

The Royal Route to Heaven

1 Corinthians Chapter 13

As you open your heart to Chapter 13, think of the closing statement of Chapter 12, “*And yet I show you a more excellent way*”. Since Chapters 12 and 14 are both focused on instruction on the spiritual gifts, and Chapter 13 on love is placed right in between, we must consider its application to how spiritual gifts are used in the church. But this is also a familiar and cherished portion of scripture to many with its beautiful description of godly love. In this chapter we are introduced to a quality of love that could never be experienced outside of Jesus Christ.

As you contemplate the truth of love in this study, pray that the Lord will reveal His love to you and work the love of Chapter 13 into your walk on the Royal Route.

Key Word(s)

Read through the entire chapter, looking for words or themes that are repeated. You might want to underline them in your Bible.

1. A word we find that is used several times is “love”.

a. How many times did you find this word?

In scripture we find four different Greek words for love. Consider the definitions of each below.

Eros was one word for love. It described, as we might guess from the word itself, *erotic* love. It refers to sexual love.

Storge was the second word for love. It refers to family love, the kind of love there is between a parent and child, or between family members in general.

Philia is the third word for love. It speaks of a brotherly friendship and affection. It is the love of deep friendship and partnership. It might be described as the highest love of which man, without God’s help, is capable of.

Agape is the fourth word for love and the one that is used throughout Chapter 13.

(from Enduring Word – David Guzik)

b. Write a definition for agape love.

2. Make note of any other words that are repeated or that you feel are significant here and include a definition.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

The first three verses of Chapter 13 remind us that we are still in the midst of Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are good and we are to desire them, but “*there is a more excellent way*” of exercising gifts.

1. We know that all of the gifts, ministries and activities of the Spirit are good, but only if they include a very important thing – love. Take each verse now and write the contrast of what is meant for a good thing and what it is without love.

a. 1 Corinthians 13:1

b. 1 Corinthians 13:2

c. 1 Corinthians 13:3

2. Why do you think there is such a contrast in each of these without love?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

In the next 4 verses we have a very detailed description of love. We do not want to miss any facet of this description, so we will look closely at each verse.

1. 1 Corinthians 13:4

a. Write each of the descriptions of love listed in this verse.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

b. Now choose any 2 from this list and explain further what they mean in our attitudes or actions. Feel free to do this for all 5 on another paper if you have time.

1.

2.

2. 1 Corinthians 13:5

a. List each of the descriptions of love listed in this verse.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

b. Now choose any 2 from this list and explain further what they mean in our attitudes or actions. Feel free to do this for all 4 on another paper if you have time.

- 1.
- 2.

3. 1 Corinthians 13:6

a. Write this verse below.

b. What does this mean to you?

c. What can you add to your understanding from the following verses?

1. Proverbs 17:5b

2. Proverbs 24:17-18

4. 1 Corinthians 13:7

a. List the four ways love acts toward “*all things*” in this verse.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

b. Now define each of the words above

1.

2.

3.

4.

c. Choose one of the words above and write your explanation of its application. If you have time, you may want to do this for all four using a separate piece of paper.

Read Galatians 5:22.

The love that is described in 1 Corinthians 1-7, agape love, is an amazing kind of love, but it is also very challenging as we try to apply this to ourselves. It might be good to pause here for a moment and consider how it is possible for us to walk in this love.

1. Agape love has been defined as: unconditional love, "the highest form of love, charity" and "the love of God for man". Agape love involves faithfulness, commitment, and an act of the will. How do the following scriptures describe this agape love of God for us?

a. John 3:16

b. John 15:13

2. Jesus is the living example of agape love, but we are also called to love in this way. What do the following verses say about that?

a. Matthew 22:37-39

b. Ephesians 5:1-2

3. So we are called to love God and others in the way God loves us – a very high calling! But we can't do it in our flesh or by our own determination. God never calls us to do something without equipping us to do it.

a. What does Galatians 5:22-23 tell us about this agape love?

b. What does this tell you about how we are able to love this way?

There is a difference between the fruit of Spirit and a gift of the Spirit – fruit grows in you as you walk in the Spirit, the gift is bestowed on someone for a specific time and purpose.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-13.

1. Look at 1 Corinthians 13:8.

a. Write the first phrase of the verse below.

b. Now write what this statement means to you.

2. The rest of 1 Corinthians 13:8 talks about three spiritual gifts.

a. What does it say will happen to them?

b. From 1 Corinthians 13:9-10, when will this happen?

Chuck Smith: "I agree with G. Campbell Morgan when he declared that it is obvious from the context that he has to be referring to the coming again of Jesus Christ. For he goes on to say that we are going to see Him face to face..."

4. Consider the comparisons between now and then given in 1 Corinthians 13:9-12 by completing the following:

a. 1 Corinthians 13:9-10

Now: For we _____

Then: But when that which is perfect has come, then _____

b. 1 Corinthians 13:12

Now: For now _____

Then: But then _____

Now: Now I _____

Then: But then I _____

Chuck Smith: “There is a natural development, a maturing process. There will be a fullness when I stand in the presence of my Lord; I will be complete. Many of the things that I do today as I look back on them from that vantage will appear very childish. I won't come into that completeness and fullness until I am with the Lord. So those things, prophecy, tongues, word of knowledge, will no longer be necessary, set aside. I have entered into the fullness there with Jesus.”

5. 1 Corinthians 13:13 brings this section to an end.

a. Write this verse below.

b. Share any thoughts you might have on why love is the greatest.

In closing...

In 1 John 4:19 we are told that “*We love Him because He first loved us.*”

1. We know that the only way we can walk in agape love is by His Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Take time now to write a prayer asking the Lord to help you to walk in this love for others.

2. We can only love God with agape love when we truly know His love for us. Remembering God's great love for you, write a prayer of thanks and love to Him here.