

GOOD NEWS
for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#45)
In pursuit of the "greater." (Part 2)

Greatness

A Spirit-led focus on greatness!

In *all* of life, we should have a focus that goes *far beyond* what the sinful world offers us!

Being in pursuit of the **GREATER** things...
NOT preoccupied with **SECONDARY** things!

THE SPIRIT DOES SOME THINGS THAT ARE OPTIONAL IN THE LIFE OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS!

- We have described them as "**SECONDARY**" works of the Spirit.
- Many are intended to point to something *more significant*.
- The Holy Spirit can do them – or *not* do them – as he pleases... but we are *not* told to pursue them.
- Not all of Jesus' followers will experience them.

✓ We could describe these things as "good" or "great"... but not our main pursuit or goal.

THE SPIRIT DOES SOME THINGS THAT ARE REQUIREMENTS IN THE LIFE OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS!

- We have described them as "**PRIMARY**" works of the Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit does them in Jesus' followers ... and *we are obligated to pursue them*.
- In some issues, such as GIFTS, Jesus' followers will experience *some* of them, but not *all*.

✓ We could describe these things as "great," "greater," or "greatest"... and they are intended to be our main pursuit or goal.

PART 2:
The pursuit for greatness!

Focusing on the *primary* works of the Spirit.

(In **PART 1**, we looked at the *secondary* works of the Spirit.)

The Holy Spirit does many wonderful things in a saved person's life!

He makes it possible for us to...

- ... grow in our salvation.
- ... have the moral virtues that come from the Spirit.
- ... have (and use) various abilities for building-up others.
- ... speak the truth of God's Word.
- ... and so much more!

For the most part,* these are *primary* works of the Spirit. In most cases, we are told to *pursue* or *grow* in them.

* (Some "gifts of the Spirit" – 1 Corinthians 12 – are *secondary* in nature.)

★ Do you want to pursue greatness? ★

**START WITH
THE #1 GREATEST!**

**IF YOU WANT TO PURSUE GREATNESS,
YOUR #1 GREATEST PRIORITY WILL BE ...**

The pursuit of "1 Corinthians 13" LOVE.

- It is the greatest of the moral virtues – the "fruit of the Spirit" – and it influences how the other virtues are expressed.
- It is the foundation that gives value and significance to the "gifts of the Spirit" – the various abilities God has given us, for building each other up.

★ Do you want to pursue greatness? There are three things that will endure—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.
1 Cor. 13:13 (NLT)

HOW GREAT IS LOVE?

- It's the #1 moral obligation for every human being.
- It is the #1 moral character quality that the Spirit puts in the life of a saved person.

★ Here, we have GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY and HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY working together (as they always do)! ★

Together, they guarantee that every saved person will choose to grow in the expression of love.

But it will be the type of love described in the Bible, not the type that the world offers.

LOVE – THE #1 MORAL OBLIGATION FOR EVERY HUMAN BEING.

★ You don't escape this obligation by claiming to "not believe in it." ★

IN THIS SPECIFIC ORDER: • **FIRST** – to GOD. • **SECOND** – to PEOPLE.

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." **This is the first and greatest commandment.**

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

Matthew 22:37-39 (NIV)

And in case you weren't sure... Jesus reaffirms: "There is no commandment **greater** than these."
Mark 12:31b (NIV)

LOVE – THE #1 MORAL CHARACTER QUALITY THAT THE SPIRIT PUTS IN THE LIFE OF A SAVED PERSON.

★ If the Spirit is present, this love will be present. ★

MANY SCRIPTURE PASSAGES DESCRIBE THESE CHARACTER QUALITIES.
We can call them the **FRUIT** – the result – of the Spirit's presence.

But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
Galatians 5:22-23a (NIV)

BOTH ARE TRUE:
The Spirit puts it in us;
AND we are to pursue it.

... pursue ... **love** [and other moral character qualities].
2 Tim. 2:22b (NASB)

★ Do you want to pursue greatness? ★

**CONTINUE WITH
THE #2 GREATEST!**

IF YOU WANT TO PURSUE GREATNESS, YOUR #2 GREATEST PRIORITY WILL BE ...

The pursuit of "the greater" GIFTS.

- "Greater" in the sense that they have the most benefit for other people.
- LOVE is the foundation that will influence how these "gifts of the Spirit" are used.

★ Do you want to pursue greatness?

But desire the greater gifts. And I will show you an even better way.
1 Cor. 12:31 (CSB)

WHAT IS THE "BETTER WAY" TO USE OUR GIFTS? SEE THE NEXT PAGE!

Gifts... BUILT the right way!

Build them on the foundation of LOVE.
(Otherwise, they have little of no value.)

➔ This "better way" (1 Cor. 12:31) is a reference to chapter 13, which is a description of godly love.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails.
1 Cor. 13:4-8a (NIV)

Gifts... USED the right way!

Use them to benefit other people.

➔ Chapter 14 shows a contrast between two "gifts" – one that normally benefits everyone ("prophecy") and one that normally benefits few (tongues).

Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy [in contrast to] the person who speaks in another tongue ...
1 Cor. 14:1-2a (CSB)

- We may have many abilities, but we should try to develop the ones that have the greatest benefit for others. This is what LOVE would do.

THE REASON for gifts and abilities

The Holy Spirit gives gifts and abilities:

- NOT: for publicity/attention/reputation.
- BUT: 1) for the purpose of expressing love, and 2) for the common good of God's people.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.
[A list of typical gifts is given here.]
All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.
1 Cor. 12:7, 11 (NIV)

★ Any gift not used in the manner God requires is being used for SIN. ★

Moral character traits vs. Gifts and abilities

"ALL with ALL"
All people are to have (and grow in) all of the moral character traits that are associated with the Spirit's presence (described as the "fruit" of his presence).
[Their expression will increase, as we grow in our salvation.]

"NONE with ALL"
No person has all the gifts; and no gift is possessed by all the people.

★ Do you want to pursue greatness? ★

THEN PURSUE THE GREATNESS THAT GOD OFFERS YOU!

Credits

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