

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

November 21, 2011

Series: Body Building

“The Most Excellent Way”

Ken Dryden

Sermon Summary:

Big Idea: There is something even greater than spiritual gifts: Love. It is the context for and measure of the gifts.

In three different places in I Corinthians Paul addresses the church there as being childish (infants) in their behavior (3:1-4; 13:11; 14:20). This lack of maturity was showing up in jealousy and factions and in the ways that they were using the gifts that God had given them. First Corinthians 13 is placed where it is for a reason - sandwiched between discussions of spiritual gifts in chapter 12 and 14. There were issues in the ways they were using the gifts and Paul needed to remind them that there is something more important - something that will last forever - LOVE. The gifts are important. Paul says to eagerly desire them, but they can become divisive or lose their power if we are not following “the way of love” (14:1).

Group Discussion Questions:

- I. Worship: Psalm 107:1 “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.”
Take some time to share what God has been doing in your lives, even if it seems small, or what you are thankful for. The leader may need to start in order to set the tone. Take some time afterward to thank and praise God and ask Him to guide your time together.
- II. Read I Corinthians 12:31b - 14:1a
- III. What stands out to you in this passage? Was there something that stood out to you on Sunday?
- IV. What does this passage teach you about God? What does it teach you about people?
- V. What do you learn from this passage about the place of spiritual gifts? How do we guard against the gifts becoming a source of division?

Note: there are some who have argued that I Cor. 13:8-10 teaches that certain gifts (tongues, prophecy, knowledge) were only for a time and are not available any more. There are very few Biblical scholars who take that view. Rather “when perfection comes” refers to the new heaven and earth where there will no longer be a need for the gifts. Until then the church

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needs all of the gifts of the Spirit. There may be questions about the gift of tongues in particular. Here is a helpful article by Jack Hayford that seeks to deal with some of the myths around this gift: <http://www.tgm.org/hayfordOnTongues.html>

VI. This chapter is very commonly used as a reading in weddings, even by those who do not know Christ. If this was the only passage in the Bible that you had, how would you explain the Gospel to someone who doesn't know Jesus?

Working it Out: How are your relationships with others in the Body of Christ? Are they characterized by love or by some of the attitudes and actions that Paul says love is not? What are you going to do about it?

Announcements:

Family Christmas Dinner: Sunday, Dec. 4 at 5 pm. Please encourage your group to participate by helping out and by bringing guests. Pray together for those you are intending to invite.

May God richly bless your time together as a group!