

**The Most Excellent Way
1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

**Russell Cook
West End Church of Christ
Knoxville, TN**

1. Sometimes it's hard for some who believe like Christians to behave like Christians.
 - a. **Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:2; Hebrews 12:14.**
2. What is the greatest need in the church today?
3. This morning we're going to look at what Paul calls the most excellent way. **(12:31)**

I. The Importance Of Love In Our Lives. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

- A. Paul first deals with their Emotions. Vs. 1, **"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."**
- B. Then, Paul addresses the Mind. Vs. 2, **"If I have the gift of prophecy and I can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, ...but have not love, I am nothing."**
- C. Third, Paul deals with our Faith. **"If I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." (13:2)**
- D. Fourthly, Paul addresses the Will. Vs. 3, **"If I give all I possess to the poor but have not love, I gain nothing."**
- E. Then he says love motivates our Sacrifice. Vs. 3, **"If I... surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."**

II. Paul's Definition of Love Is Action. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

- A. Paul describes love in terms of continued action.
- B. **There are seven positive categories.**
 1. **Love is patient, love is kind, rejoices with the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**
- C. **There are eight negative characteristics.**
 1. **Love is not jealous, does not brag, is not arrogant, is not rude, is not self-seeking, not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrong, does not delight in evil.**
- D. Summation - have you been acting out of love?

III. Lessons To Be Learned About Love.

- A. We need to love those who are close to us.
- B. We need to love those who are different from us.
- C. We need to love those with whom we don't agree.
- D. We need to love those who disagree with us.