

1 C O R I N T H I A N S 1 3

LOVE

# 10,000 FT VIEW

- AUTHOR: Apostle Paul
- The City of Corinth was a hub of commerce, attracting many travelers through the region.
- Corinth was renowned for its wealth and as the center of worship for Aphrodite, the goddess of love and immorality.
- Corinth gained the notoriety of a port city and was widely known for prostitution and other vices.
- Some of the climate had infected the church in Corinth, such as Gnosticism (a term derived from the Greek word gnosis, meaning knowledge).
- The Corinthian church was young and multiethnic. Corinth was a cosmopolitan city that was populated by Romans, Greeks, Jews, and other ethnic groups from all over the Mediterranean, as well as international visitors passing through the city.

# 5,000 FT VIEW

- Chapter 1 - 6 : Paul Confronts Sin in the Church
- Chapter 7 - 16 : Paul Answers the Corinthians' Questions

# 1,000 FT VIEW

- Chapter 12 - Different Spiritual Gifts
  - These gifts come from the HOLY SPIRIT
  - What does the Holy Spirit do?

# WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- God gives his Holy Spirit to all who come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:19; Gal 3:2-5, Eph 1:13-14)
- The Spirit brings new life in Christ.
- He affirms believers' salvation (1 Cor 6:11, 2 Thes 2:13) and their identity as children of God (Rom 8:9, 14-17)
- Holy Spirit gives Christians power over sin (Rom 1:1-4), power to live a fruitful life (Gal 5:22-23), and power for ministry (1 Cor 12:1-31)
- Believers are to be continuously "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Eph 5:18)
- Though they experience the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, they can please God by yielding to the Spirit's guidance and power (Gal 5:16-18)
- The Holy Spirit enables Christians to understand God's thoughts and ways (1 Cor 2:9-16)
- He gives spiritual gifts to believers to help the church grow (12:1-31)
- The Spirit leads and empowers their worship as they use the gifts that the Spirit has given them (14:26-33, 39-40)
- The Spirit guarantees that believers will receive all the blessings that God has promised (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13-14)
- The Spirit helps believers and prays for them in their human weakness (Rom 8:26)
- The goal of the Spirit's work is to make them like Christ (Rom 8:28-29)

# SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Words of wisdom
- Word of knowledge
- Great faith
- Gift of healing
- Power to perform miracles
- Ability to prophesy
- Ability to discern
- Ability to speak in various tongues
- Ability to interpret tongues

# ROLES IN THE CHURCH

- First are the apostles
- Second are prophets
- Third are teachers
- Those who do miracles
- Those who have the gift of healing
- Those who can help others
- Those who have the gift of leadership
- Those who speak in unknown languages

# TARGET VIEW

- Chapter 13 - The Way of Love

## 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13 (English Standard Version)

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 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. 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. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

# TARGET VIEW

- The Greek word for love is agape. “God’s love completely transcends all human ideas or expressions of love. ‘It is a love for the utterly unworthy, a love which proceeds from a God who is love. It is a love lavished on others without a thought of whether they are worthy to receive it or not. It proceeds rather from the nature of the lover, than from any merit in the beloved’.

David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*

# 1 CORINTHIANS 13

- Verse 1 -3: The absence of love
- Verse 4-7: The nature of love
- Verse 8-13: The endlessness of love

# 1 CORINTHIANS 13

- Verse 1 -3: The absence of love
  - WITHOUT LOVE, it offends others
  - WITHOUT LOVE, we are insignificant before God
  - WITHOUT LOVE, nothing is gained: the effort, the sacrifice, is wasted

# 1 CORINTHIANS 13

- Verse 4-7: The nature of love
  - Verses 4-5, Love simply does not do these things: it does not give in to jealousy, showing-off or arrogance; it resists the temptation to react rudely or selfishly
  - Verses 5-6, Paul mentions three ways in which we can easily allow the weaknesses, sins, and failures of others to force us into lovelessness:
    - being provoked by rudeness
    - gloating over the failures of others (particularly keeping a list of wrongs committed)
    - rejoicing when others fail and fall
  - Verse 7, This verse makes it plain that love is no human quality, but the gift of God himself

# 1 CORINTHIANS 13

- Verse 8-13: The endlessness of love
  - This love never folds under pressure of the most intense and sustained kind.
  - This love continues through death into eternity. This is the love of God.
  - The Corinthians prioritized the importance of the three spiritual gifts; tongues, prophecy and knowledge. Each of these will either become irrelevant or else be swallowed up in the perfection of eternity: for when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away (10).
  - If the Corinthians majored on tongues, prophecy and knowledge, Paul focuses attention on faith, hope and love. These three qualities are the ones which remain and will last forever.

# Practical Application

Are there divisions among us caused by focusing on certain Christian heroes, or do we strive for unity?

Do we value tolerance so highly that we do not confront sinners?

Are we more interested in the wisdom of this world than the wisdom that comes from God?

Do we follow biblical instruction concerning marriage and sexual relationships?

Are we using the spiritual gifts God gave us to serve others or to glorify ourselves?

Do we think about how our actions might be a stumbling block to others and thus consider them more highly than ourselves?