

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians

The Endurance of Love

1 Corinthians 13:8-12

1. Love Never Fails (v.8)

The spiritual gifts with which the Corinthian church was so enamored (cf. 1 Cor. 12:21ff) have a built in expiration-date for their usefulness, but love absolutely does not. Paul's point in this whole section is to magnify the fact that love is necessary now for any ministry (vs.1-3) and that its usefulness will endure longer than those gifts which men may find more appealing.

2. The Other Gifts Will Be Obsolete (vs.8-10)

The gifts of knowledge, of prophecy, and tongues are all related to knowing and understanding God during the time when we are not with Him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil 1:23). Because we are limited by our current state, even our knowledge and understanding of those things which He has clearly revealed about Himself is limited. Once we are with the Lord and see Him face to face, every restriction to our understanding that was connected to this life will be gone. Those gifts intended only for our benefit here will no longer have a useful purpose because they will have served and fulfilled their purpose.

3. The Other Gifts are Necessary and Good Now (vs.11-12)

The gifts of the Spirit which we have today are absolutely vital for our life of faith (1 Cor. 12:4ff). God has given His gifts to us so that we would be built up in Him (Eph. 4:12; cf. 1 Cor. 14:12). When we are with the Lord we will understand Him better than we do now (cf. 1 John 3:2). A partial understanding of Him now is good and it is all that we could handle (Ex. 33:18-23; cf. Num 12:8), when we see Him directly we will no longer have any need of the mirror He has provided.