

# THE LOVE SANDWICH

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In the English language, the sandwich dates back to 1762, and is generally attributed to Britain's John Montagu, fourth Earl of Sandwich. During his excursions in the Middle East, he had seen grilled pita breads and the like prepared by the Greeks and Turks. Requiring no utensils and only one hand to hold and eat, while he played at the gaming table, it quickly caught on, and others began to order "the same as Sandwich."

Today, I'm going to build you all a sandwich—a LOVE sandwich—from the best ingredients in the Bible. Let me break it down for you.

The bread at the bottom, the foundation of the sandwich, is 1 Corinthians 12, Paul's essay on spiritual gifts—their Source (which is God) and their purpose (which is the unity of the church).

The bread on the top, which holds the sandwich together, is 1 Corinthians 14, Paul's secondary discourse on spiritual gifts—their limits and operations.

The heart of this Biblical sandwich is 1 Corinthians 13 (famously known as the "love chapter," that so many couples choose to have read at their weddings). This is Paul's treatise on *agape*, the love of God—the motive and fuel of gifted service.

Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth, where he had spent a year-and-a-half personally establishing them in the Way of Christ, because their culture and former ways were interfering with the work of the Gospel message.

You know, Christians aren't always the best example of the heart of God. Human desires and old lifestyle patterns often make it difficult to see Jesus in the lives of Christians. Jesus is always a clear example of the heart of God; Christians not so much. But we are called to show Him to those around us, so we need to work on it, and discipline ourselves and pattern ourselves after Jesus.

*1 Corinthians 9:24 Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! <sup>25</sup>All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. <sup>26</sup>So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. <sup>27</sup>I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.*