

A Still More Excellent Way



1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13



- 1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.
- Grievances and Lawsuits: Be defrauded and take the wrong
- Food offered to Idols: Knowledge puffs up, love builds up
 - Stumble, Destroy
- Lord's Supper: Come together for Better
 - Despise, humiliate
 - Wait for one another
- Spiritual Gifts: For the common good to build up
 - Childish thinking verses Mature thinking

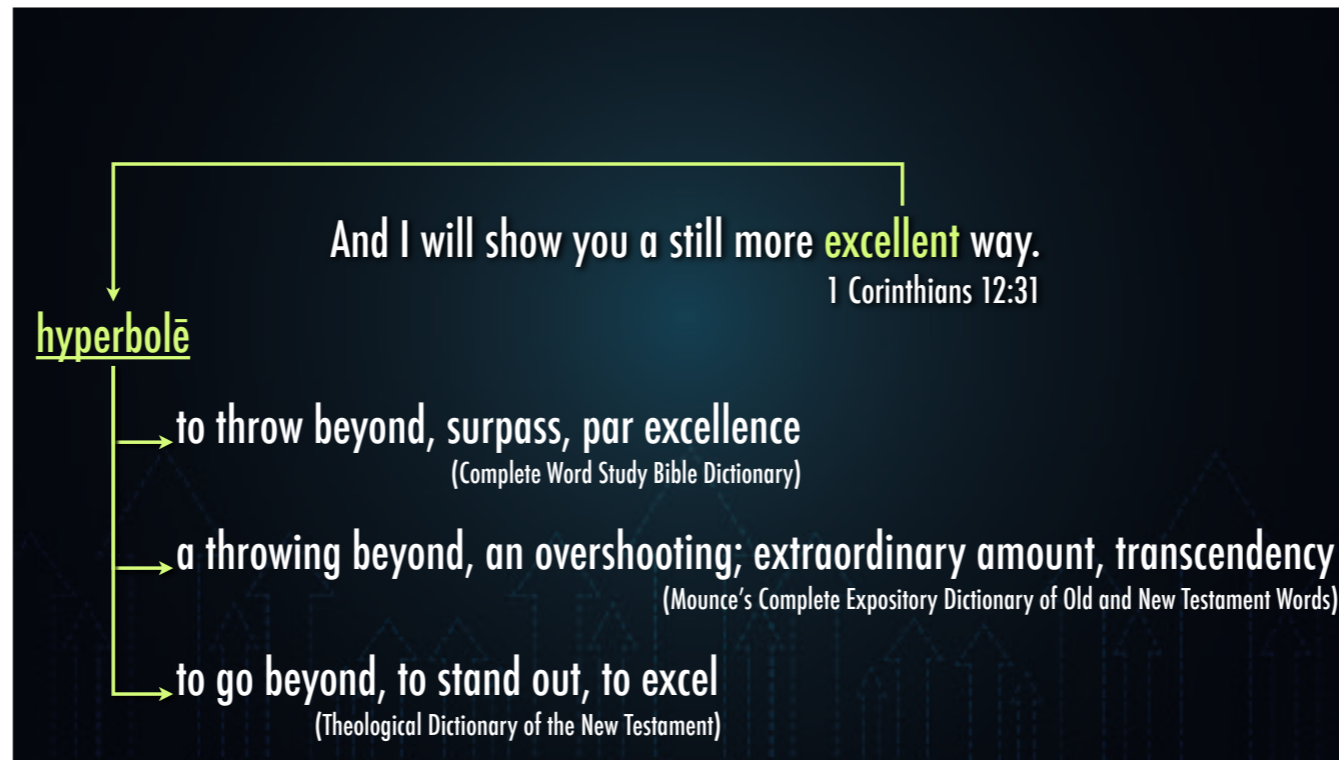
A Still More Excellent Way

(1 Corinthians 13)



And I will show you a still more excellent way.
1 Corinthians 12:31

- 1 Corinthians 12:31 But earnestly desire the higher gifts.
 - And I will show you a still more excellent way.



