

I. Introduction: Paul exhorted the Corinthians to love one another because love is the one thing that never fades away, and it should be the supreme virtue of the church.

A. Paul wanted the Corinthians to value love above everything else, including all of the spiritual gifts they could possess because it is the only thing of eternal worth.

II. The Greatness of Love (1 Cor 13:8-13).

A. Love Is Eternal (v. 8).

1. Paul told the Corinthians that love is the only thing that will last because unlike spiritual gifts that will fade away, the love of God lasts forever.

B. Love Is Perfect (vv. 9-10).

1. Paul emphasized that the spiritual gifts were temporary endowments given by the Holy Spirit and were limited because they were only a glimpse of spiritual reality.

C. Love Is Mature (vv. 11-12).

1. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to continue to grow in their knowledge and giftedness but to realize that those gifts would one day disappear.

D. Love Is Superior (v. 13).

1. Paul concluded this chapter on love by stating that love is superior to everything since it will continue on in eternity because of Jesus' finished work.

III. Conclusion: Paul told the Corinthians that love is the greatest of all virtues because it is what God will lavish on His people forever as they see Him face to face.

Questions About: The Greatness of Love

1. What is the most important thing the church needs? **(1 Cor 13:1-13)** What are the two greatest commandments in the Bible? **(Matt 22:34-40)** How do they sum up God's law?
2. What did Paul mean when he said, "Love never fails"? **(1 Cor 13:8)** What is the definition of the gift of prophecy? **(1 Cor 14:3)** Knowledge? How were they to be "done away with"?
3. How would you describe the gift of tongues? **(Acts 2:7-11)** What did Paul say would happen to tongues? **(1 Cor 13:8)** Why did Paul use a different verb to describe its ceasing?
4. What did Paul mean that we "know" and "prophecy" in part? **(1 Cor 13:9-10)** How is our knowledge of God only partial? How is preaching only partial? How is love complete?
5. What is "the perfect" that Paul said would do away with the partial? **(1 Cor 13:10)** Is the perfect the completion of the NT? Is it the return of Jesus? Is it heaven? Why or why not?
6. How were the Corinthians acting like little children with their spiritual gifts? **(1 Cor 13:11-12)** How do children act? Do you still act like a child? Have you put away childish things?
7. How was their knowledge like looking into a mirror dimly? **(1 Cor 13:12)** What were ancient mirrors like? How will our knowledge one day be perfect? **(1 John 3:2)** Why?
8. What did Paul say was superior to faith and hope? **(1 Cor 13:13)** Why is love more important than spiritual gifts? How is heaven a place of perfect love? Does that appeal to you?

Prayer

1. Ask God to show you how you need to prioritize love above all other attributes.
2. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit so that you can love other Christians.