

### 33. Learning Why Godly Love Endures

In our last topic, we looked at the Biblical meaning of godly love. We saw that love is patient with others and that love is kind to others. We also saw that godly love avoids eight things. Finally, we concluded by seeing that godly love does five things. We concluded our last topic by saying that love never fails. Today, we are going to see that everything else will one day come to an end but that love will never come to an end. Instead, love will last for all eternity because love will never fail.

In 1 Corinthians 13:8, we read, “Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away.” In this verse, we see that love is contrasted with three things. Each of these three things will come to an end but love will never come to an end. In this verse, we are reminded that these and all spiritual gifts will come to an end and will not last for eternity. The word that is translated “prophecy” is used 19 times in the New Testament. In its technical sense, 2 Peter 1:19-21 says, “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.” Here, we see that the prophecies of Scripture were given to men as the Holy Spirit moved them.

From Revelation 22:18-19, we know that nothing new is to be added to the Word of God after the book of Revelation. Those verses say, “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.” As a result, we know that no one today can add anything to the Bible.

However, we are commanded to study and obey what has already been written in the Bible. 1 Thessalonians 5:20 says, “Do not despise prophecies.” In addition, we also see that we are to speak the written Word of God to others to help others grow. 1 Corinthians 14:22 says, “Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.” In the book of Acts, we see that tongues were a sign to the unbelieving Jews. This even included Jewish believers that did not believe that the Gospel was for the Gentiles. Acts 11:17-18 says, “‘If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave* us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?’ When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.’” Here, we see that we are to speak the Word of God to help Christians grow. When prophecy is used in this sense, 1 Corinthians 14:3 tells us, “But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.”

However, the day will come when we are face to face with the Lord for eternity and there will be no need for prophecy. Paul said that tongues will cease in and of themselves because once the Word of God was complete there was no longer a need to keep showing the unbelieving Jews that

the message of the Gospel was from the Lord. In addition, the day will come when the various languages of the world will cease and what happened at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9 because of sin will be reversed and we will all understand one another. Knowledge will also vanish away and not be eternal because Revelation 22:4 says, “They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads.” When we get to eternity, we will know all things.

1 Corinthians 13:9-10 say, “For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.” Paul said that we know the will of God in the present day through the Scriptures. However, when we reach eternity, the perfect has come and there will not be a need for what is partial.

Paul illustrates this in a very interesting way in 1 Corinthians 13:11. That verse says, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” The word that is translated “child” speaks of a child who is at an age where he cannot yet speak clearly (a toddler about one or two years old). In three other passages, this word is used to describe the Christian that is spiritually immature. Those passages are 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, Ephesians 4:14, and Hebrews 5:11-14. Those passages point out how immature Christians think and act. Here, we see that Paul describes his own life when he was a toddler. His speaking was limited. His understanding was limited. His thinking was limited. However, when he became mature he did away with the things of a toddler in his life. Here, we see that when we are with the Lord in eternity that our spiritual immaturity will be gone. In these passages, we see the following ten characteristics of an immature Christian:

1. He acts like one who is not a Christian - 1 Corinthians 3:1
2. He is not able to understand difficult teachings from the Word - 1 Corinthians 3:2
3. He experiences envy, strife and divisions - 1 Corinthians 3:3
4. His talk, understanding and thinking of spiritual things is limited - 1 Corinthians 13:11
5. He is tossed to and fro by every false teaching - Ephesians 4:14
6. He is easily deceived by false teachers - Ephesians 4:14
7. He is dull of hearing to spiritual truth - Hebrews 5:11
8. He needs to be retaught the basics of Christianity - Hebrews 5:12
9. He is unskillful in the word of righteousness - Hebrews 5:13
10. His senses are not developed to recognize good and evil - Hebrews 5:14

The Corinthian Christians certainly demonstrated these characteristics in their lives. Just as Paul put away these things as he matured, we want to help our children learn to help struggling Christians mature so that they are able to put these things away in their own lives. The word that is translated “put away” means *to cause to cease*. Struggling Christians will see these things begin to cease in their lives as they learn to yield their human spirit to the Holy Spirit. As they learn to yield moment by moment, their lives begin to be led by the love of Christ instead of continuing to be driven by the fear of people. As they learn to yield, they become mature in their Christian lives.

1 Corinthians 13:12 says, “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.” Today, we have the blessing of having the New Testament which was not true at the time that Paul wrote to the Corinthians. Through the

New Testament, we see many things about Christ. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Through the eyes of those who walked with Christ we are able to learn many things about Christ. In addition, Christ promised in John 14:16-17, ““And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”” As a result, we have the Holy Spirit living within us to teach us.

In fact, Galatians 2:20 also says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Here, we see that Christ lives in us. However, these ways that we can know Christ are like a foggy mirror compared to the time when we will see Christ face to face.

1 Corinthians 13:13 says, “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.” Today, we walk by faith not by sight. We have the same faith as Abraham. Hebrews 11:9-10 says, “By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.” We are looking forward to our eternal home by faith. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 says, “So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” Here, we see that that we must walk by faith now because we do not see Christ face to face. One day, we will see face to face and will see Him clearly and will no longer need faith.

Today, we also walk in hope. In fact, Titus 2:13 says, “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Our confident hope is based on the return of Christ to take us to heaven. Romans 8:24 says, “For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?” When Christ takes us to heaven, we will no longer need hope.

However, love is the greatest because love is eternal. In 1 John 4:8-10, we see that love is the character of God so it is eternal. Those verses say, “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.” We want to help our children learn to understand and be able to explain the fact that love is the character of God and because of that His love is eternal. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why love endures forever.