- And I will show you a still more excellent way.
- to throw beyond, surpass (CWSB Dictionary)
 - With the meaning of par excellence (1 Cor. 12:31, meaning a far better way)
- a throwing beyond, an overshooting; extraordinary amount or character, transcendancy
 - (Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words) [5651] ὑπερβολή hyperbolē 8x pr.
- This verb, having an original sense of 'to throw beyond,' means 'to go beyond,' 'to stand out,' 'to excel,' or, censoriously, 'to transgress the proper measure.' The noun means 'excess' or 'supreme stage or measure.'
 - (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Abridged - Little Kittel))

And I will show you a still more **excellent** way.
1 Corinthians 12:31

hyperbolē

→ to t
→ a th
→ to g

so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that **surpasses** knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
Ephesians 3:17-19

- Ephesians 3:17-19 (ESV) 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

And I will show you a still more **excellent** way.
1 Corinthians 12:31

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the **greatest** of these is love.
1 Corinthians 13:13

- 1 Corinthians 13:13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

And I will show you a still more **excellent** way.
1 Corinthians 12:31

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the **greatest** of these is love.
1 Corinthians 13:13

greater, more important
(Complete Word Study Bible Dictionary)

megas



- 1 Corinthians 13:13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
- greatest
 - megas
 - greater, more important (CWSB)



- And I will show you a still more excellent way.
- 1 Corinthians 13:13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
- When Paul uses language like this, what is he appealing to in the Corinthians?

as **infants** in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food,
for **you were not ready** for it.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

excellent **greatest**

- When Paul uses language like this, what is he appealing to in the Corinthians?
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 (ESV) 1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?

as **infants** in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food,
for **you were not ready for it.**

And **even now you are not yet ready**

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

excellent

greatest

- And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? 4 For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?

as **infants** in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food,
for **you were not ready for it.**

And **even now you are not yet ready**

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

excellent

greatest

- Paul is appealing to the Corinthians on their current level of understanding...
 - If what they are concerned about is being important
 - And doing something great
 - And comparing themselves
- Then he's going to teach to the limitations of their thinking
 - not being spiritual, but fleshly and human
- So Paul is appealing to them to seek something that is just the very best.
 - Incomparable

as **infants** in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food,
for **you were not ready for it.**

And **even now you are not yet ready**

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

excellent

greatest

PURSUE LOVE

- 1 Corinthians 14:1 Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.
- Pursue love
 - If you're going to go after anything ... chase love.
- To follow or press hard after, to pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain, to go after with the desire of obtaining (CWSB Dictionary)
-

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

- Why is love the more excellent and greatest?
- Why should I pursue love?
 - Paul is going to give us 4 reasons why we should pursue love

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

└───> 1. Love provides meaning.

- 1. Love provides meaning.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

└───> 1. Love provides meaning.

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (ESV) 1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

↳ 1. Love provides meaning.

speaking in tongues → but have not love → I am a noisy gong or clanging cymbal

- 1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
- Paul is not diminishing speaking in tongues. If that's the gift given to you by God ... great. Use it.
- But if you do use it and you don't have love for your siblings.
- It's all just noise
 - you are all show and completely useless.
 - (So stop it!) ???

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

└───> 1. Love provides meaning.

prophetic powers
understand all mysteries
all knowledge
all faith – move mountains

→ but have not
love

→ I am nothing

- 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.
- Here's more examples of the gifts ... but now to the extreme.
 - I'm the best ... all mysteries, all knowledge
 - faith to move mountains
 - Again that's great use your gifts ... that's why you have them.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

↳ 1. Love provides meaning.

prophetic powers
understand all mysteries
all knowledge
all faith – move mountains



but have not
love



I am nothing

- But Paul is not just looking at the gifts, he's refocusing on how I see myself because I have THIS gift ... and I have it like NOBODY else.
 - (I'm so very special!)
- But if you do use it and you don't have love for your siblings.
- Then you are nothing
 - (Ouch, too personal?)
 - The gift is not given to make you think that you are great.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

└───> 1. Love provides meaning.

give away all I have
deliver up my body
to be burned → but have not
love → I gain nothing

- 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.
- Paul moves away from spiritual gifts to things any of us can do ... and again, notice that he goes to the extreme.
 - The things we'd really pat ourselves on the back for.
 - Extreme sacrifice
 - And there may be times when these would be necessary?
 - But it also feels so hypothetical.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

↳ 1. Love provides meaning.

give away all I have
deliver up my body
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love → I gain nothing

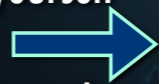
- But even if you give up everything, but if you do it without love for your siblings ...
 - Ananias and Sapphira tried this ... or tried to make it look good
- It will do you no good.
 - You don't automatically gain God's praise or approval.
 - You don't automatically gain heaven.
 - It doesn't make you better than anyone else at all.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

↳ 1. Love provides meaning.

What ever you think of yourself
And/Or
Whatever you think you can do



but have not
love



I am a noisy gong
or clanging cymbal

I am nothing

I gain nothing

- Whatever you think of yourself, whatever you think you can do
- If you don't have love
- It has no meaning.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

└───> 1. Love provides meaning.

PURSUE LOVE

- But if you have love ... then it's meaningful.
- So pursue love.
-

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

→ 2. Love is altruistic.

