

**Week 23 LEADER Discussion Questions**

**Text:** 1 Cor 13 (This week's passage is focusing on verses 1-3 and 8-13.)

**Next week's passage will cover verses 4-7.**

**Icebreaker:** Have you ever felt like you were doing something great but later realized that you lacked the right motivation? What happened?

1. Read this week's passage. What stands out to you from the text or from the sermon you heard Sunday?

2. What do you think Paul's main point is in verses 1-3? How does love relate to spiritual gifts?

Paul doesn't give a precise explanation, but it seems safe for us to consider both the motivation behind how we use our gifts and the manner in which we use them. What is clear is that Jesus said the greatest commandment was that we love God and love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt 22:36-40). If this is the greatest thing we can do, then it makes sense that this same love ought to be present in how we employ our gifts since they too have both an element of expressing love toward the God who gave them and of serving the "common good" (see 12:7). If we use our gifts without keeping the greatest commandment then we have obviously missed the point!

*Application:* What impact does love have in how we use our gifts?

3. Verses 1-3 present a scenario where spiritual gifts could still be impactful even when they are devoid of love. If an absence of love doesn't prevent such gifts from being effective, why does it really matter whether they are done in love or not?

Paul describes the possibility of having, for example, faith "so as to remove mountains," yet exercising that faith without love. In other words, it's possible for gifts to still be powerful and effective (in a sense) even when love is absent. The problem goes back to what was noted in the prior question...gifts that are not motivated by love for God and others and that are not being used in a loving manner are failing to fulfill what God desires most for his people. A gift devoid of love might still "work," but it's not serving the foundational purpose for which God has given it.

*Application:* What could be different between someone who uses their gifts without having love from someone who uses their gifts with love?

You might think of how gifts can be misused as a way to draw attention to ourselves or to create a sense of superiority as we compare how we are gifted to how others are gifted.

**4.** Verses 8-13 describe another aspect of why love is essential when it comes to spiritual gifts. What basic point does Paul seem to be telling the Corinthians in verses 8 and 13?

Love is eternal because it is fundamental to who God is (see 1 Jhn 4:7-21). It's not just that "God is loving," but that God IS love. Love has its origin in God's nature which means that true love cannot be separated from who God is. That's why love will remain forever. Our faith will one day be sight and our hope will one day be fully realized, but love will never fade.

**5. Application:** Love is the "more excellent way" from the last verse of chapter 12. What does it look like for you use your gifts in a way that's motivated by love?

What might prevent us from using our gifts out of love?