

## **Slide 1 1 Corinthians**

## **Slide 2 Gifts of the Spirit (Our Logo?)**

## **Slide 3 The Most Excellent Way (Pathway? Bridge? Aqueduct?)**

There is a “more excellent way.”

After speaking about the amazing, miraculous gifts, Paul writes that there is “still a more excellent way.”

## **Slide 4 (Usain Bolt 2008)**

Excellent—extremely good; outstanding.

Very good of its kind, eminently good.

First Class, superior.

Blue-Chip.

In the Greek, *hyperbolen*—a throwing beyond (not just this far, but farther) Not just an A, but an A+.

Usain Bolt was the fastest runner in the world. I watched him win the Olympic gold medal on TV. He was streaking for the finish, looked around, saw he had won by a mile, and let up coasting to the finish. 100 yard dash: 2008 9.69 seconds. 2012 9.64 seconds. 2016 9.8 seconds. Enough to win Gold. What if he had kept up his best past the finish line? He may have set a world record that no one, ever may pass. But he did just enough to win. He let up at the end. He was the best that day, but he could have been the best ever. All over twenty more yards of all-out effort.

In 2009, after a car wreck, a broken foot and not being able to train like he wanted he ran the world record race. 9.58 seconds. It stands today. Bolt took more than a tenth of a second off his

previous best mark, and this was the largest-ever margin of improvement in the 100-m world record since the beginning of electronic timing.<sup>[7]</sup> He was challenged by a good runner and ran hard, saying, “I ran right to the line.” He still fades a little at the last step or two, but it was his best effort to date. I imagine he could have run 9.5 if he had gone all out that 2008 Olympics. Just my projection. I can’t even run 100 yards, so I really have no room to talk, except to say, let us all run beyond the line. Surpass the line. Get really deep in God. Oceans deep!

Look at what he did accomplish!

**Usain St Leo Bolt**, [OJ](#), [CD](#) ([/ˈjuːseɪn/](#);<sup>[12]</sup> born 21 August 1986) is a Jamaican former [sprinter](#). He is a world record holder in the [100 metres](#), [200 metres](#) and [4 × 100 metres relay](#). Owing to his achievements and dominance in sprint competition, he is widely considered to be the greatest sprinter of all time.<sup>[13][14][15][16]</sup>

An eight-time [Olympic gold medallist](#), Bolt is the only sprinter to win [Olympic 100 m](#) and [200 m](#) titles at three consecutive Olympics (2008, 2012 and 2016). In addition he won two 4 × 100 relay gold medals. He gained worldwide fame for his double sprint victory in world record times at the [2008 Beijing Olympics](#), which made him the first person to hold both records since [fully automatic time](#) became mandatory.

An eleven-time [World Champion](#), he won consecutive [World Championship 100 m](#), [200 m](#) and [4 × 100 metres relay](#) gold medals from 2009 to 2015, with the exception of a 100 m [false start](#) in 2011. He is the [most successful athlete](#) of the World Championships. Bolt is the first athlete to win four World Championship titles in the 200 m and is the joint-most successful in the 100 m with three titles.

Bolt improved upon his second [100 m world record](#) of 9.69 with 9.58 seconds in 2009 – the biggest improvement since the start of

electronic timing. He has twice broken the [200 metres world record](#), setting 19.30 in 2008 and 19.19 in 2009. He has helped Jamaica to three [4 × 100 metres relay world records](#), with the current record being 36.84 seconds set in 2012. Bolt's most successful event is the 200 m, with three Olympic and four World titles. The 2008 Olympics was his international debut over 100 m; he had earlier won numerous 200 m medals (including [2007 World Championship](#) silver) and holds the [world under-20](#) and [world under-18 records](#) for the event.

Who am I to judge him? Who am I to criticize the fastest man on the planet? Yet that's what I picked out to talk about today. I'm so judgemental!

Are we consistently winning the Gold like "lightning Bolt?"

Let me encourage us all to look beyond the gold, beyond the accolades of this world and to the heavenly realm, where God's approval is what is sought. How are we running and yet letting up? Do not grow weary in doing good.

### **2 Thessalonians 3:13**

But as for you, brethren, **do not grow weary of doing good.**

### **Galatians 6:9**

Let us **not** lose heart in **doing** good, for in due time we will reap if we **do not grow weary.**

On the one hand keep going until we cross the finish line.