- 2. Love is altruistic.
 - Altruistic is focused on what I can do for others for their benefit.
 - It is not a diminishing of myself.
 - It is not thinking of myself as unimportant, unworthy.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

→ 2. Love is altruistic.

+ patient

+ kind

+ rejoices with the truth

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 (ESV) 4 Love is
 - Three positives: patient, kind, rejoices with the truth.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

→ 2. Love is altruistic.

- + patient
- + kind
- + rejoices with the truth

- not envy
- not boast
- not arrogant
- not rude
- does not insist on its own way
- not irritable
- not resentful
- does not rejoice at wrongdoing

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 (ESV) 4 Love is
 - 8 Negatives
 - does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing
- This is a lot to overcome sometimes.
 - Notice that he's really focusing on what hinders ME from loving YOU.
 - These are 'me' issues.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE



2. Love is altruistic.

PURSUE LOVE

- Paul is reminding us that our goal is not to make ourselves greater
 - But to help our brothers ... especially when they are struggling and difficult to deal with
 - And realizing that ... um ... they are not the problem — I AM
 - We want to build them up in Christ, help them get to heaven.
 - Doesn't condone sin or unrighteousness or wrongdoing: that's not love or helpful.
- So what can I do to help you?
 - And this is better than aggrandizing myself
 - And this is better than me sinning against you — even if you don't know it.
- So Pursue Love.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

3. Love is strong.

- 3. Love is strong.
- 1 Corinthians 13:7 (ESV) 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.



- Bears

- (l) Generally meaning to conceal, with the acc. (1 Cor. 13:7, love hides the faults of others or covers them up). (CWSB Dictionary)
- The meaning, then, is perhaps that love 'covers' all things. In full self-giving to others, the love that is rooted in God's love **keeps silent about unfavorable matters.**
 - (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Abridged - Little Kittel))
- properly denotes **“to protect by covering”**; then, “to conceal”;
 - (Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary)

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

Bears

3. Love is strong.

- Proverbs 10:12 (ESV) 12 Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.
- Proverbs 17:9 (ESV) 9 Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.
- 1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.
 - The picture here is of us helping our siblings when they are burdened.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE



3. Love is strong.

Bears

Believes

- Believes
 - This does not mean that we are gullible.
 - I think the focus on this is having confidence (faith, trust) in our siblings.
 - Choosing to think the best of their motives, actions
 - Or even giving them credence when they are struggling, suffering, coping with sin

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

3. Love is strong.

Bears

Believes

Hopes

- Hopes
 - Thayer: “hopefully trust in”
 - Good expectations
 - Expecting the best of my siblings, especially instead of expecting the worst, or less than

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

3. Love is strong.

Bears

Believes

Hopes

Endures

- Endures
 - suffer patiently
 - When my siblings are being difficult ... I choose to be patient
 - No lashing out against them
 - No giving up on them

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

→ 3. Love is strong.

PURSUE LOVE

- 3. Love is strong.
 - Strong in the sense that when my sibling is weak — for whatever reason — I step up to help their weakness.
 - I do this with a smile, not a sigh.
- Pursue this love.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

4. Love never ends.

- 4. Love never ends. 13:8-12
 - 8 Love never ends.
 - As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.
 - 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
 - 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.
 - When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.
 - 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.
 - Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

4. Love never ends.

The spiritual gifts will pass away

- 8 Love never ends.
 - As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.
 - 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
- The Corinthians loved the gifts ... but they are temporary
 - There's something that is much more, enduring
 - Love never ends: It's better

