

1 Corinthians, Chapter 13

Having discussed good order at public worship and the proper observance of the Lord's Supper, St. Paul continues with spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit who leads people to faith in Jesus Christ, also gives them a variety of services for the common good of the church. **Read: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.**



1. Chapter 13 begins (1 Cor. 13:1-3) by comparing love to several of the spiritual gifts mentioned in chapter 12. What makes love superior to those gifts?
2. **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** define love by how it acts. How is the love St. Paul describes compared to the way the fallen world describes love today?
3. Our knowledge of God and our ability to tell others everything about Him will remain incomplete or imperfect until perfection comes (1 Cor. 13:9-10). The word "perfect" here means complete, or fulfilled.
 - a. What does Paul say about himself in this state of imperfection in Philippians 3:12?
 - b. What do you think Paul would say to you as you struggle with your own incompleteness?
 - c. What does 1 Cor. 15:51-54 say about when we shall be made perfect?
4. In 1 Cor. 13:12, Paul is anticipating when perfection is a reality. What are you looking forward to seeing or knowing when everything has been made perfect in the world to come?
5. How are knowing and being known by God in a personal relationship with Him related to one another? (Consider: 1 Cor. 13:12b)
6. "Faith, hope, and love abide," Paul says. These three are often spoken about together or in different combinations. How does **1 Thessalonians 1:3** speak of the effect of each of these in the Christian life?
7. Why is "love" the greatest of the three? (**1 Cor. 13:13**)

The Four Types of Love

Agape (ἀγάπη): selfless, unconditional, and sacrificial love. (John 3:16)

Eros (Ἔρως): marital love. Sensual love between people who are sexually attracted to each other. (Song of Solomon)

Philia (φιλία): brotherly love, a close friendship. Linked with loyalty and companionship. The type of love for parents, siblings, family members, close friends. (Acts 16:1-3; 17:14-15)

Storge (στοργή): Love between family members, friends. Built on a familiarity between people that develops over time. (Luke 10; John 11)



Closing Prayer: (from LSB 706 – Love in Christ Is Strong and Living)

1 Love in Christ is strong and living,
Binding faithful hearts in one;
Love in Christ is true and giving.
May His will in us be done.

2 Love is patient and forbearing,
Clothed in Christ's humility,
Gentle, selfless, kind, and caring,
Reaching out in charity.

3 Love in Christ abides forever,
Fainting not when ills attend;
Love, forgiving and forgiven,
Shall endure until life's end. Amen.

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