

The More Excellent Way

12:31 “...earnestly desire the higher gifts”

earnestly desire (zēloō): to have warmth of feeling either for or against, covet earnestly, to have desire, to be zealous for

14:1 Pursue love, and earnestly desire (zēloō) the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.
14:39 So, my brothers, earnestly desire (zēloō) to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

Higher (kreittōn): stronger, better, nobler, best

- In the assembled church, to desire to prophesy instead of to speak in tongues with no interpretation would be higher, better, nobler, and best.
 - This should be an earnest desire, and the more excellent way to bring our hearts to that will be by the most spiritual thing there is: **love**.

Love in Chapter 13 - It's All Greek to Me

Agape – a rare word in Greek literature, a common word in the New Testament
This is a grace love, an unearned love - not natural, but a love from the spirit.

Here, we are given 15 characteristics of this love

- In the Greek, all of these are verbs
 - The emphasis is on what love does
- Additionally, all of these are in the present continuous tense
 - This love is to become a constant

Verse 4a - Love is patient and kind

Patient (makrothymēō): long suffering, long enduring, patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others

Kind (chrēsteuomai): mild, gentle in demeanor, without harshness

Verses 4b-6 - Love is not envious, not boastful, not arrogant, not rude, not insisting on self-interests, not irritable, not resentful, not happy with evil.

Is envy a small sin?

Envy murdered Abel (**Genesis 4:3-8**)

Envy enslaved Joseph (**Genesis 37:11, 28**)

Envy put Jesus on the cross (**Matthew 27:18**)

Ephesians 4:15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Philippians 2:3b – 4 ...in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.



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Verse 7 – Love bears, Love believes, Love Hopes, Love Endures

1st Peter 4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

1st John 4:8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Verses 8 – 13 – Love will never pass away

- When the perfect creation comes, what we enjoy now (albeit partially) will pass away.
 - The need for tongues, prophecy, and revelations of knowledge will end in the new.
 - Then, all will be fully revealed and fully known
- Even faith and hope will no longer be needed
 - Now we walk by faith, not by sight, but then we will see him face to face
 - Now we hope until the end – but then we will be with him in new creation, forever
- Love is the greatest, because all else will fade - only love never ends

The 15 Characteristics of Love

Love is/Love does:

- #1 patient
- #2 kind
- #3 rejoice with the truth
- #4 bears all things
- #5 believes all things
- #6 hopes all things
- #7 endures all things

Love is not/does not:

- #8 envious
- #9 boastful
- #10 arrogant
- #11 rude
- #12 insist on its own way
- #13 irritable
- #14 resentful
- #15 rejoice at wrongdoing

Love never ends