On the other hand keep going.

It may be to pass up the grand and take care of the small. What seems insignificant to the world, may loom large in God's schema.

One way to get the A+ in God's score card is to do things in love. You get stars with love! Notes home to your parents that they are proud of. Not just of the fridge for a week, but hung in the hall for all to see as soon as they enter the house. Army brag wall, picture with President Reagan stuff. We can achieve these things in God's power. In His Love! Ask Him for help to Love. To never give up on loving. It is more important than Gold. It is the highest measure. So while I may not be able to waddle to victory in speed, I can love, love, love. I can also leave the judging up to God. I can share with God the pouring out of His Love into everyone. Love and Love again, even past the finish line.

So, Huperbolen, a throwing beyond, excess, superiority, surpassing excellence, preeminence, exceedingly.

It is "very emphatic" a term that means superlative, beyond measure. Supereminence, abundance (far more).

Not only is it excellent, its beyond, it surpasses excellent.

Exceed, to become better or stronger than.

To go beyond.

Negative would be overstep. Positive is follow-through.

Positive would be to transcend the reach, capacity, or powers of.

Transcend, out do, outstrip.

It's the "bestest ever"! Like Usain Bolt's lifetime of achievement.

Chocolate Ice Cream with nuts and fudge and caramel, dipped in chocolate on a chocolate stick.

Or super-pure vanilla, so vanilla, it glows!

## Slide 5 (Oreos)

Yes, Love. I'm going to trade on a Beatles Song and say— everything needs love. Altogether now, Love, love. Everything needs love. Without it, spiritually, it is bankrupt.

Jack Hayford in *the Spirit-Filled Bible* writes, “Let God’s unconditional love permeate your attitudes, motives, thoughts, words, and actions. Understand that love authenticates spiritual gifts” (p1669).

And so Paul writes chapter 13, in the middle of 12 and 14, which talk about the gifts. Its an oreo where the “cream” of love is smack dab in the middle of those chocolate cookies. Without the cream, the cookies are pretty good. But that cream makes it great. Double stuff! Cookies and cream is better together. Centered on love, the gifts empower us to achieve great things. Love our enemies. Be kind to those who persecute us. Forgive those who hurt us. Have Jesus forgive us of our mistakes, evil actions and what we call “sin”—every time we miss the mark of God’s surpassing excellence as our role model.

Now Jesus is the Prophet, High Priest and King, so it’s a pretty high mark. But just because it’s high, doesn’t mean we don’t reach for the stars! Let’s ask Him for help and see what happens. One day the Chiefs could win the Super Bowl. The Cubs could win the World Series. The United States could beat Russia for the gold medal. I could get saved and love everyone I meet. You know, the stuff of legend.

Last week my brother Dave Alford entered the realm of legend. He delivered a whole 18 wheeler full of toilet paper to

Pennsylvania last week. They are still writing ballads about him. Singing of the rescue he accomplished. Hero!

**Slide 6** In First Corinthians 13, Paul writes in verses 1-3 about the absolute necessity of love. Then in verses 4-7 Paul writes of the characteristics of love. Verses 8-13 contrasts the eternal qualities of love with temporal qualities of gifts.

**Slide 7 Necessity of Love (Empty deflated balloons)**

Hayford writes, “Without love the most magnificent manifestation of gifts and the most heroic sacrifices mean nothing” (SFLB1661).

“Right things,” he writes, “must be done the right way” (SFLB1661).

Love speaks of the “defining characteristics of God’s presence among His people. Therefore it should be the defining characteristic of God’s people themselves” (SFLB1661).

This is so important that, not only is it the more excellent way, but we should burn with desire for it. We should desire zealously, eagerly and intently seek it.

Remember, gifts are partial or not complete, without love, which is eternal. The temporal made eternal, the imperfect touched with perfection.

John 3:16 writes that “God so loved” that He acted in ways hard to see ourselves doing. Yet, His love makes the attempts possible.

1 John 4:7-10 also speaks to this.

1 John 4:7-10 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

## God Is Love

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup> By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

Let's look at this love more closely.

Even speaking in Angelic languages is “blah, blah, blah” without love. In other words, “so what?”

Paul writes of nothingness.

Without love, I am nothing. Our being is centered on love.

Without love, I gain nothing. Our doing comes out of love.

