



IN THE NAME OF LOVE DEVOTIONAL

LOVE NEVER ENDS | NOVEMBER 29, 2020

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Starter: What are some words you would use to describe God's love

Key Passage: *"Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."* (1 Corinthians 13:8-13)

In this final section of the "Love Chapter," Paul emphasizes the preeminence of love.

1. Spiritual gifts are temporary, but love will never end.

"Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away." (v.8-10)

Paul contrasts the eternal nature of love with the temporal nature of spiritual gifts that will one day end.

One day in the future:

- All prophecies will be fulfilled (v.8a).
- The miraculous gift of speaking in languages for the purpose of spreading the gospel will no longer be needed (v.8b).
- God's unfolding plan will be completed, and thus knowledge of it will be full (v.8c). All that we know about eternity is through revelation and prophecy, and it is a limited understanding (v.9). But when Christians are glorified in Heaven, the "perfect" (v.10) or "completion" will have come and our limited knowledge will be comprehensive.

Discuss: Why do you think Paul chose the specific spiritual gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge to contrast the temporal nature of spiritual gifts with the eternal nature of love?

Discuss: How would you advise a new Christian to use his/her spiritual gifts for God's glory while also keeping in mind that those gifts are temporal and only love is eternal?

2. When we see Jesus in Heaven, our knowledge of Him and His love for us will no longer be dimmed by the limitations that hinder us now.

“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” (v.11-12)

Paul emphasizes that for now, we are like children in our speaking, thinking, and knowledge of Jesus and love, but in Heaven we will reach full spiritual maturity and our childish ways will be behind us—we will “*know fully*” (v.12)! Paul illustrates the contrast between our current limited knowledge and our future mature knowledge by using a mirror (v.12). Our current understanding of Jesus and the fullness of His love is like looking at our reflection in a clouded mirror, but in Heaven we will experience Him with no hindrances because we will see Him openly and freely “*face to face*” (v.12; 1 John 3:2). Just as turning off lesser lights indoors helps us appreciate the sun’s brighter light outside, turning off “lesser lights” of spiritual gifts and immature knowledge helps us appreciate the brighter light of Christ Himself in Heaven.

Discuss: What are you excited to know more fully about in Heaven?

Discuss: Why do you think waits until we get to Heaven to reveal His purposes and ways more fully?

3. Of the three great Christian pursuits—faith, hope, and love—only love is eternal.

“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (v.13)

We see faith, hope, and love mentioned together several times in the New Testament (Galatians 5:5-6; Colossians 1:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 5:8). But in Heaven, faith and hope will no longer be needed—they will have fulfilled their purpose. We will see Christ face-to-face; thus, faith will no longer be required and hope will be complete. But we will forever love God and be loved by God in Heaven—thus, love is the greatest. In this last verse of the Love Chapter, Paul is bringing his thought full circle: In our pursuit of faith and hope, we must always keep love as our motive and goal; otherwise, everything else is meaningless.

Discuss: In what ways does Christianity’s emphasis on love set it apart from other religions and worldviews (such as Atheism)?

Resources:

The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman

“Why is Love the Greatest?” at www.biblestudytools.com

The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God by D.A. Carson