

**“Now I want to (show) you
a far better way.”** -The Message

- ◇ “the most excellent way” (NIV)
- ◇ “something else that is better than any of them” (NLV)
- ◇ “A still more excellent way” (NASB)
- ◇ “the way that surpasses them all” (JB Phillips)

The far better way is the way of agape or giving love.

Three Fundamental Features of Agape Love

(From Love Within Limits by Lewis Smedes)

1. “Love is effective as law (a command) only when it first works as a power” (p.130)

To be sure love is an obligation for followers of Jesus but the good news is that love is a power. “God’s love enables us to do what love obligates us to do. I Corinthians 13 must be read as a promise of God’s power before it is read as a command.”
(p.130)

2. “The promise of love’s power is received only in an astounding act of faith” (p.131)

Faith in love comes only after a soul’s journey to the cross of Christ where God’s love is fully revealed. The way to keep love alive is “to come back to the cross of Christ where divine power healed the world by becoming weak within the world itself” (p.16)

3. The love Paul writes about in I Cor. 13 “works within the limits of human life” (P.132)

The two reasons for this are:

- ❖ “Our human weakness, which is a combination of our finitude and our sinfulness.”(p.132)
- ❖ “In this life we live by powers alongside and different from agape love.”(p.132) One of these powers is erotic love.

“Erotic love is born of need and drives us towards satisfaction.”(p.56)

“Agape love is a giving love, a love that let’s go... It is not the love of need but the love of power.” (p. 21)

A. Spiritual gifts are hollow graces if they are not wrapped in love for one another.

B. Nine elements of agape or giving love.

1. Patient
2. Kind
3. Generous
4. Humble
5. Courteous
6. Unselfish
7. Calm and steady
8. Forgiving
9. Sincere (loves truth)

