

UNDERSTANDING THE LOVE OF GOD SERIES

LOVE PERFECTS OPERATION

Paul speaks in I Cor.13 the first few verses he speaks about the operation of gifts. So I want you to see that he was not just talking about love, he was talking about love in reference to the function of the gifts and the ministries. He says in verse 1-3 *“Though I speak with the tongues of man and of the angels.”* That’s lovely, very few people speak angelic tongues. Most of us speak the tongues of man. When we speak forth in the tongues of angels, let me tell you the language of the angels and the heavenly language has a melodious tune to it. It sounds a lot like singing in the Spirit while they were speaking. Our earthly language cannot compare to the heavenly language that God has designed to operate in eternity. So Paul says that even though we may speak with tongues of man and of angels, if we have not love, what do we become? A clanging cymbal. In other words, you will be nothing more than a tin can. You will be nothing more than what Kenneth Hagin says a donkey braying at midnight in a tin barn. A lot of sounds, a lot of noise but they are empty. Isn’t it amazing? Paul says if the gifts operate without love they are empty. Lets consider that for a moment. If the gifts are from God, why are they empty? The gifts have to be from God. Speaking in the tongues of man and angels has to be a gift from God. You see the key here people must pay attention to is that as long as there is no love, your gift does not edify. That means it’s possible to operate a genuine gift that came from God. He never said that their gift was not from God. But he said that the operation of their gift must be within the love context. Without love it is nothing. The amount of edification power the gift carries is nil.

The next verse speaks about faith. *“Though I have the gift of prophesy and understand all mysteries and all the knowledge and I have all faith so that I could remove mountains,*

power gift operating, but have not love, I am nothing."

See in verse 1 he speaks about the vocal gift and then he speaks about prophesy in verse 2 using prophesy in a general manner. Usually it refers to the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and discernment of spirits. In the Old Testament they operate the word of wisdom. They prophesied and predicted Christ's coming. They called that prophecy but we all know that it is word of wisdom, a revelation of the future. But the word prophesy is used generally when it speaks about the spoken word of wisdom or word of knowledge. So Paul was using the revelation aspect. He says you can understand all mysteries; you can have all knowledge, the revelation gifts, and the power gifts. The first of the power gifts is faith, to move all mountains. He says mountains. You can have the vocal gifts, you can have the revelation gifts and you can have the power gifts operating in your life, if you don't develop love you are nothing. So you understand why we have to teach a series on love. If people do not understand love all that they have amount to nothing. All the effort is wasted. All the work and the yielding to operate the gifts become nothing. See love is important. Love will cause the gifts to have an effect, a life changing quality in its results. This is what love does. Love brings forth perfection of the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our life. Without that it is a waste of time and a waste of effort. Genuine gifts become empty. So when you operate the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life, it has to flow from a heart filled with the love of God.

Lets examine this very closely. We human beings are very funny. We are all very self-conscious and original sin in our flesh always makes us self-centered. In the natural world the opposite of love is hate but in the Bible the opposite of love is self. It says love seek not its own. To be selfish is to be unloving. To be selfless is the love of God, the agape love of God. The reason why the gifts do not produce an impact when we don't operate in love is that we forget the purpose for the gifts. See many times we look at the gifts by themselves per se. But when we lose the purpose the whole thing is gone. When you get into your car, we ask you where you are going. You have to know where you are going. Nobody gets into their means of transport and then says I don't know where I am going. You don't get into a bus and the conductor asks you where are you going and you say, I don't know. Then why are you here? I don't know. Who are you? I don't know. See we have to know the direction. Otherwise your journey will become a wilderness.

You might as well join the Israelites and go round and round for forty years.

The purpose behind the operation of the gifts is to build another person. It's to edify them. It is to impart grace into their lives. It is to help them to walk a closer walk with God. Encourage them in areas they are discouraged. Lift them up in needs of their lives. So to keep to the purpose is important. Do you know if you don't have a purpose in life, you become a lazy bum? You become demotivated and you don't have something that makes you keep going all the time. People without a purpose in life usually commit suicide. It's the purpose in life that that keeps us going when we discern the will of God in our life.

