

LOVE LASTS
THE CHURCH BODY – PART 6
1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-13

LOVE NEVER FAILS

1. Throughout all eternity divine love will **never end** (1 Cor. 13:8).
2. Many of the Corinthians constantly had their eyes riveted on the **gifts** rather than the **Gift Giver**.
3. The Corinthian church was being influenced and corrupted by the secular **culture**.

KEY THOUGHT: Divine love is God's greatest gift to **Christians** in contrast to the **temporary** nature of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 13:8-13).

I. GIFTS ARE TEMPORARY (1 COR. 13:8-10).

- A. There is **no** moment in time when divine love **fails** (1 Cor. 13:8a).
 1. Divine love is **permanent** and outlasts **failures** (1 Pet. 4:8).
 2. The Corinthians had repeatedly chosen to pursue the highly **prized** spiritual gifts rather than nurture their love for God.
 3. Divine love is the **preeminent** characteristic of God Himself (1 John 4:16).
- B. Gifts will **pass away** (1 Cor. 13:8b).
 1. Prophecy and knowledge would become inoperative when "**the perfect**" causes them to stop.
 2. Divinely taught languages would **stop** at some point.
- C. Gifts are **temporary** (1 Cor. 13:9-10).
 1. It is not hard to understand that we only know God in **part** because God does not reveal **all** to us.

2. These gifts are “fill-ins” for the state we will experience when we come into **God’s presence**.

KEY THOUGHT: The “perfect” we will have when we are in **eternity** in the presence of the **living** God (1 Cor. 13:10; 1 John 5:20).

II. OUR PARTIAL KNOWLEDGE WILL GIVE WAY TO TOTAL COMPREHENSION (1 COR. 13:11-12).

- A. The **limited** knowledge we possess today of the Bible and our God will be gone **forever** when we are in His presence.
- B. Today, we are limited in our knowledge even with God’s Word to **guide** us.

III. LOVE IS ETERNAL (1 COR. 13:13).

- A. Three of the greatest earthly spiritual virtues: **faith**, **hope**, and love.
 1. Faith and hope are embodied in **love** (1 Cor. 13:4, 7).
 2. Faith and hope will have **no purpose** in heaven when all is known and everything is good.
- B. Love is the **greatest** of these three.
 1. Love is **supreme** (1 John 4:8).
 2. Love is the only spiritual virtue to **continue** into eternity.

KEY THOUGHT: Gifts, ministries, faith, and hope will one day **cease** because they will have no **purpose** when we stand in God’s presence.

FOR FURTHER STUDY AND PERSONAL GROWTH

January 23, 2011

SUNDAY: ***Accepting that God loves you and reveling in His love is as important as pursuing any other spiritual truth (1 Cor. 13:8-13)!*** Love will never fail or “collapse”. Throughout all eternity, divine love will never end (1 Cor. 13:8). Love will last! Over against this permanence Paul set the certainty that spiritual gifts will pass away. Many of the Corinthian Christians constantly had their eyes riveted on obtaining the highly prized gifts rather than gazing intently on the Gift Giver. As a result, the Corinthian church was being influenced and corrupted by the secular culture. They were not the salt that Jesus intended. Paul was trying to be demonstrative that divine love is God’s greatest gift to Christians in contrast to the temporary nature of spiritual gifts. Do you believe that God is love (1 John 4:8)? Do you fully accept God’s love for you? Do you see God’s love as unconditional and unwavering? Rest quietly in the Lord and meditate on 1 John 4:8-9. Thank the Lord that He sent His Son to redeem sinners to Himself. ***May your acceptance of God’s love change your perspective on your relationship with God!***

MONDAY: ***There is no moment in time when divine love fails (1 Pet. 4:8)!*** Divine love is permanent and outlasts our failures (1 Pet. 4:8). The idea presented is that God is willing to love man despite his rebellion. The Corinthians had repeatedly chosen to pursue the highly prized spiritual gifts rather than nurture their love for God. It is a love one Christian nurtures for another Christian. It is a positional love that is willing to be stretched to the breaking point by the other’s sin and damaging behavior. This command does not temper the need to discipline sin or an unrepentant church member (Matt. 18:15-18). It simply means to try and overlook sins against you if you can. Fortunately, at no time does divine love ever fail. Continue to sit before the Lord and enjoy basking in His love for you. Softly praise Him and thank the Lord for the mercy and forgiveness demonstrated in your salvation. ***May the reality of God’s unfailing love bring great peace and enthusiasm to your Christian life!***

