



## COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE 1 CORINTHIANS 13

*This study guide is to help individuals and groups learn and apply the truths of Scripture to where you are in life right now. To get the most from this study guide, work through it on your own before gathering with your community group.*

### Introduction

1 Corinthians 13 is one of the most well-known passages in the Bible. The “love” chapter. It is often quoted at weddings to describe what love is, but to only think of 1 Corinthians 13 in this context really limits our understanding. Chapter 13 falls within the latter half of 1 Corinthians where Paul has exhorted how church members are to interact as a church body, specifically within the chapters dealing with spiritual gifts.

It might first appear that an explanation of love in chapter 13 is out of place, since chapters 12 and 14 directly deal with spiritual gifts. Yet chapter 13 is a necessary link in Paul’s argument for how believers are to use spiritual gifts. Each instance of the word “love” in chapter 13 is the Greek word “agape.” “Agape” is selfless love, the kind of love that we see when looking to the cross. “The cross is the paradigm case of the act of will and stance which places welfare of others above the interests of the self.”<sup>1</sup>

The structure of chapter 13 is divided into 3 blocks. Paul begins by emphasizing that no matter what spiritual gift is evident in a person’s life, even to an exaggerated degree, without love it is nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Then, using entirely verbs, he describes what love is and what love is not (1 Cor. 13:4-7). Lastly, he draws out how love is eternal (1 Cor. 13:8-13). The Corinthian church was fractured and immature. Members of the church were propping themselves up in the use of their spiritual gifts, while also putting others down in the body. Chapter 13 is the antidote to such a toxic community. Love should abolish artificial distinctions between members and draw them into self-sacrificing fellowship as a body.

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<sup>1</sup> Thiselton, 1035.

## Opening Questions

- In your opinion, what is the best love song of all time? Why?
- What was your one big takeaway from this weekend's message?

## Read 1 Corinthians 13

- Why is the context of where this passage is in the letter important to understanding what Paul says?
- From vv 1-3, why do good spiritual acts gain "nothing" for us if we do them without love?
- From vv 4-6: how is this love different from the love the corinthians had shown one another in chapters 1-12?
- This love seems so beautiful and simple in this passage. Why is loving like this so difficult?
- From v 8 - 10 - What does he mean by the spiritual gifts "passing away?" Why is that a good thing?
- How come love will not pass away?
- It seems like the hope of heaven continues to pop up in 1 Corinthians. Why is that hope so important in the life of the believer?
- When you compare the way you love others to this standard in 1 Cor 13, where do you fall short?
- How does the gospel give you hope in your failure to love people as christ loves them?

## 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

V. 1: “There is a simple format here: *If I do or have X; but I have not love; I am Y.*”<sup>2</sup> (On the other hand,) “although λαλῶ and ἔχω could be indicative (if I speak; if I do not have), the use of μή rather than οὐ, coupled with ἐάν rather than εἰ, establishes that Paul uses the subjunctive, and is perhaps best translated as, ‘If I were to speak in human or in angelic tongues, but if I had not love, I would have become.’”<sup>3</sup>

“Paul’s inclusion of the first gift of ‘speaking with tongues’ appears to confirm it is among the approved ministries within the church. But, without ‘love’ such speech is like ‘a noisy bronze or clanging cymbal’.<sup>4</sup> “No language in earth or heaven is to be compared with the practice of love. It is easy enough to be fascinated by eloquent discourse, to be hypnotized by the magic of words, and to pass over that which matters most of all. As”<sup>5</sup> “[DA Carson suggests] that in cases where a tongues speaker might be without love in his or her lifestyle, *the persons themselves* would have become merely a resonating jar or a reverberating cymbal.”<sup>6</sup>

The Greek word “χαλκὸς” translated as “a gong” can mean “bronze.” “Corinth was famous for its bronzes.”<sup>7</sup> Bronze was used to make “resonating acoustic bronze jars” which could amplify a speaker or music in an auditorium. In the grammatical context, Paul “conveys the notion of *endlessly continuing resonances which have no musical pitch.*”<sup>8</sup> “Even ‘heavenly tongues’, if not uttered from ‘love’ for the listener, were just the ‘speechless’ noise of gongs and cymbals.”<sup>9</sup> (It is as if Paul is describing an awful P.A. system that is too loud, too fuzzy, and that no one can understand – just reverberating noise.)