### **Slide 8 (Puzzle of Love, jigsaw? Wooden heart carving?)**

Patient, not impatient.

Kind, not unkind.

Content, not envious or jealous.

Humble, not boastful—gives credit to others (points out team members' accomplishments, points to God, giving glory to God).

Modest, not conceited. (self-effacing).

Propriety, not improperly.

Generous or Giving, not selfish. It's okay to save and plan, but use stewardship to be able to give as God leads.

Forgiving, not accounting and tracking, ledgering wrongs. Not listing and bringing up.

How would we like it if God did that?

Isn't that more like the accuser of the Brethren?

Does not take pleasure in sin, finds no joy in unrighteousness.

We need to be happy for others' successes—wishing them well—finding no joy in unrighteousness.

Finds joy in following God.

Rejoices in the truth.

Bears, not casts off. Enduring

Believes, not rejects, not starts with the worst.

Positive not Negative.

Hopes, not pessimistic.

Endures, not giving up.

Never ending, not passing or fleeting. Eternal!

Childish is selfish.

Love can be other-focused. It sure should be God-focused.

### **Slide 9 (Love is eternal)**

There will come a day, when language ends as we will be united again in heaven, like pre-Tower of Babel.

Prophecies will end as we will all be with the King, ruled by the Father in the Spirit.



We will all be fully cooperating with God, known and fully known.

We will be so united with Him that we will know and not need prophecy.

We will be fully alive and not need to speak life, it will just BE.

Prophecy speaks life to someone and calls forth the plan of God, calls forth who God made them to be.

When the perfect comes . . . the only perfect is God and Father sent His Son and Holy Spirit to interact with us and will one day again send Jesus. When Jesus left, He did so that the Holy Spirit, the comforter may come.

John 16:7 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**7 But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.**

The Bible is inerrant in its original translation, but only God is perfect.

**We live in a state of salvation.**

It is partially worked out and we work in this life to unfold it over a lifetime.

Sanctification—to be sanctified—to become saints, to become who God made us to be.

**Slide 10 (Jesus growing up)**

Even Jesus had to grow up into His full mission.

He was a child. He became a man. He became a prophet. He was destined to save us. He grew into what God had created Him to be and then did what He was supposed to do.

We speak life and growth to one another. Prophecy should never be condemning from us, calls someone to be all they can be. Speak life, not death. God is the judge.

John 3:17 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.**

Jesus's mission was to save the lost, reuniting them with the Father. Bring the prodigals and the pagans to the Father.

### Slide 11

Our mission is the same!

We speak life to one another and we help each other become more like the Messiah.

Paul encourages everyone walking this Path. It is appropriate to be children. Don't treat kids like little adults. Let them be kids. Grow them right. Disciple them.

When we are adults, be an adult. Adult is age and capacity defined.

We come to Jesus in open faith and trust of Jesus and Papa and Holy Spirit. We behave like grown ups now.

Not offendable. Mature and not childish.

We see with human eyes.

God help us see with your eyes.

Help us grow into all you created us to be.

Help us become all you plan for us.

Let us cooperate and be sanctified.

Soup-up my saintliness, Lord!

Soup's on! Esta Prendido!

Help us see clearly.

Now its imperfect, now its partial.

In heaven it is perfect. In heaven it is completed.

### Slide 12 Stalactite/Stalagmite

Our mission is to cooperate with God and bring heaven to earth.

One thought at a time. One act at a time.

One water drop making a stalagmite. ▲ Mound up and grow!

Uniting with God's stalactite ▼ (sometimes it is ⚡!)

Water saturated with minerals makes deposits.

We are not alone

Every drop we welcome from heaven.

Every living water act we receive from heaven and bring to fruition on earth.

### Slide 13 Aqueduct or highway.

It builds the link between heaven and earth. May it be a well-worn path, built up, superhighway!

It is the link to Jesus that gets us to Heaven. He is the ladder, the bridge, the way, the truth and the light.

John 14:6 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>6</sup> Jesus \*said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

He gives us the might, to hold tight to the light.

And bridge heaven into earth in the Spirit. To unite the two realms and make it earth more like heaven, make us more like the Messiah, the Christ, the King.

It takes Love.

Love to be mature and choose the harder right over the easier wrong.

### Slide 14 Grand Canyon

There are eternal things God brings us.

