

SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

MINISTRY UPDATE 2

CapMin Shines at Southern Baptist Convention—400 Interested in Learning about Partnering to Lead Ministries to Political Leaders!

VERSE OF THE WEEK 3

1 Corinthians 13

ABOUT CAPITOL MINISTRIES 8



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FOCUSED ON THE WORD

The Preeminence of Love



Without *love* as the center of your faith, your trajectory in office will be less than it could be otherwise. For you to be influential, your spouse, family members, and colleagues must know in their heart of hearts that, first and foremost, you are a loving person. Paul states in the opening portions of 1 Corinthians 13, without *love I am nothing*. What then are the defining aspects of *love* that both you and I need to be continually working on and growing in? This study will take a close look at this element to consider.

Read on, beloved.

Ralph Drollinger

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

Governors: Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom

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Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served

House Members: Thursdays 8am, AG Hearing Rm., Longworth 1302, hot breakfast served

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MINISTRY UPDATE

CapMin Shines at Southern Baptist Convention—400 Interested in Learning about Partnering to Lead Ministries to Political Leaders!



CapMin’s unflinching mission resonated with 400 enthusiastic pastors and church leaders at the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, on June 11–14, who wanted to know more about discipling political leaders inside the halls of government. SBC-affiliated churches are strongly missions minded, but most of those who requested information were unfamiliar with the biblical top-down outreach missions strategy to reach political servants first with the Word of God. And they liked what they were hearing!

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I. INTRODUCTION

Contextually, chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians is sandwiched between two chapters of instruction by Paul to the Church at Corinth whose members, in their carnality, emphasized the practicing of certain spiritual gifts above the practicing of Christian *love*. Paul instructs them that *love* is preeminent. Again, *charity*, or *love* is what ties people together.

Of special note are the *love*-defining verbs from verses 4-7 that follow under the second outline point: “The Elements of *Love*.” All 15 are in the present continuous tense “denoting actions and attitudes which have become habitual, ingrained gradually by constant repetition.”¹ Born from this, and worthy of saying again:

These defining characteristics of love are worthy of constant review and practice, especially with our spouses, family members, office staff, and professional colleagues; after all, love is what ties us together and sustains our relationships.

Given that repetition is the key to learning and ingrain, I like to review this study often. Akin to skills needed for driving a car, these specific, measurable aspects of *love* should become habitual responses in our lives—even though they are more difficult and take much longer to cultivate than the rote habits of driving a car.

Before examining the fundamental aspects germane to objectifying *love*, Paul first emphasizes, and appropriately so, the superiority of *love*. So let’s look at that first.

II. THE ESSENTIALITY OF LOVE (1 CORINTHIANS 13:1–3)

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know 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 give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

In these three opening verses, Paul makes three stark comparisons in order to underscore the incomparability of *love*. These introductory remarks exclaim the dominance of *love* as a virtue over all other character traits. It is important, motivational, and insightful to note that the three respective comparisons are related to qualities necessary *from a human perspective* for one to succeed in the capital community! One must possess speaking skills (13:1), leadership (13:2) and self-sacrifice (13:3). As critical as those are,

Love—from God’s perspective—is of greater importance!

As interesting a comparison as this is, let’s elaborate on each. The first comparison in verse 1 is to a person’s oratory abilities.

A. LOVE OVER ORATION (1 CORINTHIANS 13:1)

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

One’s *love* for others is more important than his speaking abilities. The metaphorical meaning of *becoming a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal* relates to empty philosophizing. Someone who knows and exclaims all the right answers but has



no *love* is akin to the Church of Ephesus as described in Revelation 2:1–7. That church had all the right doctrine but had lost their *love* for God.

Proverbs 3:3 summarizes the necessary virtues a public servant needs to possess: both a herald of truth and a man or woman of *love*. **Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.** Solomon’s use of the words *neck* and *heart* bespeak of both love (kindness) and *truth* as being a part of a person’s outward and inward adornment. The meaning of the Hebrew word for *heart* (*leb*) includes the aspects of one’s intellect, emotion and will.

The mature believer possesses love and truth simultaneously in full measure.

Because the loving public servant’s priorities are straight, he or she is neither inwardly nor outwardly **a noisy gong or clanging cymbal**. Even when heralding the truth on the floor, such speech should be couched in words of *love*.

