

RATZ (Love)

1 Corinthians 13

The Basic Bible Truth

Paul explained to the Corinthian church what true love is, and how it relates to real life. In essence, everything we do must begin out of a heart of love. Love is the most important thing in the universe. God's love was demonstrated towards us for a reason. He could have told us forever what love is, but God, wanting all to know the truth about perfect love, showed the universe what it looks like to love. Without love, nothing that we do in this world has any value.

The Object And Lesson

A Game Called RATZ

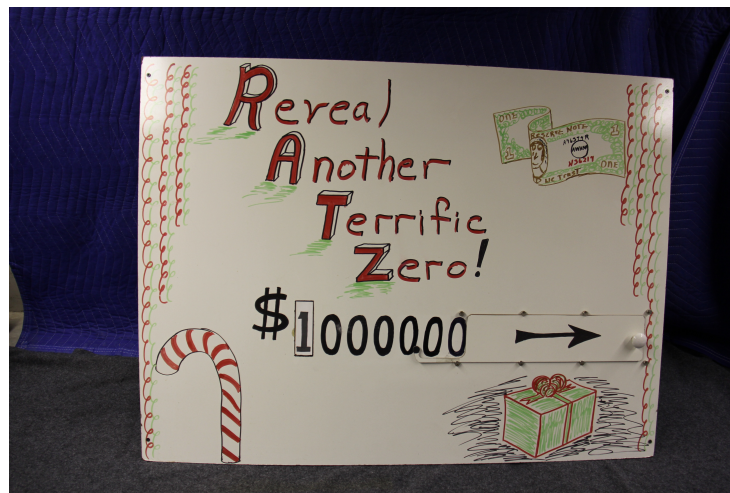
A Name Tag

\$100 Bill

\$10 Bill

\$1 Bill

A Dime



The game board is made with a sliding decimal point that allows more zeros to be revealed as it is moved to the right. In front of the number is a blank that can be rotated both directions. Rotating it one way will always reveal a 1. But rotating it the other way will reveal a 0. The player is not told this information.

This lesson is presented in the format of the TV game show "Let's Make A Deal". It is a high pressure, fast paced game to coerce the volunteer to keep making the deals. I start by introducing it as a Beta test of the game before we take it nationally. I pick a volunteer and we begin. I give them a nametag with some ridiculous name printed on it, because all game show contestants must have nametags, and refer to them by that silly name. Then I explain the premise of the game. My pitch to them will go something like this.

"Lolita, to begin this game I am going to give you this thin dime. Now, Lolita, that dime is yours to have and to hold until death do you part, or the end of the game, which ever comes first. You can stuff that dime down into your pocket and go home a wealthy young lady today, or you can try for more. I am

prepared to offer you the deal of a lifetime, Lolita. The name of this game is Reveal Another Terrific Zero. And that is exactly what I am going to do. I am going to reveal another terrific zero. Now Lolita, here is the deal. I will trade you that thin little dime for the dollar amount that will be shown on this game board when I turn over this first blank spot. What would you like to do Lolita? Ladies and gentlemen, I think she is having difficulty deciding what to do. Let help her a bit. Tell her what to do.....She's going to trade! That is the way the game is played. Now hand me your dime, and I will turn over this first blank and it is a 1! Congratulations, Lolita, you are now the proud owner of a \$1 bill. That \$1 bill is yours to have and to hold till death do you part, or the end of the game, whichever comes first. You could stuff that dollar bill into your pocket and go home a wealthy young lady or you could try for more. The name of this game is Reveal Another Terrific Zero, and that is exactly what I plan to do. As I reveal another zero, Lolita, I am prepared to offer you a trade. I will trade you that \$1 bill for the dollar amount that will be shown on this game board when I reveal what is behind this first blank. Would you like to trade? Ladies and gentlemen, I think she need a bit of help making the choice.....She's gonna trade! Yes ladies and gentlemen, she knows how to play the game! Hand me the one dollar bill, and as I turn over the blank, we have a 1! You, Lolita, have won \$10! That \$10 is yours to have and to hold till death do you part or the end of the game, whichever comes first....." The pitch continues. It works well to get the audience involved verbally.

When the player has won the \$100 bill, many times they begin to realize something fishy is going on and are tempted to stuff the bill in their pocket and sit down. I will then break from my fast pitch and get serious for a moment and ask them for the bill, I would like to show them something about it. Reluctantly they will eventually produce the bill and hand it over, and at that very instant I switch back into game mode and wave it high in the air and say something excitedly like, "Will you look at that ladies and gentlemen, Lolita has decided to play the game. I like your style Lolita. Let's see what you win." This time, though, when the blank is turned over, it reveals nothing but a zero. And now you know why the game is called RATZ. Ah, rats!

As a consolation prize, I always give my volunteer the dime and the \$1 bill. Then the actual lesson begins.

In I Corinthians 13, Paul breaks our actions and dealings in life into 5 basic areas. 1. Speech—what we say to others, about others...everything that comes out of our mouths. 2. Knowledge—our understanding of the world we live in and how it operates. 3. Faith—our relationship to God, the church, and everything religious. 4. Generosity—what we give to others and to God: our time, talents, or money. 5. Our physical self—extreme sacrifice. Everything we endure for others. He reminds us that all of these things are noble and worthwhile activities for anyone to partake of. But if love is not the motivating factor, if love is not what makes us do the things we do, then we have been wasting our time. \$1,000,000 is an enormous amount of money. All of those zeros are impressive. But without the 1 in front of them all, we have nothing of value whatsoever.

He then defines love in a very clear way. Imagine a prism setting in a beam of light, and as the light refracts in the glass, it is broken into a rainbow of colors. Here we have love divided out in much the same way. We speak of love as a single entity or thing, but it is actually made up of many things. Love is:

1. Patient—love passive. Waiting on the sidelines, calm and meek, but ready.
2. Kind—love active. In kindness to others we "do unto others".
3. Does not envy—love not jealous. The green eyed monster must be tamped down.
4. Humble—love hiding. Keeping ourselves in the shadows, and others first.
5. Courteous—love in society. Politeness and etiquette, it's the little things that matter.
6. Even tempered—love not provoked. A hot temper is given a pass in our society today.
7. No delight in evil—love building others up. People are influenced by those who believe in them.
8. Protective—love unselfish. Expending our self to ensure another's safe passage.
9. Trusting—love believing. Trust, the first cousin of loyalty.

10. Hope—love to come. Hope is a confidence in what is to come. A promise fulfilled
11. Perseveres—love always. We never give up and quit—no matter what.

Love is the most important thing in the world. I John 4:8 explains why. **God is love.**