In the same way love gives purpose to the gifts. Love brings the perfect operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in both the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit and the fivefold ministry. You may be called to be pastor, teacher, evangelist, prophet or apostle but if you don't operate in the love of God, all your doing will come to nothing in the end. Isn't that a dangerous thought? Living for twenty years and then comes out with nothing. Not only nothing here but also nothing in heaven. Unless we operate in the love of God, all we do in this life are wasted. Isn't that a frightening thought? An awesome thought to know that you have lived and died without living in love is a dangerous thing. Because up there you will be found naked, not in our natural tern today, Paul used that word in I Cor.3 he says when you go up there, everything that is done in the flesh, everything that is not done in love is burned up. And only what is done in love remain. That's an awesome thought. So we better develop love in our life because without love we are nothing. We must have all the love of God to flow in our life and our ministries.

I John 4 Love bring perfection to the operation of the gifts and ministries in our life. Love perfects a person. I John 4: 12 *"No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us."* Love will perfect your life. We have seen how that our vertical relationship with God is measured by our horizontal relationship with our fellow men in I John 4 towards the last verse. In verse 21 *"This commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."* In other words, we don't care how much you say you love God, your love for God is measured by your love for your brother. Your vertical relationship is measured by your horizontal relationship. Love is not just a

philosophical idea or feeling. It is a practical aspect of seeking or edifying another. So here in I John 4: 12 it says that as we love each other, as we reach our hand out to love another, we love with the love of God.

Last week we talked about love suffers. Understanding the suffering of Christ is love. Paul also suffered when he love. He paid a price when he love and when we keep loving others and when we keep denying ourselves and loving other, it says love is perfected in us. Not just ordinary love. His love is perfected in us. And I John 4 is the only place where you will find this powerful verse that says in verse 17 *"Because as He is, so are we in this world."* There is no more powerful verse than that. That says as Jesus was in the world, so you are in the world. You are like Christ and the only way we can be like Christ is to learn to be like Him in love. When you are like Christ in love, you will be like Christ in power. Ever since I was born again I was always hungry for revival. I am not satisfied with a Christianity that sits in the pew. That does not change life. That does not change the world around me. And this hunger had driven me to pray and to fast and to seek God's face for the power that will change this world and through the years God has shown that unless we know the heart of God, we will never know the hand of God. God's hand represents His power. His right hand represents the ultimate of His power. When in Acts 4 the church prayed saying, *O Lord, look at what they are doing to the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant us boldness by stretching forth thy hand that signs and wonders may be done in the name of your holy Child Jesus.* See the hands of God symbolize signs and wonders. And God spoke those words to me and said, "Son, if you want to know My hand, learn to know My heart of love."

Many people like to be like Jesus and have power, they want that but they don't realize that the key to the power is through love. Learning to love one another. When we love one another, it says that His love is perfected in us. How is this love perfected in us? He describes in verse 18 *"There is no fear in love."* That is a fantastic statement. Our world lives in fear. Look at the TV fear is there. Look at the newspapers fear is there. You go out into the world you find they have fear. This whole world is ruled by fear. Why is that so? The Bible already showed that in Hebrew 2: 14 the devil rule the world by fear. The Bible says that the devil is the god of this world. That is in II Cor.4 and then in Hebrew 2 it says that through fear the devil holds all men in bondage. So fear has to do with the domain of the enemy, the domain of the devil. Hebrew 2: 14-15 talks about the devil holding all

