

## 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

### The Greatest Mark of Christian Maturity

*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. (1 Corinthians 13:8-13 ESV)*



They were missing out on what was really extraordinary- the basics of Christian living.

*“...clumsy hands have touched a thing of exquisite beauty and holiness. Here what is true of all Scripture is true in especial measure, that no comment can be adequate to so great a theme. Yet no commentator can excuse himself from the duty of trying to make plain what these matchless words have come to signify for him. And no Christian can excuse himself from the duty of trying to show in his life what these words have come to mean for him.” (Leon Morris)*

#### I. The time for spiritual gifts is now (v.8).

*Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because*

*we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. (1 Corinthians 4:8-10 ESV)*

II. We mature now, and will be full grown then (vv. 9-12).

*But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. (1 Corinthians 3:1-3 ESV)*

III. Three marks of true maturity (v.13)

*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of **your faith in Christ Jesus** and of the **love that you have for all the saints**, because of the **hope laid up for you in heaven**. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, (Colossians 1:3-5 ESV)*

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father **your work of faith** and **labor of love** and **steadfastness of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 ESV)

- Faith is what joins us to Christ.
- Hope is the confidence the Christian has in the future.
- Love is what you express in action and goodwill to your fellow man, especially the family of God.

*"...love is preeminently the grace which makes a man useful. It is the spring of good works and kindnesses. It is the root of missions, schools, and hospitals. Love made apostles spend and be spent for souls. Love raises up workers for Christ and keeps them working. Love smooths quarrels, and stops strife, and in this sense "covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). Love adorns Christianity and recommends it to the world. A man may have real faith, and feel it, and yet his faith may be invisible to others. But a man's love cannot be hidden." (JC RYLE).*

Three reasons for the superiority of love:

1. Love is the only of the three that God does.
2. Love is the only of the three that will directly benefit others.
3. Love is the only of the three that will last into eternity.