

The Essentials

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1 Corinthians 13

What exactly is essential? According to Turner Classic Movies these are your movie essentials, *Pillow Talk*, *A Star is Born* ('54), *Lawrence of Arabia*, *An American in Paris*, *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Bringing Up Baby* and *On the Waterfront*.

This fall *Newsweek* published the essentials for college; earplugs, an ipod, a laptop, a calculator, and a cell phone.

We are often confused concerning what is essential and what is optional. In 1972 power windows were optional today they are standard. A rear window defroster is often standard when it was once optional. Yet just because it is standard equipment does not mean it is essential. So much of what we deem as necessary is more of a luxury than an essential. We can live without seats that heat up or keyless entry in our cars.

What are the essentials in life?

A good sense of humor is a valuable trait. The ability to laugh at ourselves to enjoy a good laugh, to not take ourselves so serious is a wonderful quality. It helps you meet girls but it also helps you keep your sanity. While wonderful, it is a far cry from essential.

Some might argue money is essential; sure it is the only thing Wal-Mart takes but money can only buy a house, not a home. It can buy a bed, but not sleep. It can buy a clock, but not time. It can buy you a book, but not knowledge. It can buy you a position, but not respect. It can buy you medicine, but not health. It can buy you blood, but not life.

When we turn to the Bible we discover that a relationship with Jesus is ultimately the only essential. Nevertheless the Bible often points out other things that compliment this meaningful relationship with Christ. Like contrasting pillows complimenting your bed or a pair of shoes complimenting your dress there are some things which are essential if we call Jesus our Lord. Likewise they are essentials to living a meaningful life. We cannot live without.

Laughter is good, money is important but love is essential. As I read this pay attention to the style of love we are talking about.

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love; I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If 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. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Did you notice the essential kind of love has nothing to do with being loved.

It is not essential to be loved, it is essential to LOVE.

Everyone likes to be loved but to love is work. In fact we think it is more important to be loved than to loved. This is backwards. Our energy comes from loving not from being loved. God is the supreme example of this. God loved us before we loved him. It is in loving that we are set free, not in being loved.

Kristen Talbot had trained from her childhood for the Olympics. She had to pay special attention to her training regiment as she prepared for her opportunity in the 1994 Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway. She was expected to medal for the US speed skating team. Yet, Kristen actually chooses an interruption to her plans. Weeks before the Olympics began her brother needed bone marrow. She donated her bone marrow to her critical ill brother. In an interview she said, "After all skating is just skating. It's important but not more important than life." Kristen competed in the Olympics but she did not medal, and she couldn't have cared less.

Kristen is such a contrast from most. Most folks know the price of everything but the value of nothing. Kristen knew what mattered, do we?

Is our life ordered around loving or is ordered around being loved? Are we loving to our family and strangers even when they are not loving to us? Do we love people when they are cross or short with us?

Our scripture constantly reminds us how significant sacrificial giving love is, **"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."** The power of love is great, **"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear"** As I mentioned earlier this is not about being

loved it is about loving, it is about doing, it is about sacrifice, **“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”**

On one occasion Jesus was asked what was essential. What absolutely had to be done. May what he said be a lasting reminder to us that it is not enough to collect earthly trinkets, or to build a reputation; we are measured not by how many people love us but how deeply we love,

³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^[2].