Faith, Hope, Love—the greatest of these is Love.

Pursue love. Not a hobby, it’s a lifestyle.

The same drop of heavenly water, living water, can make a groove and erode a path for more to flow.

What were your thought patterns before salvation?

There is an old groove that needs filling. I know a supernatural filler! Filled with the Holy Ghost! Fire! Living Water! All three at once! Esta Prendido! It’s On people! The switch is thrown, the light is on, we are home!

Fill the old and make a new groove Lord.

Re-make a pathway. Re-make an irrigation channel, for the heavenly thinking. Not stinkin' thinkin' but Joy Thinkin' Love thinkin' Peace thinkin'. A new way of seeing that forms templates that God fills. That we help fill by cooperating, by choosing God second by second. By asking Him what to do each time instead of assuming that what worked before is the way to go now. It may even work like it did before, but should we? *Should we* do it that way or does the Lord have a still more excellent way? Have we progress and are ready for the next thing? Let's do the next God thing He has for us! Right now! And, Right now!

Holy Spirit take captive my thoughts, you'll hear me say that over and over.

Holy Spirit make me Pneumatikon. Let me be submitted to God, under the influence of Pneuma, Holy Ghost. Ruach Hakodeth in the Hebrew. Ruach! God's Army! Hup! Hoop! Horeep! Hor! Open up the heavenly door!

Fill in the old like stalagmites.

Fill with sediment from living water rivers. Build up rich cropland like the Nile used to do. Overflow my banks lord and deposit your goodness, your residue, your grace accumulating and growing.

Raising crops of behaviors and thinking. Opening doors to You and your Triune will and presence!

Make an aqueduct stone by stone.

Verse by Verse.

Prayer by Prayer.

Drop by Saturated drop.

Fill up the old so it will not flow anymore down pagan paths.

Carve out a new heavenly path, so that's my reflex. That Love is my reflex. That turning to God is my reflex. That Thanking God, that praising God and that worshipping God is my reflexive action, trained thought. Like a Karate Man, Hiyah! I automatically respond as God has trained me, taught me, disciplined me. That I Judo the enemy and what he intended for evil, God uses for good.

Use some Good-do! Hiyah! We serve a Hiyah! Power in Jesus.

Holy Spirit bring those gifts to make it sweeter, more powerful, more edifying, more uplifting, more glorifying to God.

Carve out the new so that it becomes the new path, the permanent, sealed in the Holy Spirit chosen path to God and from God. Like a mountain sled path in Gatlinburg. Pipeline of purity and purpose. Whee! Richard was mad I went first. I was chicken. I rode the brake all the way down and he had to slow down. Reduced his Whee factor considerably. He and his friend Allan went back up the hill and almost came out of the pipeline!

Like the Olympic training ground near Salt Lake city. Bobsled rides in the off-season are \$40.00 and I heard the lady try to scream the whole way down. It took her breath away. Richard would be lining up. I'm saying you cannot pay me enough to do it, unless God says. If He says, I'm in.

Ate deer heart the other day. Lord Jesus protect me and I'm in.

Lord help me resist the old, and receive the new.

Dam up the old, and open the floodgates of heaven to saturate and irrigate and populate the church with more children of God,

more disciples, more blood-bought men and women of God choosing the godly Gospel life of redemption, renewal and adventure white water rafting with Ruach Hakodeth, on the River with Jesus, to the Father! To eternity and beyond!

Holy Ghost bring new springs of water.

Hydrate us with Holiness.

Bring us faith to trust you—to be open to your living water flow.

Bring us hope to hang on tight—to choose to cooperate.

Bring us Love to sustain and nurture us—love for living.

Love for sharing.

Mercy raindrops are falling.

Bring drops. Bring rain. Bring flood! I want a gully wusher of Godliness.

Help accelerate the process Lord.

Build the bridge up over night.

**Isaiah writes** Isaiah 57:14 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>14</sup> And it will be said,

“Build up, build up, prepare the way,

Remove every obstacle out of the way of My people.”

Let me agree with prophecy Lord.

Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstacle out of the way of My people.

