



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The More Excellent Way

Tuesday, 1 July 2014

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CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

monthly (interim) schedule

*** 1st Tuesday of the month ***

TUESDAY, 1 JULY 2014

12 NOON in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission (Interim) Bible Studies are held the *first* Tuesday of every month at 12 Noon. The monthly Bible study is nonpartisan and nondenominational. We are currently studying First Corinthians, chapter-by-chapter, and verse-by-verse. I pray that this study will be edifying to you. I am here *solely* to serve you and to be a resource for prayer and counsel. Please accept my study in the Word of God, as evidence of my desire to serve you.

– Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission (Interim) Bible Study

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Tuesday, 1 July 2014

First Corinthians 13 – “The More Excellent Way”

Have you taken a family vacation this summer? If you drove to your destination, how did you decide which roads to take? I remember as a child that my father would lay a map on the table and use a yellow highlighter to designate our route. For the majority of the journey, my dad would select the safest and quickest roads, and also include a few scenic routes. Now, we simply enter the address in our GPS for the quickest route, and can easily modify the itinerary with an excursion, if there is the opportunity to see something historic or picturesque.

The majority of families will choose whatever they deem to be the best route. Certainly, there are many options for traveling from one place to another, yet most drivers take the opportunity to plan their journey, and then depart with the conviction that the best route has been selected. First Corinthians 13 continues the revelation concerning spiritual gifts; additionally, the section is an invitation to consider one's path. Perhaps you are traversing in a particular way and doing so with little concern for the path you are taking. First Corinthians invites us to examine our experience and to discern the most “excellent way” to use the spiritual gifts that God sovereignly dispenses to each and every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A LIFE OF EXCELLENCE

First Corinthians 13 is one of the more popular chapters in the Bible. The reason is that it contains the great love hymn, which is a favorite for children to memorize and for reading at wedding ceremonies. Nevertheless, it is important to understand 1 Corinthians 13 within its context because therein is the purpose of the chapter revealed.

First Corinthians 12:31 introduces the thirteenth chapter: “But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent

way.” Love is the most excellent way to use spiritual gifts. The initial verses persuasively articulate the truth that abilities and gifts are worthless without loving motivation and purpose. Included among the sacrificial deeds of verse 3 are the three gifts mentioned in verse 2. The three gifts that will not continue (13:8), which are useful when initiated and regulated by God's Word, are in contrast to the enduring nature of love. Jesus summarized all Scripture and all God's commandments as loving God with all one's being, in addition to loving one's neighbor as yourself (Matt 22:39). Therefore, not to have love is to be “nothing” (1 Cor 13:2), and without love, “it profits [you] nothing” (13:3). Galatians 6:3 reads similarly, “For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”

God's Word is in contrast to those who believe themselves to be “wonderful” because they possess infinite worth as a human being (*and thus live without regard for their actions and words*). As those uniquely created “in the image of God,” every human being possesses dignity, and yet a considerable segment of the population could be regarded – by God – as “nothing” because they “do not have love.”

WE ARE WISE TO RECOGNIZE THAT FEW THINGS THAT ARE WORTHWHILE CAN BE ACHIEVED EASILY AND QUICKLY.

Is it possible to affirm that a considerable number lack the kind of love described in 1 Corinthians 13? Scripture answers that many are traveling the broad way (cf. Matt 7:13-14). Only those who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit have the love of God outpoured within their hearts (cf. Rom 5:5). The love of God is the work of the Holy Spirit, and thus gives glory to the Lord. The Bible confronts the proud.

Matthew 7:13-14 – “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. “For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

The description of love in verse 4-7 is immensely edifying. We live today in an era of instant gratification, thus there is a plethora of lack of patience. Nevertheless, enduring change necessitates patience (and time). Human nature is such that we often quit when things do not occur according to our expectations. We are wise to recognize that few things that are worthwhile can be achieved easily and quickly. Impatience can lead to tremendous difficulties when anxious persons are unwilling to grant others the adequate time and help to change. Impatience is (fundamentally) what occurs when love is lacking.

Love is “kind *and* is not jealous,” which means love is not cruel to others. Lack of kindness is the opposite of love. Moreover, love is opposed to a threatening coercion (i.e. an “iron fist”); rather, it uses gentle but effective persuasion (i.e. a “velvet glove”). Love trusts others and is not suspicious that others may betray one's self; love learns to grant freedom to others and resists the tendency to regard the actions of others in a negative capacity.

Capitol Commission (Interim) Bible Study

1st Tuesdays (monthly) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP

Capitol Commission Georgia

The More Excellent Way

“Love does not brag *and* is not arrogant.” Braggarts seek to benefit themselves by sharing their achievements and possessions in such a way that diminishes others. Humility characterizes those who love by avoiding the natural tendency to boast regarding achievements and abilities. Moreover, love removes the emphasis upon self that would lead one to even prioritize one’s natural impulse without regard for someone else.