Additionally, bronze instruments may have been used in the pagan cults and processions of Corinth.<sup>10</sup>

V. 2: “Now Paul turns to communicative and “wisdom” gifts of prophecy and knowledge, and to the action gift of faith of a special kind which produces dramatic effects. ‘Knowledge of mysteries’ may be translated ‘the depth to pound for human discovery.’”<sup>11</sup> “The second ‘gift’

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<sup>2</sup> Barnett, 242.

<sup>3</sup> Thiselton, 1032

<sup>4</sup> Barnett, 243.

<sup>5</sup> Morris, 175.

<sup>6</sup> Thiselton, 1039 (The perfect tense γέγονεν in place of an expected future suggests: ‘look at what such a person would have become.’).

<sup>7</sup> Barnett, 243; *see also* Morris, 175.

<sup>8</sup> Thiselton, 1036.

<sup>9</sup> Barnett, 243; *see also* Morris, 175.

<sup>10</sup> Barnett, 243.

<sup>11</sup> Thiselton, 1039-40 (“We follow the syntactical subdivision of prophecy, knowledge, and faith that links understanding of ‘mysteries’ with [the gift of] knowledge, rather than with prophecy. … Out of about 26 occurrences in the NT, 22 occur in Paul, and of these, 15 occur in 1 and 2 Corinthians; more than half the uses of γνῶσις are addressed to Corinth.”).

(‘prophecy’) appears to be connected to the third (‘know all mysteries’) and the fourth ([have] all knowledge’). By ‘mysteries’ Paul is using the apocalyptic language then in vogue among the Jews.”<sup>12</sup> Loveless prophecy amounts to nothing. *All* mysteries and *all* knowledge point us to the sum of all wisdom, human and divine. Paul stating “*all*” is referring to faith in the fullest degree. But even the highest gifts, without love, are actually nothing.<sup>13</sup> “[One scholar contrasts] two different kinds of fellowship with God: the Gnostic-mystical ‘vision of God’ typical of Hellenism; and the primitive-Christian and Pauline way of Agape. ‘*Gnosis is egocentric, Agape theocentric*’.”<sup>14</sup>

A fifth ‘gift’ is then given by way of example. It is ‘faith’ such as can ‘move mountains’. Here Paul seems to be echoing Jesus’ words [from Mark 11:23]. *All 3 commentaries agree that Paul refers to faith not in in the sense of having faith in God as a basic Christian tenant, but as a separate gift of faith or as an extra measure of faith to see God work.*<sup>15</sup>

**V. 3:** The sixth gift, stated in exaggerated terms, “if I give *all* my possessions” also seems to have been inspired by words of Jesus (Mark 10:21).<sup>16</sup> “From knowledge and deeds of power Paul turns to deeds of mercy and dedication. Give translates *psōmizō*, a verb connected with *psōmion*, used of the ‘piece of bread’ that Jesus dipped and gave to Judas. Paul is speaking of giving one’s goods in small amounts (JB, ‘piece by piece’), i.e. to large numbers of people.”<sup>17</sup> There is next a textual discrepancy between “give my body to be burnt” and “give my body that I may boast.”<sup>18</sup> Given the context of “give all my possessions,” the interpretation “that I may boast” makes sense because it takes giving a dramatic step forward: sell my *possessions* or even sell *myself* (into slavery). “If we accept the reading ‘boast’ there were people who sold themselves into slavery and used the money to provide food for the poor. Therefore it is possible for a person to give his body up to be burnt (martyrdom) or to slavery and make this spectacular sacrifice without love.”<sup>19</sup> (Barnett commentary does not discuss the different interpretations and states only that it relates to martyrdom.)<sup>20</sup> Thiselton argues it must mean “boast” rather than “burned.”<sup>21</sup>

**Regarding verses 4-7:** There is an important grammatical point for these 4 versus: “Most English translations render the Greek as if it used adjectives to describe the nature of love ‘timelessly,’ e.g., love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or rude.

