

You Ain't Nothin' Without Love **1 Cor 13**

What is this thing called love?

The Greek word is *agape*: A selfless concern for the welfare of others that is not called forth by any quality of lovableness in the person loved, but is the product of a will to love in obedience to God's command. (NIV Study Bible)

Love makes the difference (1-3)

It doesn't matter what you say

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

It doesn't matter how "spiritual" you are

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

It doesn't matter what you sacrifice

If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

The "how" matters more than the "what"

Agape love is love that gives and serves and looks for no reward. You don't have to *like* someone, or even feel compassion for them, to love them the way God calls us to love them.

I want to know what love is (4-7)

These verse aren't a list of emotional responses, they're a particular set of behaviours, a way of being, a way of treating others.

Everlasting love (8-13)

When Paul says that "love never fails" he's not talking in terms of pass/fail or succeed/fail. He means that love never ends, it never passes away, it never gets weaker; it is a constant presence, even when things go terribly wrong.

That's because this kind of love is part of the very nature of God himself. (1 John 4.8)

We can only love this way as we look to Jesus and allow him to change us to be like him.