

## **The Most Excellent Way**

May 1, 2014

John Wesley called **1 Corinthians 13**—Paul’s treatise on love—“the greatest chapter in the entire Bible.” In fact it is the portion of Scripture which inspired Scottish evangelist Henry Drummond to write his famous book: *The Greatest Thing in the World*. The power and priority of agape’—God’s love—is vividly expressed in the first three verses: In short, if we do not have agape’, we **are becoming nothing**, we **are nothing** and we **will profit nothing**.

**1 Corinthians 12:31b** “...And now I will show you *the most excellent way*.”



**1 Corinthians 14:1a** “Follow the way of love....”

**Prepare by Soaking in Scripture:** Since God’s love can only be defined in Scripture, look at each verse and place its address in the Bible—from the list at the bottom—on the right.

- “...as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us....” \_\_\_\_\_
- “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son....” \_\_\_\_\_
- “...to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.” \_\_\_\_\_
- “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world....” \_\_\_\_\_
- “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” \_\_\_\_\_
- “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.” \_\_\_\_\_
- “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” \_\_\_\_\_
- “...I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” \_\_\_\_\_
- “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her....” \_\_\_\_\_
- “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” \_\_\_\_\_

**John 3:16**  
**John 15:13**  
**Romans 5:8**

**Galatians 2:20**  
**Ephesians 5:2**  
**Ephesians 5:25**  
**1 John 3:16**

**1 John 4:9**  
**1 John 4:10**  
**Revelation 1:5**

**Scripture to Memorize:**

**1 Corinthians 12:31** “But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you *the most excellent way*.”

**NOTES on Speaking Session:**

**Questions for Mentor-group Discussion:**

1. Tucked in-between 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and chapter 14 is considered “The greatest treatise on love found anywhere in literature” even by the secular world. Read this 13-verse chapter through and give it your own assessment in ten words or less.

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2. 1 Corinthians 13 is a **precise passage** with 13 verses, 3 sections/categories, and 262 words in the NIV. Circle one **appropriate title to the first section**—verses 1 through 3—from the list below. There is a ‘right’ answer, so take a cue from the lesson title.

Love is Permanent	Love is Perfect	Love is Particular	Love Lasts
Love is a Practice	Love is Preeminent	Love is Patient	Love is Picky

3. Write out numerically one million on the line below, and then scratch out the one. If the 0s represent all that we speak and know and sacrifice, and the number in front of the 0s represents agape’—God’s love—then we can see that all the 000000000s in the world will not be worth anything apart from love!

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Without love, when push comes to shove, we’re most likely to shove!

Anon.

**Recommended Reading:**

*A Love Worth Giving*, Max Lucado  
 1 Corinthians 13 from the *Holy Bible*  
*The Greatest Thing in the World*, Henry Drummond

*“And now I will show you  
the most excellent way.”*

## *1 Corinthians 13:1 -3*

*“If I speak in the tongues of men and of  
angels, and have not love, I am only a  
resounding gong or a clanging  
cymbal.*

*2If I have the gift of prophecy and can  
fathom all mysteries and all  
knowledge and if I have a faith that  
can move mountains, but have not  
love, I am nothing.*

*3If I give all I possess to the poor and  
surrender my body to the flames, but  
have not love, I gain nothing.”*



*“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children  
and live a life of love,  
just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us  
as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*

*Ephesians 5:1-2*