And again in closing Isaiah 62 he writes:

Isaiah 62:10-12 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>10</sup> Go through, go through the gates,  
Clear the way for the people;  
Build up, build up the highway,  
Remove the stones, lift up a standard over the peoples.  
<sup>11</sup> Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth,  
Say to the daughter of Zion, “Lo, your salvation comes;  
Behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.”  
<sup>12</sup> And they will call them, “The holy people,  
The redeemed of the LORD”;  
And you will be called, “Sought out, a city not forsaken.”  
That’s going out the gates not in. We are already in.

We can go in and out as we need. Refill at the source and then  
take our aqueducts out with us. But go out.

Matthew 28:17-20 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>17</sup> When they saw Him, they worshiped *Him*; but some were  
doubtful. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “**All  
authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go  
therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in  
the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy  
Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and  
lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

Go out! Make easy the way. Remove the stones in the way. While  
we’re at it, why don’t we use the stones to make an aqueduct. We  
can travel on top of it! Rivers flow in it.

Make a Royal Highway into Zion, the Lord’s Glowing, Holy City!

Let us embody the eternal values.

Faithful to find you Lord, faithful to be faithful to you.

Hope to hold onto you. Hope to be hopeful in you.

Love to live with you. Love to abide in Abundant life.



Pursue—chase after—hobble after if you have to.

Choose God.

Choose Love—over and over!

Choose fullness in Him.

Desire and pursue Spiritual Gifts to accelerate and facilitate the process!

Help reach others.

Help us accomplish in accelerated.

One thought, one choice, one act, one second.

All adding up into a lifetime.

Let's deal with the little thing  
to be found faithful.

Let God help you each second.  
invite Him into everything.

1 Peter 4:11 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>11</sup> Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 14:31 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>31</sup> For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted;

Gain something, be something  
Seconds with God matter

They add up to a life.

Second and thirds and fourths and infinities!

Train like you mean to go on.

Become a man. Become a woman. Become an adult, no longer a child. Faithful like a child. Receptive and trusting like a child.

Responding on mission like a man. Barmitzvah, Batmitzvah.

God's Purpose: Eternal Life

John 10:10 & John 3:16

People's Problem: Sin and Separation

Romans 3:23

God's Solution: Jesus Christ

1 Peter 3:18

John 14:6

Prayer for Salvation: If you are ready to trust Jesus with your life,

Lord Jesus, I've gone my own way and sinned against you. Have mercy on me and forgive me my sin. I believe you are God's Son who died in my place, then rose from the dead with the power and authority to give me a new life. Thanks for making me a child of God. I now surrender my life to you and your purposes. Give me, by your Holy Spirit, the boldness to confess my faith in you to others. I ask this in your name, Jesus, Amen (it is so). (*Fire Bible* xi) Now, tell someone, start praying, read the Bible, Get involved. You have a whole new family to get to know and work with!

Let the adventure begin!

## Living the Life of Christ

### **Astonished**

I just have to share this passage with you today from The Ragamuffin Gospel by Brennan Manning.

“We should be astonished at the goodness of God, stunned that He should bother to call us by name, our mouths wide open at His love, bewildered that at this very moment we are standing on holy ground.

“Every parable of mercy in the gospel was addressed by Jesus to His opponents: murmuring scribes, grumbling Pharisees, critical theologians, members of the Sanhedrin. They are the enemies of the gospel of grace, indignant because Jesus asserts that God cares about sinners, incensed that He should eat with people they despised. What does He tell them?

*“These sinners, these people you despise are nearer to God than you. It is not the hookers and thieves who find it difficult to repent. It is you who are secure in your piety and pretense that you have no need of conversion. They may have disobeyed God’s call, their professions have debased them, but they have shown sorrow and repentance. But more than any of that, these are the people who appreciate His goodness: They are parading into the kingdom before you for they have what you lack – a deep gratitude for God’s love and deep wonder at His mercy.”*

Am I “astonished at the goodness of God”? Am I “stunned that He should bother to call” my name? Is my mouth agape at His love or “bewildered” at my status in

His eyes?

Sometimes, yes. But too often I tend to exhibit the tendencies of the Pharisees – comparing my righteousness and good works to that of others and judging them and myself accordingly.

Oh my dear God, forgive me! I have whored after other gods, and yet You have never stopped loving and pursuing me.

Yes, I am so grateful. Thank You, thank You, thank You!

I want to love You like Jesus does. I want that freedom and joy. I want that “wonder” at Your love and creation. Surprise me; amaze me. I want to share that with You.

Isn't it wonderful to be loved?

Bobby