<sup>12</sup> Barnett, 243-44 (“In short, the prophet’s ‘knowledge’ and ‘speech’ is an interpretation of, but is limited by, the apostolic word (see on 14:36–38”).

<sup>13</sup> Morris, 175-76 ([all mysteries & all knowledge] includes the knowledge people gather for themselves (*gnōsis*, knowledge, sometimes has a meaning not unlike our ‘science’), and what they know only by revelation.”).

<sup>14</sup> Thiselton 1040

<sup>15</sup> Barnett, 244.

<sup>16</sup> Barnett, 244.

<sup>17</sup> Morris, 176 (The verb is in the aorist tense, pointing to a once-for-all action, the action of a man who, in one grand sweeping gesture, sells all that he has and gives it away.).

<sup>18</sup> Morris, 176.

<sup>19</sup> Morris, 177.

<sup>20</sup> Barnett, 245 (.“details are lacking but Paul’s words make it likely that [handing over one’s own body] had occurred among the early Christians. Perhaps Jesus’ example of being ‘handed over’ provided a model. But self-sacrifice can be self-seeking.”).

<sup>21</sup> Thiselton, 1043 (“martyrdom by fire [as a punishment] was unknown in the Graeco-Roman world [at this date]. It would seem rather strange, then, for Paul to select just this one as his example.” The only use of “burn” could be of selling oneself into slavery and being brandished by a hot iron, but this is unlikely.)

But ‘the nature of love is expressed by Paul in a series of verbs, the active character of which may not be fully indicated by adjectives.’”<sup>22</sup>

**V. 4: Patience:** “The verb μακροθυμέω may mean to be patient or to have patience... Love deals patiently with the loved one and it recognizes that the right timing plays a huge part in securing the welfare of the other. The Corinthians were all too ready to jump the gun both in their assumptions about Paul and other ministers (1 Cor 4:5) and in anticipating their own triumphs (4:8).”<sup>23</sup> “Love is patient with people rather than with circumstances.”<sup>24</sup> “Long-suffering” (*makrothumia*—‘slow to anger’) is closely connected to ‘mercy’ (see e.g., Ps. 103:8). It is a metaphorical meaning ‘long burning’: a fire burning for many hours, contrasted with fire that fizzes and sputters; an active and deliberate determination to await the hand of God’s intervention.”<sup>25</sup>

**Kindness:** “The verb shows kindness (to show kindness), occurs only here within the NT... The adjective form was widely used in the first century, but [some scholars] think Paul may have coined this verb for his purpose. [A scholar] perceives love here as that which breaks the spiral of passion, anger, and resentment by showing kindness.”<sup>26</sup> “Love reacts with goodness towards those who ill-treat it; it gives itself in kindness in the service of others.”<sup>27</sup> “God is also called ‘kind’ (*chrēstos*), as in Psalm 34:8—‘Taste and see that the LORD is kind.’ Several times Paul connects ‘patience’ and ‘kindness’ as qualities of God (Rom. 2:4) and they are also Holy Spirit-inspired qualities in believers (2 Cor. 6:6).”<sup>28</sup>

**Envy:** “The first, ‘jealousy’ (*zeloō*), recalls his earlier ‘there is jealousy and strife among you’ (3:3), referring to their factions.”<sup>29</sup> “Love does not envy; the verb is occasionally used in a good sense (as in 12:31, ‘eagerly desire’), but more usually it means a strong passion of jealousy or the like. This is its meaning here. Love is not displeased at the success of others.”<sup>30</sup> “Only the translation by Charles B. Williams, Love never boils with jealousy, seems to retain this nuance explicitly.”<sup>31</sup>

**Boast:** “The second, ‘showing off’ (*perpereuomai*) echoes their ‘boastful’ attitudes related, among other things, to their ‘pride’ in their party leaders (e.g., 4:7).”<sup>32</sup> “Love does not boast, where Paul uses a picturesque word, the root pointing to what BAGD define as a ‘wind-bag’.”<sup>33</sup> “*Does not brag* precisely captures the semantic-force primary connotations of the verb.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Thiselton, 1046.

<sup>23</sup> Thiselton, 1046-47 (In the LXX μακροθυμεῖν may translate הָאַרְיךְ אֲפָח (he’erik aph), to be slow to anger (Prov 19:11) but also to take time patiently (Prov 25:15; Eccl 8:12, Heb. אַרְךְ ('arak).)