How to Become a Marginalized Public Servant

In my 12 years of ministry in the California State Capitol and the 11 years in the U.S. capital, I have observed certain members who become marginalized, ineffective, and discarded by others because they double down on truth at the expense of love. I beg you not to follow in their footsteps. It is essential that you are as loving as you are truthful!

B. LOVE OVER LEADING (13:2)

If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

Interpreting the second verse of chapter 13 to be a statement of the primacy of *love* over leadership is not a stretch. A public servant who knows the Word of God, possesses *faith* and is acutely *knowledgeable* of all the policy issues—visionary leadership for his or her personal and party’s future—but does not possess a genuine, heartfelt *love* for people amounts to *nothing*, the Scripture states emphatically. The phrase **so as to remove mountains** is Pauline hyperbole² (also seen in verse 7) and intended to emphasize the conveyable meaning “to make what seems impossible possible.”³ You may already be a great leader or aspire to be one in American government—a man or woman of great *faith* who may be able to achieve what others deem impossible—but never forget that *loving* people is more important. Especially *love* those who have nothing to do with helping you to accomplish your leadership objectives. Don’t kid yourself into thinking that people don’t take notice of self-centeredness.

C. LOVE OVER SELF-SACRIFICE (13:3)

And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Most assuredly, a person who gives sacrificially of time, talent, and treasure is to be exalted above the those who do not. But in comparison to *love*, sacrificial qualities are of lesser significance. In fact, a life of personal sacrifice for whatever objectives wanes in comparison to a life of loving others. The individual who lacks *love* is woefully deficient.

VERSE OF THE WEEK



1 Corinthians 13

Read 1 Corinthians 13



May you conscientiously and regularly cultivate the habitual traits of Christ’s unending love in your personhood!





Continued from page 2

“Okay, where do I sign up!” said one man immediately after realizing that government officials whose decisions impact our lives are perhaps one of the most neglected mission fields in our nation today. Another man visited our booth early in the morning and said he had spent a sleepless night sensing that God was calling him to lead weekly Bible studies to politicians.



Some 400 people visited our booth and received our book, *All in Authority, Reigniting the Bible’s Top-Down Missions strategy* which provides the biblical exegesis for ministering to political leaders. They also received ministry brochures, in-depth Bible studies that were written specifically for political leaders, and many signed up to learn more about leading Local

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“Love is the indispensable addition which alone gives worth to all other Christian gifts.”⁴

Lord, help us to get this—to work on being more loving!

Life in the capital, in the community, or in the home without *love* is *nothing* (*oudeis*), which means “nothing at all.” How are you doing as a preeminently loving person—a *lover* of people and especially your spouse if you are married?

What follows the essentiality of *love* in the inspired mind of the Apostle Paul are the biblically-objective indications of *love*, and they should help to answer the question “Am I a loving person?” The biblical objective supersedes analyzing subjective feelings that may or may not accurately reflect one’s real *love* quotient.

III. THE ELEMENTS OF LOVE (1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7)

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

After first stating for openers what *love* is—*love is patient* and *kind*—Paul then describes the characteristic elements of *love’s* non-existence. The following seven descriptors on this inspired-by-God passage list what *love is not*. Sometimes the best way to describe what something is by stating what it’s not.

After briefly examining and defining all of these virtues in 1 Corinthians 13, I want to review Colossians 3:12-14 for additional insights relative to the emotional aspects of *love* in order to round out the

study because *love* is emotive as well. (However, I want to be careful not to get the cart before the horse.)

Keep in mind that emotions, both good and bad, always stem from a person’s thinking, both proper and improper.

Given our cultural misunderstanding of *love*, it is essential to approach and teach on *love* in this order: 1 Corinthians 13 before Colossians 3.

A. LOVE IS PATIENT (MAKROTHUMEO)

Patient literally means “suffers long.” This first characteristic is the ability to be taken advantage of by a person many times and not be upset. The root word means “to persevere.” James uses this same Greek word in describing the attitudinal response of the prophets of old whose words went unheeded by their peers (cf. James 5:8). Program your mind with Philippians 1:6:

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

The truth of this passage will help sober you to the fact that God is not through sanctifying the other person—nor is He through sanctifying me! So be *patient*, not condemning and judgmental! Remember too that since Christ forgave your sins—past, present and future—you must find room in your heart to forgive others who have wronged you. To be longsuffering and *patient* with another person’s shortcomings is to be categorically loving!

