

What is the Main Purpose of Life ?

I want to start by asking you a question.

My aim in life is

Please fill in the blank.

What did you write? Success – happiness – comfort – security – recognition – fun – approval.

How we answer that question determines our “*Dominant Life Principle*”.

Everyone has got one whether we realise it or not. We refer to this “*Dominant Life Principle*” every day as we have choices to make.

If my “*D.L.P.*” is **fun** and I have two invitations to go out in the evening, I will choose the one where I will have most fun.

If my “*D.L.P.*” is **security**, I will then always make the choice that is most safe – has the least risk.

If my “*D.L.P.*” is **comfort**, I will always choose to do the thing that is easiest, involving least effort.

If my “*D.L.P.*” is to be **recognised**, I will tend to choose jobs or events where people will notice me.

What does God say should be our *D.L.P.* ?

After all, He made us and therefore knows what will bring us the most satisfaction and enjoyment in life.

1 Corinthians 14:1 [Living Bible] “*Let love be your greatest aim.*”

Why does God say “*love*” should be our greatest aim – our Dominant Life Principle?

This presentation is an introduction to an in-depth study series based on one chapter in God’s Handbook for Life, the Christian Bible – First Corinthians chapter thirteen.

Throughout this chapter it presents love as the number one priority in life.

All that I say is ineffective without love.

1 Corinthians 13:1 [NIV] “*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.*”

God is saying words without love are empty, just noise.

The world is impressed by great communicators, and look up to those with great charisma but God is **not** impressed with great communicators.

The Corinthian Church was caught up with their spiritual gifts of communicating.

They boasted the ability to speak both in tongues of men and angels.

Have you heard the statement, “*we are just not communicating in our home*”?

Have we ever thought it was because we are not speaking to each other in a loving way?

We always listen and respond to loving words but resent and reject un-loving words.

All that I know is incomplete without love.

1 Corinthians 13:2 [NIV] *“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.”*

Without love all the knowledge I may have is incomplete.

We can be a member of MENSA or have so many degrees that they call us doctor centigrade, but it is all of no real value without love.

You could be a walking Bible Encyclopaedia, but without love we are nothing.

1 Corinthians 8:1 [NIV] *“Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. **Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.**”*

It is better to have a right heart than a right head.

We are in this generation in the middle of a “*knowledge explosion*”. It is expanding so fast we cannot keep up with it.

But are any of man’s basic problems being solved by all this information and knowledge ?

No !

Although most do not realise it, the world is **not** looking for more knowledge: the world is looking for more love.

All that I believe is insufficient without love.

1 Corinthians 13:2 [NIV] *“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 we believe if we don’t have love it counts for nothing.

There is a misconception about Christianity.

Many people believe that all that is involved in being a Christian is believing certain truths and having certain doctrines.

People say, “*I’m a Christian*”, but I ask how do you know this? They reply, “*well, I believe in Jesus Christ*”. Big deal! The devil and his demons believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God [**James 2:19**].

What I ask is do you love other people because God loves you?

Christianity is a relationship and a loving lifestyle, not a religion.

Galatians 5:6 [NIV] *“**The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.**”*

All that I give is insignificant without love.

1 Corinthians 13:3 [NIV] *“If I give all I possess to the poor ... but have not love, I gain nothing.”*

We can give everything we have got but it counts for nothing if it is done without love.

Why?

Because we can give for selfish motives!

People often give for different motives.

Some give for:-

- a) **prestige** – to get our name on a plaque to impress everybody.
- b) **for power** – to be able to control people. Some parents give money to their children to control them.
- c) **out of obligation or guilt**

We can give without loving but we cannot love without giving.

All I accomplish is inadequate without love.

1 Corinthians 13:3 [Living Bible] *“If I were burned alive for preaching the gospel but didn’t love others, it would be of no value whatever.”*

I can even sacrifice my life for the greatest cause in the world, but without a loving attitude towards others it would be of no value in God’s eyes. It would all be wasted effort and sacrifice.

These three verses are summed up in the simple statement:-

“Relationships are more important than accomplishments in life.”

Success without love is an empty lifestyle.

When God in the future does an audit on our lives He will **not** look at our success, our accomplishments or our bank account, but our relationships.

Summary of what God is telling us in these verses:-

I can have the eloquence of an orator.

I can have the knowledge of a genius.

I can have the faith of a miracle worker.

I can have the generosity of a benefactor.

I can have the dedication of a martyr.

But if I don’t have love it counts for nothing.

There is nothing more important in our lives than love.

Life minus love equals zero.

Now perhaps we understand why we need to study this passage of scripture on Godly love !

The practice of love.

Colossians 3:14 [Living Bible] *“Most of all let love guide your life.”*

How do I do this?

First of all we have to define love.

It is amazing to me that everyone uses this word love, but few can define what love is.