<sup>24</sup> Morris, 177 (The concept is often used of God (Luke 18:7; 2 Pet. 3:9; the noun, Rom. 2:4; 9:22, etc.)).

<sup>25</sup> Barnett, 246.

<sup>26</sup> Thiselton, 1047-48.

<sup>27</sup> Morris, 177.

<sup>28</sup> Barnett, 246–247.

<sup>29</sup> Barnett, 247.

<sup>30</sup> Morris, 177.

<sup>31</sup> Thiselton, 1048 (Whether it is constructive zeal or destructive envy depends on the context. Again, Paul chooses the verb: does not burn with envy. BAGD translate the verb “to be filled with jealousy or envy,” but burning conveys the intensity more precisely than the hydrodynamic metaphor of filling.)

<sup>32</sup> Barnett, 247.

<sup>33</sup> Morris, 177.

<sup>34</sup> Thiselton, 1048.

**Arrogant:** “The third, literally ‘puffed up’ (*phusioō*), depicts haughtiness, which earlier in the Letter was specifically given as a counterpoint to ‘love’ (8:1).”<sup>35</sup> “For is not proud see the note on ‘take pride’ in 4:6. The last two verbs remind us that there are many ways of manifesting pride. But love is incompatible with them all.”<sup>36</sup> “Paul hammers home the incompatibility of love as respect and concern for the welfare of the other and obsessions about the status and attention accorded to the self.”<sup>37</sup>

**V. 5: Rude:** “The fourth, ‘unseemliness’ (*aschēmoneō*) has a parallel in his call that everything in the assembly be done ‘decently’. This is an implied rebuke to prophets and tongues-speakers who want to parade their ‘gifts’— disruptively they speak while others are still speaking.”<sup>38</sup> “The verb has a general meaning of ‘what is not according to proper form’, and thus anything disgraceful, dishonourable, indecent.”<sup>39</sup> “[I]t does not behave with ill-mannered impropriety. Love does not elbow its way into conversations, worship services, or public institutions in a disruptive, discourteous, attention-seeking way.”<sup>40</sup>

**Insist on its own way:** “The fifth, ‘seek its own’ (*zēteō*), has an exact parallel in those Corinthians who seek not their neighbours’ ‘good’, that is, their salvation, but who pursue their own selfish interests (10:24, 33).”<sup>41</sup> “Love is not self-seeking (‘does not seek its own things’), which might be understood as ‘does not insist on its own way’ or ‘is not selfish’.”<sup>42</sup> “[Love] seeketh not her own, correctly conveys the structure of the Greek οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἔαυτῆς.”<sup>43</sup> “The coupling of behaving with ill-mannered impropriety and not pre-occupied with the interests of the self alludes to such conduct at Corinth...”<sup>44</sup>

**Irritable:** “*Love is not easily angered*, ‘is not touchy’. There is, of course, a place for anger (cf. Eph. 4:26), but that is a passionate opposition to evil, not a selfish concern for one’s own rights. Karl Barth reminds us that the neighbour ‘can get dreadfully on my nerves even in the exercise of what he regards as, and what may well be, his particular gifts ... Love cannot alter the fact that he gets on my nerves, but ... it can rule out ... my allowing myself to be “provoked” by him.’”<sup>45</sup> “The heart of the word conveys the semantic force of to exasperate, to irritate, as metaphorical extensions of to make sharp, to make pointed, to make acid.”<sup>46</sup>

**Resentful:** “*Love keeps no record of wrongs*. Paul uses this verb (*logizomai*) in the sense of the reckoning of righteousness to the believer. It is a word connected with the keeping of accounts.

<sup>35</sup> Barnett, 247 (The many other references to this ‘inflated’ attitude suggest this behaviour was a Corinthian characteristic (4:6, 18, 19; 5:2).).

<sup>36</sup> Morris, 177.

<sup>37</sup> Thiselton, 1049.

<sup>38</sup> Barnett, 247.

<sup>39</sup> Morris, 178.

<sup>40</sup> Thiselton, 1049-50.