B. LOVE IS KIND (CHRESTEUOMAI)

The counterpart to *patience* is *kindness*. The Greek word means “to show oneself



mild.” This characteristic willingly forgives vengeance and gives gentleness to others, including his or her enemies. The Greek root means “one desires and works for another’s welfare.” Kindness embodies the idea of good will, generous responses and actions in contradistinction to holding onto past bad memories and thence being bothered by another in the future, i.e., “He or she gets on my nerves.”

C. LOVE IS NOT JEALOUS
(ZELOO)

Literally the root means “earnestly desire.” Contextually, *jealousy* is similar to covetousness as it is used in this passage, carrying the idea of envy. Jealousy is a desire to have what another possesses as well as fearing that someone will take what you have. To the contrary:

Scripture commands us not to want what another possesses but rather to give to others what we possess.

We are to *Rejoice with those who rejoice...* (Romans 12:15). Choose to be glad for those who have—be they more talented, successful, popular, or beautiful—versus being *jealous* or envious.

Are you the biggest cheerleader of your spouse, children, grandchildren, and colleagues?

D. LOVE DOES NOT BRAG
(PERPEREUOMAI)

Literally, brag means “to talk conceitedly.” The mature in Christ have forgotten about self-importance. They center on others—not self. Proverbs 27:2 states:

Let another praise you and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.

Furthermore, be characterized by asking sincere questions of others, i.e., cultivate

personal curiosity while talking little about self. Don’t be quick to add your personal stories to every conversation in the crowds in which you circulate. Everyone already gets the point; they don’t need to hear your long-winded illustration that includes individuals about whom they know nothing. Spending your time asking questions of others and giving short answers when asked a question is far better. *Love does not brag.*

When joining a conversation, think, “What can I learn from this person?” versus “What can I tell them about me?”

E. LOVE IS NOT ARROGANT
(PHUSIOO)

The word *arrogant* literally means “to puff or blow up.” The missionary, William Carey, who translated the Bible into 34 languages, was once belittled at a banquet. An arrogant man said to him, “Mr. Carey, I understand that you were once a shoemaker.”

Carey replied, “I was not a shoemaker, only a shoe repairman!”

Strive to be big-hearted, not big-headed. Make it a habit to deemphasize self in the presence of others. Proverbs 16:18 states:

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

Reciprocally, keep in mind James 4:6:

God...gives grace to the humble.

F. LOVE DOES NOT ACT UNBECOMINGLY
(ASCHEMONEO)

This characteristic describes someone who cares so little for those around him that he acts without proper decorum for

the occasion; he acts rudely or impolitely and perhaps even in a crude manner.

Work always on showing sensitivity for others. Always display respect for another regardless of the person’s position or ability to assist in your objectives.

G. LOVE DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN
(ZETEO HEAUTOU)

Jesus *did not come to be served, but to serve...* (Matthew 20:28). Be occupied with others’ needs—not yours. Philippians 2:3 states:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.

Herein is boilerplate Christianity! Are the objectives of your spouse or your colleagues more important to you than your own?

What will you do by way of time, talent, and treasure for your spouse or colleague that will spell out to her or him in no unmistakable actions that you cherish her or him above yourself.

One of the measurable aspects of *love* is not seeking your self-interests continually. Coach John Wooden stressed adopting the daily habit of doing a kind deed for someone who in no way could recompense the person. That habit is an excellent one because it keeps reminding us of this truth: *love does not seek its own.*

H. LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED
(PAROXUNO)

Literally, *provoke* means “to irritate, arouse to anger.” *Love* guards against being upset, irritated or angered.



Continued from page 2

Government Ministries (LGM) Bible studies to public servants.

