

A photograph of a forest path. The path is made of dirt and gravel, winding through a lush green forest. The ground is covered with ferns and other low-lying plants. Tall trees with green foliage are visible in the background. A green horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

The Excellent Way

1 Corinthians 12:31–13:13

1 Corinthians 12:31–13:13

³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. ¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is

patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

THE EXCELLENT WAY

A photograph of a dirt path winding through a lush green forest. The path is covered in small stones and leaves, leading into the distance. The trees are tall and thin, with dense foliage. A solid green horizontal banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text in white serif font.

THE EXCELLENT WAY

1 Corinthians 12:31–13:13

Introduction

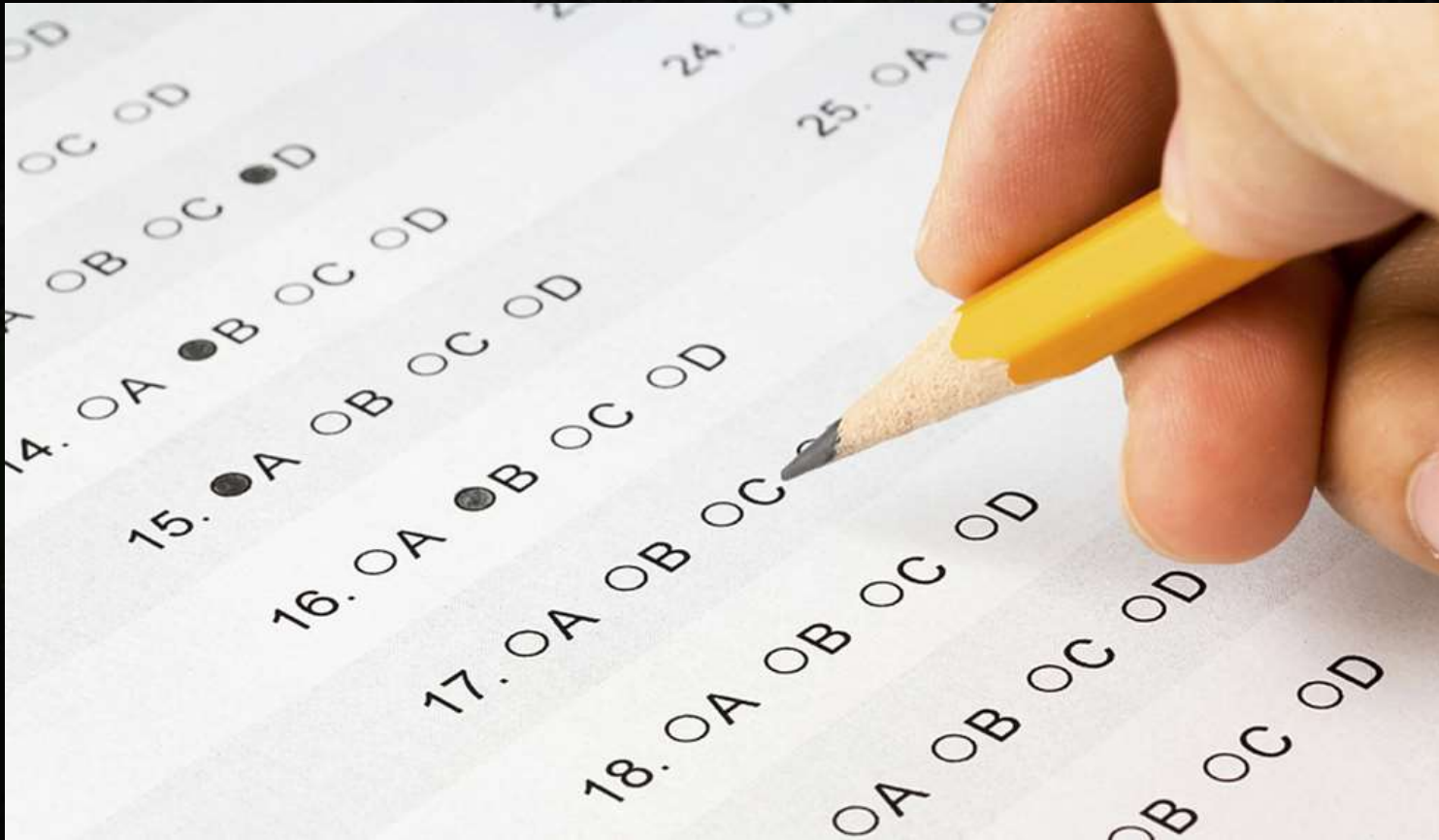
But earnestly desire the higher gifts.
And I will show you a still more excellent
way.