<sup>41</sup> Barnett, 247-48.

<sup>42</sup> Morris, 178.

<sup>43</sup> Thiselton, 1050 (Yet most modern translations prefer a more explicit reference to the self: hence, is never selfish (REB, Moffatt); is never self-seeking (TCNT); does not pursue selfish aims (O. M. Norlie); is not self-seeking (NIV); does not insist on its own way (NRSV). To seek the affairs of one’s own self (reflexive pronoun), however, also conveys the idea of seeks its own advantage (NJB).).

<sup>44</sup> Thiselton, 1051 ((i) insisting on one’s way about idol food; (ii) rushing ahead with the Lord’s Supper in a “better” room (the triclinium) while the latecomers are squeezed into the atrium; (iii) interrupting speakers with supposed “instant revelations” during worship, or alternatively carrying on at an inordinate length when someone else has an important contribution to make; (iv) and imposing unintelligible tongues into a sequence of worship.”).

<sup>45</sup> Morris, 178.

<sup>46</sup> Thiselton, 1052.

Love does not take notice of every evil thing that people do and hold it against them. Love takes no account of evil. It does not harbour a sense of injury.”<sup>47</sup> “Love does ‘not keeping a score’ which is reckoned up coheres well with counting attitudes or actions as evil, and invites the double meaning.”<sup>48</sup>

**V. 6 Rejoice at Wrongdoing/Truth:** “Contextual factors suggest that wrongdoing embraces a wider range of possibilities than theological unrighteousness or moral injustice.... If we genuinely love a person, we should not take pleasure at conduct which gives us the opportunity to lecture them or to rebuke them about their wrongdoing. Here, again, may be an allusion to overly ready pleasure in *prophetic rebuke* and *pronouncing judgment* on failures within the congregation.”<sup>49</sup> “It is all too characteristic of human nature to take pleasure in the misfortunes of others.... Love shares truth’s joy; it cannot rejoice when the truth is denied.... Love must not be thought of as indifferent to moral considerations. It must see truth victorious if it is to rejoice.”<sup>50</sup> The practical thrust of *love* joyfully celebrates truth, then, is that love does not use manipulative devices and subtexts to protect itself from truth or from *the truth*. It places the good of the other above the good of the self.<sup>51</sup>

**V. 7:** “Paul now provides four positive expressions of ‘love’, each strengthened by the word ‘all’ (verse 7). These four words sum up Paul’s own concrete and positive attitude towards the brittle Corinthians. Let them follow his implied example and love one another in the Corinthian assembly.”<sup>52</sup> “Love always protects. The verb (*stegō*) basically means ‘cover’; this leads to ‘hide by covering’, or ‘ward off by covering’ and thus ‘endure’. *Always trusts* points to the quality that is ever ready to allow for circumstances and to see the best in others. This does not mean that love is gullible, but that it does not think the worst. *Always hopes* is the forward look. This is the confidence that looks to ultimate triumph by the grace of God. *Always perseveres* = steadfastness. The verb (*hypomenō*) denotes not a patient, resigned acquiescence, but an active, positive fortitude.”<sup>53</sup>

**V. 8:** “‘Never fails’ the verb commonly means ‘to fall’. It comes to be used with the meaning ‘collapse’, ‘suffer ruin’. Love will never suffer such a fate.”<sup>54</sup> “As opposed to reducing the interpretation to merely ‘to fall apart,’... it means falls to the ground in a literal and metaphorical sense, often with the added force of collapsing or falling apart. We regularly use the term fall apart of the disintegration and demise of something or someone hitherto apparently robust.”<sup>55</sup> “[Love] endures all things” (v.7) and ‘Love never falls’ (v.8) serves to introduce a contrast between this age and the coming age. In regard to ‘this age’ Paul’s keyword is ‘abolished’ (*katargeō*). When God draws down the curtain on history ‘prophecy’ will be ‘abolished’,

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<sup>47</sup> Morris, 178.

<sup>48</sup> Thiselton 1054.

<sup>49</sup> Thiselton, 1054.

<sup>50</sup> Morris, 178 (Love rejoices in the *truth of God*, in the *truth of the gospel* (cf. John 8:56).).

<sup>51</sup> Thiselton, 1056.