LOVE WOULD NEVER PERJURE ONESELF. . . .

Love “does not act unbecomingly.” The words spoken to others and the actions toward someone else are all becomingly (cf. the usage of the Greek word *kalōs*, which also can be translated as “act virtuously,” “rightly,” “suitable,” “to do well,” in 1 Cor 7:37; 14:17; Gal 4:17; 5:7; Phil 4:14). Love stimulates consideration for the other person; it is a concern for how one interacts with another. Love avoids anything dishonorable – in action or speech – from a relationship.

Love “does not seek it own.” A self-centered life manifests itself through boasting, bragging, impatience, and unkindness; it is truly unbecoming. The prevailing mentality within today’s culture is to prioritize self. The problem with justifying self-interest is that people become focused upon gratifying self in such a manner that they care little for others or how actions and words may affect someone else.

Loving people are selfless individuals. Those who are self-oriented are easily agitated; they become annoyed if they do not receive all attention and irritated when they are given notice. The reason for such annoyance is because one’s thoughts were not immediately perceived and thus all was not accomplished in accordance with the individual’s desires. Every little thing is agitating because (in some manner or another) the focus of attention is not (as the self-oriented person desires) continually upon him or her. God expects his people to become ever more loving to others.

Love “does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,” it does not become resentful by either recording or remembering an offense. One of the fundamental faults of self-oriented human nature is to continually mention and contrive another’s actions against them in an aggressive, competitive, or defiant manner. Love, however, seeks reconciliation by means of forgiveness, and understands that once a matter is forgiven, it may not be used in a begrudging or vengeful manner (cf. Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60; 2 Cor 2:6-7; Gal 6:1).

Love “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.” Unlike many today who would seek financial benefit from another – either justly or unjustly – love happily agrees with the truth and rejoices when justice is accomplished. Love would never perjure oneself to obtain a lucrative settlement. Furthermore, whenever it is possible and without obstructing justice, love “bears all things.” Love refuses gossip and slander. Although sorrowful, love sometimes (for biblical reasons) must relate someone’s sinful activity to another, but rejoices when such issues can be addressed as discreetly as possible.

Whenever there is doubt, love “believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” Love always thinks the best concerning someone else, and unless there is substantive evidence to the contrary, grants individuals the benefit of the doubt. Love “believes and hopes” that a rational explanation is not a mere rationalization. The Bible encourages believers to persevere in living the Christian life (cf. 1 John 5:2-5), and it is also necessary to persist in love for others. The extent and the resolve of Christ’s love is the standard for us. To become the individuals that God would have us to be, we must each work to see each of these qualities of love evident in our own lives.

Christian love is the “still more excellent way” because it is absolutely permanent. Love will remain when all the other spiritual gifts – represented by prophecy, tongues, and knowledge – are gone (1 Cor 13:8). Even at their best, our lives abound with imperfections.

In some ways, we are like children, or like people who see only poor reflections in a mirror (13:9-12). However, the life of love leads to the day when all those imperfections will be no more, and then we will see “face to face” and “know fully” (13:12). Spiritual immaturity is characterized by a lack of love and imperfect judgment; however, when we achieve maturity, then our previously incorrect assumptions and mistaken conclusions will be no more.

TO BECOME THE INDIVIDUALS THAT GOD WOULD HAVE US TO BE, WE MUST EACH WORK TO SEE EACH OF THESE QUALITIES OF LOVE EVIDENT IN OUR OWN LIVES.

First Corinthians 13 reminds us that love is the greatest of all spiritual gifts. Faith and hope are wonderful, yet they are forbidding and unfeeling virtues without love. Love is absolutely supreme because it is similar to a fire that kindles faith and a light that brightens hope (13:13).

What is the significance of this Bible study for the Capitol community? The relevance is that we have the completed revelation from God in Scripture, and thus we have all we need to know regarding humanity. The proper study of humanity is not psychologically and sociologically examining other’s actions and words; rather, the better way is the study of the Holy Bible. One may completely understand self (and others) by means of God’s absolute revelation in the Bible, and also know how to live a life by God’s grace and that is pleasing to Him.

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the honor to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission state ministers teach ongoing verse-by-verse Bible studies for the entire Capitol community, and also meet personally with many government leaders (and their staff) to proclaim God’s grace in salvation, to encourage our leaders, pray with them, and provide biblical counsel. Capitol Commission is a charitable and religious nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Capitol Commission is supported by the generous gifts of businesses, churches, and individuals. Capitol Commission is not state-funded; rather, those with a heart for the Capitol community fund it.

Please join us in this ministry!

**NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION (INTERIM) BIBLE STUDY:
TUESDAY, 5 AUGUST @ 12 NOON in 123 CAP
(always the 1st Tuesday of each month, during interim)**



Enhancing Trust