

The Most Important Subject...

LOVE

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Introduction:

I was thinking about the school year ending. I was thinking about the upcoming summer... all the great stuff going on. I was thinking about Youth Camp, and swimming, and my parents coming to visit. I was thinking about how some of you would go away on vacations, or to visit family in other places. And I was thinking about those of you who would be graduating. It's just a couple of you, but I thought that this just may be the last message I ever get to preach to you. Though I'm sure I will see you, and speak with you again, this may be the last time I get to preach to you... So I decided to preach about the most important subject. LOVE.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 NIV

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. [2] If 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.** [3] If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, **but have not love, I gain nothing.**

[4] Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. [5] It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. [6] Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. [7] It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

[8] Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled;

where there is knowledge, it will pass away. [9] For we know in part and we prophesy in part, [10] but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. [11] When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. [12] Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

[13] **And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.**

1. If I have *not* LOVE, I AM NOTHING

I've never gotten a tattoo, for matters of controversy, and conscience. But I've often thought that if I were to get a tattoo, it would be of these words. "IF I HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM NOTHING." Because I believe it to be one of the most powerful and true statements I've ever heard, or spoken. If this saying, becomes more than a saying, if it becomes a lifestyle... the person who lives w/ this in mind, will be a hero. The person who lives in LOVE, truly lives. He or she lives the life of a true believer in Christ.

Jesus set the ultimate example of LOVE. He was the extreme lover, who gave his life in brutal death for his loved ones, you and me. He died so we could live, that is ultimate love. As followers of Him, we should live like Him.

Richard Crisco - the former President of BRSM, and one of my heroes. Said these words, "Relationships are everything. Everything important is our relationships with God, and with others." He was right. Our relationship with God, our love for God, is the most important factor in our life. The next most important thing is our relationship with others, our love for them.

If a person doesn't love others, he/she is NOT a true follower of Christ.

1 John 4:8 NIV Whoever does *not* love does *not* know God, because **God is love.**

It is impossible to really know the LOVING God, and yet NOT have love for other people. God is the essence of Love, He is the definition of Love, and He expects us to emulate Him.

If I have not love, I AM nothing.

2. If I have *not* LOVE, I GAIN NOTHING

The scripture is clear, that even if we were so bold as to give EVERYTHING we have to others. Even if we gave our LIVES, it would mean absolutely NOTHING if we did not have love.

There is NO GAIN for those that have not love.

Question: Do you think this is talking about not gaining earthly possessions??? If not, then what is it talking about?

People might still amass a lot of wealth, and stuff for themselves here on earth. People that don't have love will not have ANY spiritual GAIN. Most importantly, they will never be saved.

Salvation is an act of love; God's love for a person, and their love and gratefulness to Him in return. Without receiving and giving love, you can't receive Christ's salvation, and you can't love Him. You can't go to heaven, to spend eternity with God, if you don't live a life of love.

Not only will a person who lacks love not be saved, but they will never have any spiritual blessings in their life. They will never enjoy the fellowship of believers. They will never have the Peace

of God in their hearts. Without LOVE, you really do GAIN NOTHING.

John Maxwell, the great leadership guru says, **"A person who lives only for himself, is in a mighty small business."**

The scripture tells us that when Christ returns, there will no longer be spiritual gifts, like prophecy, and speaking tongues. They will no longer be needed, because we'll be in the presence of God. We'll see Him "face to face." But even then there are three things that never pass away.

[13] And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

3. LOVE is ETERNAL

Love is one of the three things that will last forever. Love is the substance of the Kingdom of God. Love is what makes the Church, the Church. Love is what caused Father God to give His Son for us. Love is what gave Christ the strength to complete His mission on the cross. Love is what saves us. Love is what causes us to live for Him. Love is what allows us to put others ahead of ourselves. Love is what creates an atmosphere of acceptance amidst a world of hate. Love is what gives us hope. Love is Christianity. God is love.

If there is one thing you take away from this youth ministry, let it be love. If there is one thing you remember me preach to you, let it be this. **Always love. Love is the most important thing. Love God and love others, and your life will have purpose.**

Reread 1 Cor. 13:4-8a ...love never fails." Activity: love letters to God. Song "There is Nothing Like" -United Live