

THE THEOLOGY OF LOVE Introduction Part I
"Just exactly what is love anyway?"
 Reference: **I Corinthians 13:1-13**
 Pastor Larry Webb

Summum bonum is a Latin phrase that means "the _____."
 Based on that definition, love should be the summum bonum
 of our entire human existence.

Jesus summarized all human interpersonal responsibilities into dual
 commandments: love _____ and love _____.

Reference: **Matthew 22:35-40** and **I John 4:7, 8** (see screen)

Most people isolate these verses on love from their actual textual context
 and in doing that radically understate the importance of this concept.
 These incredible insightful comments on love are actually found in
 between the middle of Paul's discussion on spiritual gifts in
I Corinthians chapters twelve and fourteen.

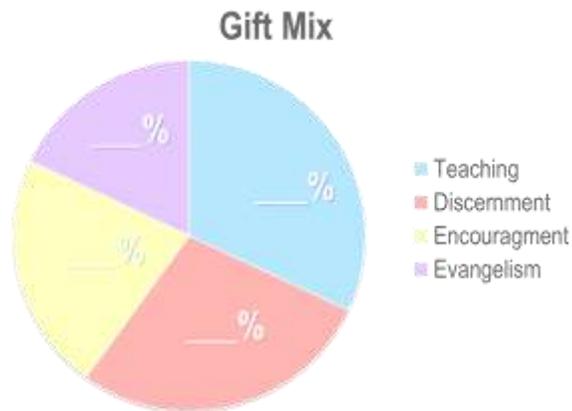
Definition: Spiritual gifts are specialized abilities the Holy Spirit
 generates in and through someone that enables that person to minister
 to _____.

Reference: **I Corinthians 12:7** (see screen)

Most Christians don't understand that God actually exercises His
 sovereign prerogative and assigns to us at our salvation the different
 gifts **He wants us to have.**

Reference: **I Corinthians 12:11** and **I Peter 4:10** (see screen)

This section on love actually begins at the last verse of the preceding
 chapter (**I Corinthians 12:31**) and understanding that verse is critical to
 understanding this section on love.



Reference: **I Corinthians 12:31**, *"But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way."*

The Greek verb that is translated as *"earnestly desire"* can mean either a
 _____ to the Corinthians (the imperative mood) or it might
 mean a statement of fact that was describing something that was
 _____ about the Corinthians (the indicative mood).

To complicate the problem the grammatical form (imperative or indicative
 mood) in the Greek language permits either meaning; so, it is essential
 that we understand the larger textual context (**I Corinthians 12:1-14:40**)
 in order to know which case it might be. Is this verse in the imperative or
 indicative mood?

There's ample textual evidence in **I Corinthians chapter twelve** to
 justify interpreting this statement in an _____ sense and
 that's the reason Paul said in the second half of **verse thirty-one**, *"And yet I show you a more excellent way."*

The *"more excellent way"* was for these Corinthians to be satisfied using
 the spiritual gifts God had assigned them and then to exercise those gifts
 in _____. Then **I Corinthians chapter thirteen** goes on to describe
 love.

To correspond to our singular word love in the English language the
 ancient Greeks had four words:

- **Eros** described a _____ love.
- **Storge** described the _____ parents
 feel toward their children and grandchildren.
- **Philia** described a psychological and social love;
 i.e. _____.
- **Agape** described the _____ form of love.

Reference: **John 15:13**, *"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."*

Definition: Agape love is a _____ - _____ act we do for
 someone else.

Remember that an attitude _____ an act and that means
 agape love is an external action that is the resulting fulfillment of an
 internal attitude.

Reference: **Matthew 23:28** (see screen)