



What's Love Got To Do With It?

The Sermon Connection is a weekly handout to help you apply Sunday's sermon content to your everyday life. It is designed to give you additional insights and practical tools for applying the teaching throughout the week.

Application, reflection and connection questions may also serve as a springboard for discussion in your small group, your family time, or in one-on-one conversations.

Love is B.A.E. (Before Anything Else)

**Sermon by Calvin Lamar Brown, Sr.
January 29, 2017**

Today Pastor Calvin launched a new series on love. A popular song posed the question: "What's love got to do with it?" For the believer, the answer is ... everything! When Jesus was asked to name the greatest commandment, he responded that all of the commandments could be summarized as follows: Love God and love people. Over the next 6 weeks we will unpack that concept and show why and how we can apply it in today's culture.

In today's message, Calvin used 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 to teach on the importance of love. He used an example from a scene of a movie he had recently watched where the son asked the father why he didn't like him. The father responded with a long monologue about duty and responsibility. Essentially, the father told the son that he didn't need to like him; instead, as a father his responsibility and duty was to simply provide for his son, not to necessarily like his son.

That illustration begs the question, "Is it possible to serve fruitfully without love as the motivating factor?" Paul seems to argue not in 1 Corinthians 13. Or, is it possible to even do harm in service if love isn't the motivating factor? Paul seems to argue so in 1 Corinthians. Paul presents love as the key to making a spiritual gift or Christian service fruitful or futile – fruitful if love is present and futile if love is absent.

The context of the passage is Paul's teaching about spiritual gifts and the usage of those gifts. Paul wants to make the point that love must be the motivating factor in the exercise of spiritual gifts. He illustrates and emphasizes this point three-fold in our key passage. First, he uses hyperbole to argue that even supernatural speaking gifts become nothing but noise, if exercised without love. Again, using hyperbole, he argues that incredible knowledge and faith does not benefit others, if exercised without love. Finally, he argues that even the ultimate sacrifice of one's life gains nothing for the martyr, if not motivated by love.

In the end, it seems that God is more concerned with how and why we do something rather than what we accomplish.

E-CHECK: Experiencing Christ-like Relationships AND Exercising our God-given Spiritual Gifts

READING AND REFLECTION:

1 Corinthians 12:7 says “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” According to this verse, what is the purpose of spiritual gifts? How does this relate to “The Great Commandment” that Jesus gave?

1 Peter 4:8 – “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” (Also, 1 Peter 4:9-11) According to this verse, how important is it to love each other? How can love cover sins? The verses that follow this command list practical ways to love. List them out.

John 13:34-35 says “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” According to these verses, how important is love to our Christian witness? What is the implication if we don’t love each other?

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

When you serve, why do you serve?

What are your spiritual gifts or in what ways do you help others?

Can you recount times when you used your spiritual gifts with love clearly as the motives? What about when love wasn’t clearly the motive? Can you distinguish the difference?

COMMUNITY CONNECTION:

Who do you serve with? Where do you have opportunity for others to see the love that you have for fellow believers?

KEY POINT:

When I do that which I believe God wants me to do, I should ask myself: Am I doing this out of love for God and others?

RESOURCES:

1 Corinthians 12-14. Reading these 3 chapters will place this message in context.