<sup>52</sup> Barnett, 248-49 (“Paul is not merely moralizing, however, merely suggesting that we ‘make allowances’ for others. Rather, it is a call to act positively towards others because our God is a redeemer, a God of positive intent and of glorious eventual outcomes (verses 8–12).”).

<sup>53</sup> Morris, 179. (*Thiselton discusses verse 7 on pages 1056-1060. There is too much to summarize!*).

<sup>54</sup> Morris, 179.

<sup>55</sup> Thiselton, 1060-61.

‘tongues speaking’ will ‘cease’ and [words of] ‘knowledge’ will be ‘abolished’.”<sup>56</sup> There may be a difference in the finality of how prophecies and knowledgeable be abolished,<sup>57</sup> whereas tongues will cease.<sup>58</sup>

**V. 9 & 10:** “The more we know the more we realize that we do not know. What is meant by we prophesy in part is not quite so clear. Probably the idea is that God does not reveal everything, so that the prophet, no less than the sage, gives but a partial glimpse of truth. Perfection conveys the idea of the destined end or aim. It points to God’s plan. When the consummation is reached, all that is partial disappears.”<sup>59</sup>

“‘Knowing’ and ‘prophesying’ are only ‘in part’ since they belong within this age and suffer the limitations of this age. When ‘the perfect comes’, that is, the new age, all that was ‘in part’ now will be ‘abolished’. The need and the opportunity for the exercise of these ‘gifts’ will have passed. Paul’s words are quite pointed here. The Corinthians had the highest opinion of their spiritual gifts whose exercise may have misled them to think that ‘the perfect’ was a present reality in their midst.<sup>60</sup> “γινώσκομεν means both *we know* and *we come to know*, and Paul conveys the pictorial image of “building up” knowledge by trying to fit together bits and pieces a part at a time.”<sup>61</sup> “The climactic τὸ τέλειον includes the double meaning the *complete* and *wholeness*.<sup>62</sup>

**V. 11:** Verses 11 and 12 seem to give examples of the partial passing away and the perfect coming. “The contrast between the partial and the complete is illustrated from human life (child to adult). The verb *thought* is a word for general intellectual activity. The choice of verb indicates a determination to not be ruled by childish attitudes. The use of perfect tense implies decision and finality.”<sup>63</sup> “The verb also regularly means to form an opinion or to hold an opinion, or alternatively to set one’s mind upon, which here would denote having childish interests and concerns. The word γέγονα means reached adulthood. [T]he finality of the perfect state and the nuance of rendering idle in καταργέω suggest closing the door upon, or have done away with or turned my back on the things of childhood to retain the force and completeness of the verb.”<sup>64</sup>

**V. 12:** Corinth was known for producing good-quality bronze mirrors.<sup>65</sup> “[Paul] contrasts the very limited vision from a mirror of those times, which was made of polished metal, with ‘face

<sup>56</sup> Barnett, 249 (“When a boy becomes a man he will ‘abolish’ childish ways. By contrast ‘love’, the only true motive for the exercise of these ‘gifts’, will ‘never fall’ but ‘endure’ throughout history into the coming age.”).

<sup>57</sup> Thiselton, 1061 (“The intensive compound κατά- with ἀργός, idle, useless, ineffective, is very strong, and here the future passive does not suggest simply that prophecies (and knowledge) melt away of their own accord as they are fulfilled, but that the *cosmic, eschatological, public deed of divine judgment brings them to an end.*”).

<sup>58</sup> Thiselton 1061-62 (“Tongues will evaporate as readily as tears when a resurrection allows the believer to come face to face with God without the limitations and hidden conflicts of the mode of this present life. There is no need for them to be brought to an end; *their cause will have disappeared*. Interpersonal communication represented by the term language (singular) in contrast to either languages (plural) or glossolalia is not said to cease at the eschaton.”).

<sup>59</sup> Morris, 180

<sup>60</sup> Barnett, 249

<sup>61</sup> Thiselton 1064

<sup>62</sup> Thiselton, 1065 (Depending on the specific force required by the context the word may also mean perfection (NIV) or perfect (KJV). [Quoting a scholar] “What is new announces itself in the judgment of what is old. It does not emerge from the old; it makes the old obsolete. It is not simply the old in new form. It is also a new creation.”).