Twenty of the four book sets of *Oaks in Office: Biblical Essays for Political Leaders* (OIO) were given to those who showed a strong interest in partnering with us. OIO is the curriculum for LGM Bible studies. “Capitol Ministries has been building Bible studies to political leaders in the U.S. and around the world since 1996, but with our nation’s steady deterioration, we need more partners to establish more ministries to city and county public servants at the grass-roots local level of government,” said Ralph Drollinger, President and Founder of CapMin. “That’s why we are participating in SBC and other pastor conferences throughout this year—to explain our mission and partner with like-minded Christians to change hearts one at a time for Jesus Christ.”

Manning the CapMin booth during the four-day event were ministry leaders and their wives, Cheyne and Misty Day (Oklahoma), Brian and Mandi Hanson (Ohio), and Keith and Brenda Hill (LGM, Texas) who talked with interested people, explained our mission, and distributed resources. “We came away with 100 strong leads from across 20 different states from east coast to west coast, including some who were interested in leading Bible studies to state leaders,” said Cheyne.

Remember, *love* is kind. People who are intent on having their own way are easily *provoked* when denied what they want.⁵

I. LOVE DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A WRONG SUFFERED (LOGIZOMAI)

The Greek has the idea of not “ledgering” the *wrongs* someone has done and keeping a log. To the contrary,

An important early church father, Chrysostom, remarked that a wrong done against love is like a spark that falls into the sea and is extinguished forever.

The famous saying, “Don’t get mad, get even,” illustrates the opposite idea to Paul’s intent in this passage. If you are a Christian, your response must be to forgive and forget. Do not engender in yourself a memory akin to that of an elephant. Praise God He takes not into consideration our past sin! When a person tightly clasps the virtue of Christ’s forgiveness, he is enabled to forsake the bondage of bitterness. Don’t keep a **log**; it is not *loving*. Paul, who was more ill-treated than you or I will ever be, declared, *forgetting what lies behind...* (Philippians 3:13b). Can the same be said of you? Do you instead *press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 3:14)?

J. LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS (ADIKIA)

Isaiah warns, *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil...* (5:20). Sacrificing *truth* is not loving. The presence of sin in another person should not be applauded. For sure, the biblical concept of *love* is not emotional sentimentality devoid of truth.

K. LOVE REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH (ALETHEIA)

Love cares that what another believes is *truthful*. Allowing another to be hurt by lies is not *loving*. What an individual believes (and then acts upon) is determinative to personal, familial, and national destinies. Therefore, *love* does not *rejoice* with erroneous thinking.⁶

The following remaining four elements of *love* are stated in a literary device known as hyperbole, i.e., exaggeration in order to make a strong point. (See endnote 2.) The repetition of the phrase *all things* therefore relates to *all things* within the confines of God’s righteousness, will and tolerance.

L. LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS (STEGO)

Literally, the word *bears* means “to cover.” *Love covers a multitude of sins* (Proverbs 10:12b; cf. 1 Peter 4:8).

You can measure your love for another by how quickly you are willing and apt to forgive and forget, to move on relative to another’s faults.

God’s nature, and hopefully the believer’s actions, must emulate God’s revealed character in Psalm 103:12:

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Accordingly, in order for us to be as loving as Jesus expects us to be requires our being forgiving and forgetful.

M. LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS (PISTEVO)

Love trusts and is confident, without suspicion or cynicism. Even after past hurts



for having trusted, *love* still trusts. Keep taking risks in your relationships! Far better to trust and be hurt again than to end up living life alone and bitter.

N. LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS
(ELPIZO)

Hope literally means “to anticipate with pleasure.” Jesus did not take Peter’s failure as final. The believer continues to *hope* that sinners will someday turn from their sin and that believers will someday mature in Christlikeness, for to lose *hope* is equivalent to losing *love*. Again, and similar to the virtue of *patience*, *I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus*, stated Paul in Philippians 1:6. Remember, as long as God’s grace remains operational in this world, human failure is never final. People do learn from their mistakes; *hope* for the best in a person relative to his or her future. To carry in you such an optimistic attitude toward others is to be *loving*!

O. LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS
(HUPOMENO)

This Greek word was used in reference to an army that held its position no matter what the cost! *Love* holds fast to the one it *loves*, standing against all opposition. *Love* remains loyal—even when the object of *love* is less than perfect.

Though these fifteen virtues may seem somewhat mechanical, they will however produce the emotions of love that are critically important to every human being and necessary to tying us together for the long run!

