**LOVE IS…**

1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13

Key Verse 13:4

*“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.”*

1. Read verses 12:31b-13:1-3. While teaching the Corinthians about spiritual gifts, why did Paul pause (12:31b)? In verses 1-3, what gifts does he mention? What happens when these are practiced without love?
2. Read verses 4-6. In Greek, the word for love here is “agape.” Look up its definition in a dictionary. What does Paul say love is, and what is not? Of all the characteristics of love, why does Paul mention patience and kindness first (Ro 2:4)?
3. Without love, what are human beings inclined to do (4b-6a; Ge 6:5)? How can these sinful tendencies be overcome (Ro 8:5-9; Gal 5:16)? How does love relate to the truth (6b; Ro 12:9)?
4. Read verse 7. How do the verbs “protect,” “trust,” “hope,” and “persevere” relate to building up others? What does “always” mean? In the following references, note the examples: “protect” (Mk 2:23-26; Jn 17:15); “trust” (Ac 9:26-28; “hope” (Jn 1:42; Lk 22:32); “persevere” (Jn 13:1).
5. Read verses 8-11. How is love different from all other spiritual gifts (8-10)? What is most valuable, and how does this help us in using our gifts? How did God’s love affect Paul’s way of thinking and lead to his spiritual maturity (11)?
6. Read verses 12-13. What was Paul’s hope (12)? What are the three essentials in Christian life? Is spiritual growth possible without any of the three? Why is love the greatest of these?