoral; government was imperial; and the people were hostile. Paul writes the Corinthians a letter (AD 52), “*I will show you a more excellent way to live*” (I Cor. 12:31). Then Paul writes I Corinthians 13, the chapter on LOVE – thus, the title of our series – **LOVE and LIVE.**

I. LIFE is filled with problems for which the only solution is LOVE.

“God is love, and *whoever abides in love* abides in God, and God in him” (I John 4:16).

A. LOVE is the most misused word in the English language.

It is misused because love has come to mean something other than God’s definition. Have you used a word in conversation that means something else to other people? The love that GOD defines and describes in I Corinthians 13 is the kind of love that will bring real solutions to you.

B. LOVE, God’s kind of love, is something that is both *caught and taught*.

When you experience it, you know it. When you experience the love of God, it fills your heart. God’s love overflows our hearts when love fills our hearts. There’ll be times when you may get frustrated with the text (or study) because you see how shallow you have treated the people you love. It is my prayer that this study helps you see the kind of love that God has for you.

II. LOVE carries a promise that is worth your unconditional TRUST.

The inspired promise is found in I Corinthians 13:8: “Love never fails.”

A. Love will never fail you - When you find yourself in a tough situation, choose LOVE.

B. Love will never fail others - There are so many things we do in our relationships that isn’t love.

We are selfish and controlling—we protect ourselves from hurt—and we seek to manipulate to order our environment—and we fool ourselves into thinking that we truly do love others.

C. Love will never fail God – *you will never* again wonder how to please God.

III. Living a LIFE defined by LOVE is living a life that is fully devoted to God.

In the coming weeks I will show you that without love, you do nothing, are nothing, and have nothing. The question – and test - we face today is: “Are we serious about our loving and living?”

READ I CORINTHIANS 13