There are 1000s of books and 100s of films advertised as love stories, 100s of songs called ‘*love songs*’.

We say *“I love my wife, I love God, I love my country, I love beef burgers.”*

We just use the word indiscriminately.

I looked up the word love in an encyclopaedia and there was no article on it, instead it said *“love – see sex”* and *“emotion”*.

So I looked up *“emotion”*.

Well, I thought I knew all I needed about sex !

In a very long article on emotion and the word love was used only once, and not even defined.

That is not too bad because love is **not** an emotion in the first place.

Did you register that statement?

Love is **not** an emotion; love affects and creates emotion but love is **not** an emotion.

If love was an emotion we could not control it !

So next I looked up *“sex”* a very interesting article which covered three pages, and in it only five short sentences on *“love”*, with still no definition.

This is typical of our society that knows far more about sex than it does love.

A lot of songs on the radio are not love songs; they are lust songs. *“Give it, give it to me if you don’t I’m going to take it”*, etc., etc.

We all need lessons on how to love.

In the society today with so many dysfunctional families, most people have never learnt how to love.

We do not have any real role models to follow in the society, nor has there been in previous generations.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 [NIV] *“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.”

Here we have a list of descriptive words that give us an insight into true love.

True love is patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not proud, not rude, not selfish, not easily angered, keeps no record of wrong, does not delight in evil, rejoices in the truth.

Love protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres and never fails.

When I read that list it tells me I am **no** great lover, I need some lessons. I need to learn how to love other people in my life.

What kind of lover are you?

Notice two things about this list.

Love is an action: it is not something we feel; not something we say: love is something we do.

Every “love word” above is an action word. Love is **not** just “lip service”, but action.

Like the boyfriend who says to his girlfriend, “*I would die for you honey*” and she replies, “*Oh John! You are always saying things like that, but you never do them.*”

Love is a demonstration, not an inclination.

Love is a choice. We choose to love or we choose not to love.

There is a myth going around that love is uncontrollable. I just “fell” in love, as if it was a ditch to fall into.

Remember, love is **not** a feeling. We cannot force a feeling.

Have you noticed when we spank a child in correction and tell them to smile, they reply “*I can’t daddy*”. We tell them to be happy and they reply “*I’m trying to daddy.*”

Love is not a feeling; love is an action and a choice which we can control and be loving when we don’t feel like loving.

Love is doing the loving thing when we don’t feel like it.

For example, getting up in the middle of the night to comfort and help a sick child when it is the last thing we want to do.

Love is being patient with our husband or wife when they are acting like a “jerk”.

Love is giving a person what they need, not what they deserve.

When we love in spite of our feelings, that is what I call love by faith.

The permanence of love.

We need to make love No. 1 in our lives because **love is the only thing that will last for ever.**

1 Corinthians 13:7-9 (a) [Phillips Translation] “*Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope, it can outlast anything, love never fails.*”

If we say “*but my love for my ex-wife did fail*”, then it couldn’t have been real love in the first place if it failed.

Every life principle is temporary, except love.

Fun, money, pleasure, security, approval of others, etc., etc.

None of these are lasting if we choose to make these our Dominant Life Principle.

1 Corinthians 13:13 [Phillips Translation] *“In this life we have three lasting qualities, faith, hope and love, and the greatest of them is love.”*

Why is love greater than faith and hope ?

Faith only lasts until the reality comes.

Hope only lasts until we receive what we hoped for.

Love is eternal, even as God is love and eternal.

1 John 4:16 [NIV] *“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”*

Love is the only thing that is eternal.

John 13:34-35 [NIV] *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

We say “*I can’t love people like Jesus did.*”

We are right, we can’t: that is why we need Jesus Christ to live His life in us, to love others in the way we have just read, through us.

Paul, talking to the Christians at Rome, reminds them of this fact.

Romans 5:5 [Phillips Translation] *“Already we have some experience of the Love of God flooding through our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us.”*

Love is the main thing in life and the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.

The sign of a Christian is **not** a cross, **not** a dove, **not** a fish, **not** a crown: **the sign of a Christian is love.**

We need to ask how many people know that I am a Christian because of my loving lifestyle?

To make love our Dominant Life Principle means we will have to take some action on a daily basis.

From this moment onwards love takes the initiative, in loving acts which will mean some radical changes in our lives.

Maybe we need to seek some **reconciliation** with the people we treated in an un-loving way, in our relationship with them.

We then need to seek new relationships and bring to them the Love of Christ which is flowing through us.

You cannot live the loving life style as a hermit; love demands someone else to love.

We all have to spell love in a different way. T I M E.

John 15:13 [King James] *“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life [time] for his friends.”*

To love people we have to lay down part of our life [TIME] for them, spend time with those who are the object of our love.

A loving life style takes time, effort, involvement and energy; but it’s more than worth it in the end, because it is eternal.