Keep in mind, theologically speaking, all of these attributes of *love* already and

completely exist in the life of the child of God per Colossians 2:10a, *and in Him you have been made complete*. The believer is made positionally perfect before God at the point of salvation. How well a person responds to his new God-given, loving positional perfection in his everyday practice is a matter of obedience. All that explanation is to say this: no believer can rightfully reason, “I am just not a very loving person.” All believers are perfect in their love: how obedient you are to your new nature in Christ is the more appropriate self-analysis.

IV. THE EXUBERANCE OF LOVE

Colossians 3:12–14 speaks to the passions of *love*:

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

In light of all the perfect and sacrificial *love* Jesus Christ has displayed to and for the world (John 3:16), God expects nothing less in response from His followers.

The phrase, *heart of compassion* (*splagchnon oiktirmos*) speaks of the seat of emotions. These elements that follow in this passage are very similar to those previously listed in 1 Corinthians 13 but are listed in Colossians in the context of having a heart of compassion.

God’s exuberant, supernatural love is poured out via the indwelling Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Again, and importantly, all of the elements of *love* presently exist in the believer’s heart (cf. Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 2:10; 2 Peter 1:3–4). It isn’t a matter of gaining these attributes; it is a matter of taking ownership and using them!

The *essential*, *elemental*, and *exuberant* aspects of *love*, as listed in 1 Corinthians and Colossians, are all characteristic ingredients of the truly redeemed, and these attributes should naturally flow forth in and from the life of every Spirit-filled follower of Christ!

V. THE ETERNITY OF LOVE

I want to address the closing passages on *love* as found in 1 Corinthians 13.

A. LOVE NEVER FAILS

Love is permanent. It is an attribute of God, which means it never withers or decays. It is not as if Love is important to one generation and not to another.

The believer should view this permanence of *love* as a communicable attribute from God. *Love* is to be present and active in the life of every believer at all times and in every generation. Likened to Jesus we need to possess eternal, unfailing, ever-present *love*! *Agapé love* is part of the believer’s very nature!

May these virtues be increasingly unfolding in your life! May you conscientiously and regularly cultivate the habitual traits of Christ’s unending *love* in your personhood!

The 1 Corinthians 13 passages go on to contrast the importance of *love* with the spiritual gifts in the body of Christ (another study with a great deal of complexity).



May God help you to put on the very nature every believer already possesses: the *essential, elemental, exuberant* and *eternal* aspects of *love*. Amen!



Making Disciples of Jesus Christ in the Political Arena Throughout the World



Capitol Ministries provides Bible studies, evangelism, and discipleship to political leaders. Founded in 1996, Capitol Ministries has started ongoing ministries in more than forty U.S. state Capitols and dozens of foreign federal Capitols.

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- 1. David Prior, The Message of 1 Corinthians, The Bible Speaks Today Series (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 1985). 229–30.
2. In the literary genre of Scripture, as in the best of writing today, various figurative devices are inculcated to communicate both effectively and artfully. These devices would include the use of simile, allegory, ellipsis, metaphor, paradox, irony, euphemisms, etc. In 1 Corinthians 13:2 and 7, Paul uses the figurative device of hyperbole. In ancient times, the people of the Middle East used intensified exaggerated expressions to convey a thought with more force. An additional example would be what the Apostle John states in his gospel about the life of Christ: "I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written" (21:25). [cf. E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible (London: Messrs. Eyre, and Spottiswoode, 1889), 171ff.] Such insights defy a wooden literalistic approach (of which Evangelicals are often falsely accused) to biblical interpretation/hermeneutics.
3. H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, 1922–1928, As quoted in C. K. Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, The Black's New Testament Commentary Series (London: Hendrickson Publishers, 1968), 301.
4. Ibid, 303. This quote in its tightest context relates to the point of chapter 13 in comparison to chapters 12 and 14. The application of the quote is nonetheless an appropriate capstone as used in the placement of these notes.
5. The exception to not being provocative is when a person maligns or contradicts God's Word. Being provoked over such is akin to righteous indignation.
6. Herein biblical Christianity conflicts with Postmodernism in that the Christian faith is based upon perspicuous moral absolutes as explicated in and through propositional truth, i.e., infallible and inerrant biblical revelation.