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

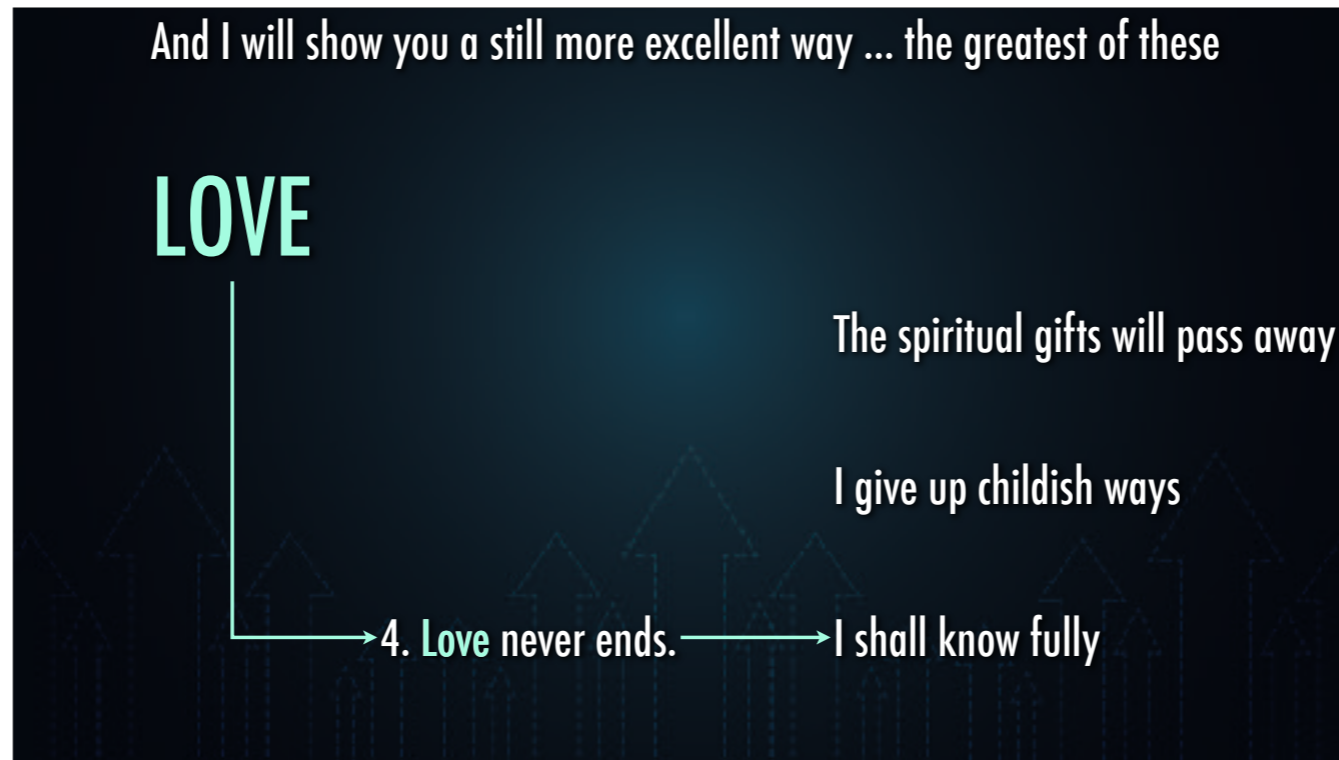
LOVE

The spiritual gifts will pass away

I give up childish ways

4. Love never ends.

- 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.
 - When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.
- This seems very pointed to the immaturity of the Corinthians.
 - They were so self focused that they hurt their siblings
 - They needed to give up this immaturity and choose something that's not as flashy and showy.
- Love for my siblings is maturity.



- 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.
 - Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.
- The Corinthians loved knowledge
 - but Paul reminds them that what we know now is nothing compared to what we will know
 - there's so much more
 - Knowledge puffs up, love builds up.
- What's better: Love!
 - Consider how in Jesus love has been demonstrated to it's fulness.
 - His love that gives us rich mercy and grace and kindness

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE



4. Love never ends.

PURSUE LOVE

- Love never ends.
 - We can pursue a lot of things ... but so many of them are temporary and ephemeral.
 - Pursue Love!

And I will show you a still more excellent way ... the greatest of these

LOVE

1. Love provides meaning.

2. Love is altruistic.

3. Love is strong.

4. Love never ends.

PURSUE LOVE

- 1. Love provides meaning.
- 2. Love is altruistic.
- 3. Love is strong.
- 4. Love never ends.

PURSUE LOVE

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14

- How can I pursue love?
- 1 Corinthians 16:14 Let all that you do be done in love.
 - When I have a grievance with my brother?
 - — With Love, take the wrong and be defrauded
 - When I want to eat meat that makes my sister stumble?
 - — With Love, don't eat it, build her up

PURSUE LOVE

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14

- When we come together to eat the supper
 - — with Love, make it better for everyone and wait for one another
- When we come together and use our gifts
 - — with love, use your gift to build others up
 - even if that means not using your gift so that someone else can use theirs.

PURSUE LOVE

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14

- Love is the more excellent way, and is the greatest.
 - A more excellent way to what?
 - Context: for us to build each other up.
 - Since love is the best, we shouldn't expect it to be easy.
 - Love is hard.
 - Jesus sending his son for our forgiveness and reconciliation.
 - Love is hard but it is the best way.
- So Pursue Love.

Let brotherly love continue.

Hebrews 13:1

We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

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Holy Brothers

#08

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A Still More Excellent Way

1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13

Synopsis: Paul teaches the Corinthians on their level of spiritual immaturity that love is excellent and great. He reminds them that they should pursue love because Love gives meaning, Love is altruistic, Love is strong and Love never ends.

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“Let all that you do be done with love.”