

The Greatest Gift of All – Part 7

1 Corinthians 13; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 1-7-2024

How can you and I grow in love this year?

Love Gone Bad

Our greatest need is love and love is our greatest danger. How so? There are three ‘natural loves’ that are good but can go bad when they are set up as ‘gods’ and then become ‘idolatrous, demonic and destructive.’ See CS Lewis’s *The Four Loves* and *Lewis on the Christian Life*.

- *The Love of Affection* is family love and for anyone we are familiar (neighbors, grocery store checkers, etc – ‘the people who happen to be there’). Affection goes bad when it becomes the ‘tyranny of possessiveness’.
- *The Love of Friendship* is the least natural of loves, both unnecessary and important; it is the connection between two people based on common interest (not merely common activity). Friendship goes bad when it becomes exclusive.
- *The Love of Eros* is not sexual love, but romantic love or being ‘in love’; ‘a delighted pre-occupation with the Beloved – a general, unspecified pre-occupation with her in her totality.’ Eros goes bad when its demands will not be denied.

Make love your goal.

Isn't that the point of 1 Corinthians 13?

Is the love of 1 Corinthians 13 really your goal?

Make the connection between faith and hope and love.

Do you expect love to pop up like weeds in a garden?

“Faith, hope and love are the three principal graces, of which charity is the chief.” – Matthew Henry

“The graces of Christianity are all linked together or united one to another and within one another, as the links of a chain; one does, as it were, hang on another from one end of the chain to the other, so that if one link be broken, all falls; the whole ceases to be of any effect.” - Edwards

Focus on God, fight sin.

- Love is rooted in the nature of God.
- Love is the overflow of fellowship with God who is love. (13)
- Love is sabotaged by sin: lies, lusts and lawlessness.

Where is your focus and where is your fight? – 2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:12-14

Listen to God.

If you could have an audience with God for one hour, what do you think He would say to you? This is reading your Bible. - Deuteronomy 13:18; Romans 12:1-2; John 17:17

Talk to God.

If you could have an audience with God for one hour, what do you think you would say to God? This is your prayer. - Psalm 5:2; Psalm 119:33-40; Luke 11:5-13

Combat lies.

If you are failing to love, what lies are you believing? - John 8:44; Romans 1:25

Combat idolatrous lusts.

If you are failing to love, what desires have you made into an idol or little god? - Psalm 52:7; James 4:1-4

Combat lawlessness.

If you are failing to love, what things are you doing and saying that are wrong according to God's Word? - Romans 6:19; 1 John 3:4

Don't fight alone.

How important is worship with the Church to you? - Hebrews 3:12-14; Hebrews 10:23-25

Don't give up.

How long are you willing to wait on God? - Psalm 27:11-14; Luke 8:15; Romans 5:3-5

Love Ruled by Love

*“In *The Four Loves*, Lewis's overall aim is to show that charity – love for God – must govern all our natural loves. Our loves must be ‘ordered,’ to use Augustine's term. ... divine love orders and guides the natural loves to their proper end.” - Joe Rigney, *Lewis on the Christian Life**

Love for God is being pleased with God above all and living to please God above all. This love is to rule all our other loves. – Matthew 6:9-10