<sup>63</sup> Morris, 180

<sup>64</sup> Thiselton, 1066

<sup>65</sup> Thiselton, 1068 (Paul’s use of the mirror metaphor to indicate indirect knowledge.).

to face' seeing. The one is indistinct and approximate, the other is crystal clear, a direct encounter.”<sup>66</sup> “So Paul says we see ‘dimly’. The noun properly means ‘a riddle’ (we derive our word ‘enigma’ from it), so that the expression means ‘in a riddle’, i.e. ‘indistinctly’. While we live out our lives on this earth our sight of things eternal is, at best, indistinct. But it will be face to face.”<sup>67</sup> “Then I shall come to know just as fully as I have been known ( $\kappa\alpha\theta\omega\varsigma$ , even as, exactly as, indicating quality and measure in this context—just as fully as [NJB] with the aorist passive  $\dot{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\theta\eta\gamma$ ).”<sup>68</sup>

**V. 13:** “The last word in this chapter fittingly is love. God cannot be said to exercise faith or hope, but he certainly loves, and indeed *is* love. We should not press Paul’s comparison too closely, nor waste our time inquiring into the precise manner in which love surpasses faith or hope.”<sup>69</sup> “By adding *these three* he sets them apart from everything else. We also see that the three are often linked in the NT and early Christian literature.”<sup>70</sup>

“Did the Corinthians mend their ways, learn the ‘more excellent way’ of ‘love’?”<sup>71</sup>

“[workout] *there remain*, since Paul’s syntax allows for two possible meanings. (i) One meaning is that of an eschatological assertion: *these three abide or remain*. (ii) The other is that of a logical summary providing the stage setting for v. 13b: *So now (logical use) there remain*, out of all the gifts and experiences compared and considered, faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these (for reasons which include its eschatological permanence) is love.”<sup>72</sup> See footnote for whether *faith, hope, and love endure, or just love.*<sup>73</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Barnett, 250.

<sup>67</sup> Morris, 181 (*I am known* is in the aorist tense, which points in the same direction. The knowledge that God has doesn’t grow and become more and more perfect. God knows him with a knowledge that is perfect and complete.).

<sup>68</sup> Thiselton, 1070 (Paul regularly uses what H. A. A. Kennedy calls “an aorist of sovereignty” for divine decision and divine knowledge. This is the measure and nature of the full knowledge.<sup>226</sup> “The consummation consists in the fact that the cleft between knowing and being known by God is abolished” (Bornkamm).).

<sup>69</sup> Morris, 182 (it may be significant that in v. 7 these two are modes of love’s outworking).

<sup>70</sup> Morris, 182 ((Rom. 5:2–5; Gal. 5:5f; Eph. 1:15–18; 4:2–5; Col. 1:4f.; 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8; Heb. 6:10–12; 10:22–24; 1 Pet. 1:3–8, 21f; cf. Barnabas 1:4; 11:8; Polycarp 3:2f.). Evidently it was an accepted practice in the early church to link these three.).

<sup>71</sup> Barnett, 252 (In a follow-up letter (‘the letter written in tears’—cf. 2 Cor 2:4), it appears that Paul gave them an ultimatum to practice love or he would not return to them (cf. 2 Cor. 7:8–12). Paul visiting a 3rd time could be of repentance. Such change, however, may have been shallow. Half a century later Clement, a church leader, also wrote to the Corinthians. He too called the Corinthians to resolve their differences and to show love to one another.).

<sup>72</sup> Thiselton, 1071 (For translation, it is essential not to pre-judge by exclusion which of these two meanings Paul wishes to convey. Hence remain is preferable to abide, since without comment it allows for either or both meanings as the Greek  $\mu\acute{e}vet$  does.).

<sup>73</sup> Thiselton, 1071-72 (Irenaeus rightly distinguishes theologically between that which is within human control and that which must be “left in the hands of God.” He then concludes that at the end, according to Paul, God will do away with everything except “these three; faith, hope, love shall endure.” Tertullian appears to make this point initially, but his subsequent comments demonstrate that he singles out love as that which alone endures after the eschaton.).