men in the bondage of fear. The fear of death and all the other fears are involved in that one word fear. Fear of the future, fear of heights, fear of water, fear of rats. Fear rules our present world. When John says there is no fear in love, he is pointing to a possibility, he is pointing to a realm. He is pointing to a place call the kingdom of God where no fear can rule. No fear is present. And that is the realm of love. We know that the opposite of faith is fear. So when we have faith we eradicate fear. If there is faith there is no fear. And if there is love, there is no fear. Therefore faith and love are related. You cannot separate them. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Roman 10: 17 but the faith to believe that His word is His word comes from love. If you love God, everything He says is accepted. You will do what God tell you. You won't question Him. You will accept what He says. For example, if you love someone and someone says, "Please meet me in town" you will take a bus and go meet him. "Lets meet at 12.30pm." You are not going to say, "Are you sure? I don't know I can trust your word or not. I don't know I can believe you or not." Maybe if it is someone whom you do not know, you may find it more difficult. But if it's someone you love, you trust and he/she say I am going to do this for you, you would believe it, without questioning. See the ability to believe His word is derived from love. The more love you have for God, the more love you have for believers and love perfects you. Perfect love produces perfect faith. We want to move to a realm where we operate in perfect faith. That is where we would see a hundred percent healing taking place in an evangelistic or healing service. In most evangelistic meeting or healing miracles service you will find that sometimes thirty percent got healed, sometimes 50%, 70% or 90%. It's very rare to have a meeting where you have everyone who comes gets healed. That is not God's perfect will. In Jesus healing services when He heals the Bible always record, they were all healed. What is demonstrated? Perfect faith. Everyone was healed. Remember it says as He is so are you. As Jesus is so am I in the world. Jesus had that kind of services. Gospel of Matthew records it many times and they were all healed.

In the book of Acts chapter 5, when the church in the book of Acts reached its peak of ministry, this statement was recorded in Acts 5: 12 *"And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men*

and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed." Do you know that is supposed to be a normal service? The time is coming when the body of Christ is going to recognize its position in God and the body of Christ is going to be like God in love. They will become like God in faith and it will become a common experience to have everyone who comes with a need touched by the presence of God. The key is love. There has been prophecy about the power of God being manifested. Prophecies all over the world where I traveled, I hear people prophesied about the body of Christ - the fivefold ministries being raised up, all the gifts of the Spirit being manifested, the power, the revival, the glory. Let me tell you, it has to come from love. It starts with your heart, a heart of love. Before Jesus came down on this planet earth, love was working in His heart. Love was working in the Father's heart. By the time He steps out with power, His love was flowing. Which came first, love or power? It's love. See love came first then the power. God so loved, then He gave. Jesus loved, then He died.

Remember those times when people came for healing? Gospel of Matthew records and He was filled with compassion. In your life, you want to operate the power usefully. What do I mean by usefully? That it edifies. Do you know you can have wild electricity, it will do you no good. Helps you to become charcoal. You try tapping on a lightning, its wild electricity flickering in the air. You try to have fire that is not controlled you will have wild fire. But when fire comes to your stove, it becomes beneficial.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit, unless they operate in love will not function the way God intended it to function. It's just like buying a petrol car and like putting kerosene in it. It's just like buying a beautiful tinted flower vase and then using it to keep your rubbish. Something is wrong. The gifts of the Spirit and the calling of God can only be brought forth by love, by the love of God in our lives. Develop love because love perfects your operations. Love will remove all fears from your life. All of us have been subject to fear because we have a past in original sin. And we were sinners. When we were born again, we were given a new Spirit but sometimes our un-renewed mind still carry a measure of fear. The only way to get all fear out of your life is begin to operate in love. As you begin to operate in love

something begins to take place within you. Fear starts disappearing. Look at the word carefully, it says in verse 14, *There is no fear in love but perfect love cast out all fear*. Why does the Bible use such a word as *cast out* like casting out demons? See love is a powerful force in the heart. Love not only slowly removes fears, love not only erases the fear, it cast out fear, and it gives fear the left foot of fellowship. When love comes fear goes. The love of God and the power of God are related.