TUESDAY: ***All spiritual gifts will pass away when you enter God’s presence (1 Cor. 13:10)!*** Entering into the presence of “the perfect” will mean that the gifts of prophecy and knowledge will become inoperative. These gifts will be unnecessary. These gifts are operating today because the condition for their cessation has not been met. Divinely taught languages have met the criterion for ceasing. The word for cease used a middle voice to indicate a reflexive, self-causing action. There is a built-in stop that simply drained their power and automatically ended their activity. Not too many years after Paul wrote this letter, the gifts of tongues came to an end. Paul did not know that when he wrote this letter, but it was to be an example when it did happen of the permanence of love compared to anything else in the spiritual realm. Ministries, church jobs, and even physical activity will come and go in your life. However, the love of God is permanent in your life for all eternity. Pause and be still before God to sense His presence. Thank Him for the love He has showered on your life through your salvation and His constant provision for you. ***May the permanence of God’s love become a “warm blanket” comforting your spirit and deepening your love for God!***

WEDNESDAY: ***Spiritual gifts are temporary and temporal (1 Cor. 13:9-10)!*** Christians can easily become enamored with what is immediately in front of them. It is our selfish nature to

desire what we feel or think will give us the most pleasure. Our self-love is great. It is not hard to understand that we only know God in part. God has not revealed Himself fully to us. The Corinthian Christians were seeking the temporary spiritual gifts and missing the main point surrounding God's eternal love. These gifts were merely "fill-in" for the presence of God. One day each Christian will stand in God's presence, and these coveted gifts will not be important or valuable. Stop to be quiet. Ask God to allow you to imagine how glorious His presence will be. What is it you want now? Once the option of being in God's presence is considered, that is all we really want. ***May the permanent love of God grip your heart and bring you into a sense of personal worship!***

THURSDAY: ***Our limited knowledge will give way to total comprehension in God's presence (1 Cor. 13:11-13)!*** Why are we so possessive of crumbs when we can have the whole loaf of bread? The limited knowledge we possess today of the Bible and our God will be gone forever when we are in His presence. Despite all of our academic pursuits, we really only know what God has revealed about Himself. Some continue to search more deeply for truths that do not exist. The search for the historical Jesus is one such apparition. We have limited knowledge regarding some topics raised in the Bible. We will just have to be content with that information until we are in God's presence. After resting in the Lord until your heart is quiet, whisper your gratitude for the revelation God has provided to us about His kingdom. Praise Him for the Bible we hold and study. ***May the love of the Lord be invaluable to you as you study the Bible to help you love God more!***

FRIDAY: ***Faith and hope are encompassed in divine love (1 Cor. 13:4, 7)!*** Paul ends this section by contrasting the here and now with our future in God's presence. The concept is that "in conclusion" consider these three spiritual virtues as really one. Paul said earlier that faith and hope were encompassed in love (1 Cor. 13:4, 7). By adding "these three" they are being set aside from discussion with every other spiritual virtue. These three are preeminent. We are to live by faith in the Son of God (Gal. 2:20). Christians are to have more than the mild optimism of the world. They have the Living Hope in God (Rom. 15:13). Do you have complete faith in God, or do you place a fair portion in your own ability? Is your life filled with the "living hope" of Jesus Christ? Most Christians would have to honestly answer those questions sheepishly. You do not have too. Stop and pray. Allow silence to surround you like a cocoon. Decide to trust the Creator of the universe to keep the promises He gave in you in the Bible. Obediently follow His commands. Place all your hope in Him. Be still as God confirms in your heart that He is actively participating with you as you pray. ***May the decisions you made today seep deep into your heart and change your perspective about everything!***

SATURDAY: ***Love is supreme (1 John 4:8)!*** It is fitting that the last word in this chapter is love. Paul was emphasizing for the Corinthians that the greatest spiritual possession was not the gift of tongues, but faith, hope, and especially love. Remember the Corinthians were having trouble observing a civil communion service (1 Cor. 11:17-33). Love is supreme (1 John 4:8, 16). Paul states that love is the spiritual virtue of the three that will continue on into eternity. The application for us today in the church is that all the gifts, ministries, faith, and hope will one day have no purpose when we stand in the presence of God. Pray for the strength to be filled with God's love and have it demonstrated through faith and hope. ***May your growth this week spur you to love your neighbor as yourself and God above everything in life!***