

1 Corinthians 12:

12 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be ignorant. **2** You know that when you were gentiles you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. **3** Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

4 Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, **5** and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, **6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. **7** To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. **8**

To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, **10** to another the working of powerful deeds, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. **11** All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. **13** For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. **15** If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. **16** And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? **18** But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. **19** If all were a single member, where would the body be? **20**

Chapter 13 insists that no gift, however genuine, can ground identity or worth. Love names the way gifts are held without rivalry.

Chapter 13:4–7 describes the dispositions (patience, kindness, non-insistence) that make embodied difference livable rather than violent.

As it is, there are many members yet one body. ²¹**The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”** ²²**On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,** ²³

Chapter 13 refuses self-sufficiency: gifts exercised without love collapse into noise, nothingness, or loss.

and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect, ²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this.

But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵**that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.** ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And

God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work powerful deeds? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹

Love “does not insist on its own way” because it does not rank value by visibility or strength.

Chapter 13 names love as the only force capable of sustaining unity without uniformity.

Identity is given before it is enacted. Love is what lets us rest in belonging, rather than strive to earn it.

**But strive for the greater gifts.
And I will show you a still more excellent way.**

Chapter 13 is not an interruption but a revelation: love is the way gifts are exercised, endured, and finally relinquished.

Love, the Essential and Lasting Criterion (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

	New Revised Standard Version	Thiselton, A. C. (2007). <i>The first epistle to the Corinthians: A commentary on the greek text</i> . Eerdmans.
1	If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.	If I were to Speak with human or angelic voices but if I had not love, I would have become only a resonating Jar or a reverberating 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 do not have love, I am nothing.	And if I should have the gift of prophecy and if I penetrate all the depths too profound for mere human discovery, and if I have all “knowledge,” and if I possess the gifts of every kind of faith sufficient to remove mountains—but after all, may lack love, I am nothing.
3	If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, ^[a] but do not have love, I gain nothing.	Even If I should divide up all my possessions to feed the needy, and if I hand over my body that I may glory, but have not love, it counts for nothing.
4	Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant	Love waits patiently; love shows kindness. Love does not burn with envy; does not brag — is not inflated with its own importance.
5	or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;	It does not behave with ill-mannered impropriety; is not preoccupied with the interests of the self; does not become exasperated into pique; does not keep a reckoning up of evil.
6	it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.	Love does not take pleasure at wrongdoing, but joyfully celebrates truth.
7	It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.	It never tires of support, never loses faith, never exhausts hope, never gives up.
8	Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.	Love never falls apart. Whether it be prophecies, these will be brought to an end; if it be tongues, these will stop; if it be “knowledge,” this will be rendered obsolete.
9	For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part;	For we know in fragmentary ways, and we prophesy part by part.
10	but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.	But when the completed whole comes, what is piece by piece shall be done 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 an adult, I put an end to childish ways.	When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, form Opinions like a child, count values like a child; when I reached adulthood, I turned my back on the things of childhood.
12	For now we see in a mirror, dimly, ^[b] but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.	For we are seeing the present only by means of a mirror indirectly; but then it will be face to face. For the present I come to know part by part; but then I shall come to know just as fully as I have been known.
13	And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.	(13) So now, there remain faith, hope, love, these three. But the greatest of these is love.