II Timothy chapter one, when he talks about the Spirit of God, he talks about love. II Tim.1: 7 *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”* You see love and power go together. The Bible does not separate them. It's only human beings that separate love and power. Love and power come together because power is authority and with authority comes responsibility. To have responsibility you need to have love. You put an irresponsible guy and give him with authority, he will become like Hitler. See man cannot handle authority without love. Authority is given in proportion to love in the kingdom of God. In the world it may not be so. But in the kingdom of God, promotion comes when you develop love. You may be faithful as a one-talent evangelist, you could be within your town known as an evangelist. You perfect love in your life, God will perfect your ministry. You can become a five-talent evangelist and then as love develops in your life, God promotes you. See promotion does not come from the east or from the west or from the north or the south, but it comes from God. And God promotes according to love. Then you are in a position for a greater responsibility. If love brings a promotion then selfishness brings a demotion. It depends on you, whether you want to operate on love or operate on selfishness. Every time someone walks in self and self-centeredness, something begins to happen. It's like the pull of gravity on their life. It will pull them down because they are heavier now. But when you walk in love, the law of gravity, spiritual gravity of sin does not pull you down. You go upwards towards God because God is love. If God is love the more you live love, the more you allow love to perfect you, the closer you are to God. And there is nothing that can go higher than God. God is the highest. The more love you develop in your life the higher you go.

Love will promote you but watch out, no matter how high you get in the kingdom of God, the moment pride which is in the form of self comes in and you stop operating in love, you start operating on self. No matter how high you got, it will be down hill all the way. Remember Lucifer was high up. The moment he

stopped operating in love, he went down hill. We have given you a powerful key to get promotion from God.

Now there is nothing wrong with having spiritual goals because the Bible says we are all in a race. Hebrew 12 talks about a race that we all run. What kind of race? A friendly race where all of us seek to be the best in God. Run the race to be like God. Paul says in I Cor.14: 1 "*Desire is natural in itself.*" The desire to go high up with God is not wrong. It is only wrong when the desire is self. And the desire is separated from the love of God. Jesus says, you want to be great, no problem, that is my paraphrase version. John and James came and said we want to be at your right hand and your left hand. We want to be no.1 after you. According to my version, Jesus said no problem, learn to be servant and you will be there. In the Bible it says the greatest among you shall be a servant, a servant to all. So there is nothing wrong for the desire of greatness. The desire to be great is encouraged. But the desire to be great is pruned to be greatness to be like gods, to be like a servant to all. Love serves.

I Cor.14: 1 *Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts especially that you may prophesy.* See he does not discourage you from pursuing spiritual gifts. Why is it so? If you have no desire to speak in tongues you will never. If you don't have a desire to operate in the word of knowledge, you will never. There is nothing wrong with those desires but those desires must be pursued with love. Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts. Pursue go after it and you will be perfected in your life. All of us have an inherent desire to be perfect. That is born of God. The key to perfection is love. It's not power. It starts with love. When you have perfected love in your life, something began happening. The operation of the gifts become perfect, finely tuned. Perfection of love is contagious. It produces perfection of character. It produces perfection of ministry. It produces perfection of gifts and operation. It produces perfection of relationship. But it starts in the heart. Develop perfection in love and you will develop perfection in ministry.

I believe and I am very sure every one of you wants to perfectly in the gifts. When you operate the gifts of God, you want to be accurate. When God gives you a word you want to be exact. When you prophesy over someone you want to be exact. When you see a vision and you give a word of the vision you want to be precise.

Do you know that when the gifts of God operate perfectly, that's when the world began to see the signs and wonders? That's when the world becomes astonished. We do the signs they do the wondering. But as long as the gifts are not perfected, we will be trying to do the signs and they will be doing the mocking. It will be signs and mocking, not signs and wonders. When you operate perfectly in the gifts of God and the ministries of God, that's when the world will say something is happening. They will begin to come and ask. Then you can tell them it's Jesus and they will come to Jesus by the flocks and by the tribes.

The key to operation in perfect gifts and perfect ministries is perfect love. Lets be very practical that means it starts with your neighbor. Turn to the one next to you and say it starts in your home. It starts among those you know. That's the amazing thing about love. How my relationship with another one close to me can determine my ministry right up to the North Pole. It's amazing but there is a relationship there. The one who stay in the same roof with you is going to determine your power and impact. If your life and ministry whatever you do, wherever you go, if you don't correct that, it's going to be a hindrance in your life everywhere you go because you will be imperfect. As He is, so are you in the world. And the context starts with love.