Context is spiritual gifting

The best way to use them

Excellent-to throw over and beyond

Way-lifestyle



Tests for spiritual gifts

1. Does it edify the Body of Christ?
2. Is it exercised in Love?

Start with their favorite gifts

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

Tongues without love is just a bunch of noise

Cymbals used to gain attention of crowd or in worship of idols

Agape

Agape

1 John 4:10...In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Agape is self sacrificing love



Hit their hang up

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Prophecy

Knowledge

Faith

No standing without love

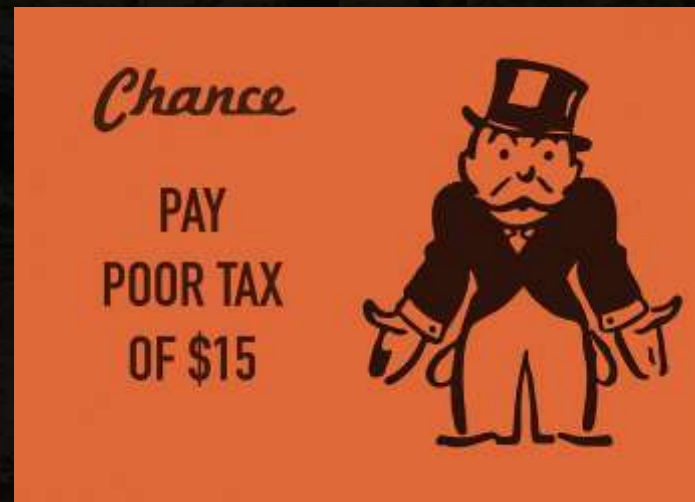
Without love

Matthew 7:21–23...Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Give it all up

If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Voluntary poverty
Martyrdom



My action without love do not gain me heaven

A note

This may have been a hymn or poem about love, written or quoted by Paul. All of these descriptions of love are active. Love is an action, not simply an emotion. These all describe the ministry of Jesus (the full and complete revelation of YHWH) as He dealt with imperfect people. Love is a person!



Bob Utley

Love is

Patient to people, no retaliation



A fruit of the Spirit



An attribute of God

Love is...



kiw

3/19

*...a necessity,
not a luxury.*

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Love is

Kind-gentle to all

♥ Commmanded to treat all Christians

♥ A Fruit of the Spirit

♥ Jesus described himself with this word

love is...



kiw

3/19

*...a necessity,
not a luxury.*

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Paul embarrasses his audience

Most of the negative aspects to what
love is not have been addressed
throughout this letter!

Love is not

- ⊘ Envy-boil over; desire control over
- ⊘ Boast-self flattering; associated with knowledge or oratory skill in Corinth
- ⊘ Arrogant-overestimate and flaunt
- ⊘ Rude-unacceptable behavior; curse in Jesus' name

Its actions



It does not insist on its own way

Liberty becoming a stumbling block

Not seeking his own good

1 Corinthians 10:33...just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

Love's Action Guide

Galatians 5:13...For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Ephesians 5:21...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Its actions

It is not irritable-sharpen
(constant friction), sharp
disagreement





Its actions

It is not resentful-an accounting term for an unpaid bill,
a revengeful spirit

Zechariah 8:17...do not devise evil
in your hearts against one another,
and love no false oath, for all these
things I hate, declares the LORD.”

(Same phrasing in the LXX)

A couplet comparison

does not rejoice at wrongdoing,
but rejoices with the truth.

It refers to gossip within the
Christian community

Unrighteousness contrasted with
the truth

Actions
speak
louder than
words

Love bears all things

Believes all things

Hopes all things

Endures all things

Love never ends



Bears All things

At all times and
at all occasions

Bearing-to
provide a
covering

Believes

Believes all things-implies “sees the best in others” or “gives a fellow Christian the benefit of the doubt



Hopes

Love holds out hope of a fellow believer's eventual development in the faith. It does not despair.



Endures

voluntary, steadfast endurance. This phrase emphasizes no personal retaliation or rejection, but steadfast perseverance, especially with people.

Never fails

1. Fails-an actor being hissed off the stage
2. Fails-a flower that dropped its petals because of inclement conditions

God's love never gives up!



This is the type
of love we need

Exercise of spiritual gifts

To our family

To the stranger you meet

What doesn't last forever

As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

Love is permanent, the gifts are not.



Clue for ending

For now we see in a mirror dimly,
but then face to face. Now I know
in part; then I shall know fully,
even as I have been fully known.

Application Statement

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

Exercising Spiritual Gifts without love is childish

Finish strong

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Not spiritual gifts

Not status

The loving actions I exercise



Our take away

You are gifted, use them in a loving way

Use this a mirror for yourself

Major on loving those around you

Ask yourself what you can do that edifies with love

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