Pastor Rick Baker

Jan 10, 2016

***The Most Excellent Way***

(1 Cor 13)

The centerpiece of Christian virtues is God’s kind of love

The AGAPE way!

Primarily an action and not a feeling

* an unconditional commitment
* a promise never broken

**1. Agape (love) is more important than even the greater gifts because love is eternal**

(13:1-8a).

Love trumps your favourite gift, the greater gifts, and the most costly charity.

Love is not a spiritual gift; it is fruit of the Spirit and it superintends the use of impactful gifts. (Gal 5:22)

“In love we take God’s side, share his outlook and implement his designs; and we treat our neighbours as we know God has treated us (see Rom 15:1-7)” (Martin)

How loving are you…? WHAT’S YOUR LQ?

* Patient – put up with anything
* Kind – give anything
* Not envious – cheer everyone
* Not boastful – make others feel bigger
* Not proud – full of Spirit; not yourself (1 Cor. 4:6-8)
* Not rude – care for everything
* Not self-seeking – me second, third…
* Not easily angered – low boiling point
* No record of wrongs – love allows unloving another chance
* No delighting in evil – hoping everyone does right
* Rejoice in the truth – love limited by truth
* Bear all things – keep messes to a minimum
* Believe all things – optimistic toward people
* Hope all things – believe broken can become whole
* Endure all things – love doesn’t give up no matter what

 /15

**Love lasts!**

**2. On the other hand, gifts are imperfect and temporary, exercised by the imperfect within the temporary** (13:8b-12).

* Be careful that you don’t boycott the value of gifts exercised by those whose love and giftedness is imperfect.

 – We know in part
 – When I was a child

* Be careful and cautious to not elevate the imperfection of exercising gifts above the perfection of Scripture.

 – A poor reflection
 – We see face to book!

* Be aware that the perfect and permanent are on the way when Christ returns.

 – When the perfect comes, the imperfect disappears
 –We will see face to face!

**3. When the imperfect disappears and the perfect comes, faith hope and love will remain.** (13:13).

* Love although imperfectly represented, does not end – nor do faith and hope (belief in Jesus; enduring anticipation of good things)
* Love is greatest because unlike faith and hope, it is the nature of God himself – God is love.

To which do you give more of your time and attention, Gifts or Love?