**1 Corinthians 13**

*In the midst of a discussion of spiritual gifts, he directs the Corinthians attention to* “a more excellent way.” *The chapter is a discussion of* ***agape*** *love, showing the greater importance of love as contrasted with the lesser gifts about which they were contending. (Synopsis by Stan Cox)*

1. Inquiry from Corinthians **(7:1-16:4)** – *“Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:”* **(7:1)**.
   1. Conduct in worship assembly **(11:2-14:40)**
      1. Spiritual Gifts **(12:1-14:40)**.
         1. When love is absent **(13:1-3).**
            1. Tongue speaking without love = useless noise **(v. 1).**
            2. Prophecy, understanding of mysteries, all knowledge, and faith that moves mountains without love = nothing **(v. 2).**
            3. Benevolence which gives all, and self-sacrifice without love = no profit **(v. 3).**
         2. Love characterized/defined **(13:4-7).**
            1. Positive qualities – Love does/is **(v. 4a):**

Suffer long.

Kind.

* + - * 1. Negative qualities – Love does/is not **(v. 4b-6a):**

Envy.

Parade itself.

Puffed up.

Behave rudely.

Seek its own.

Provoked.

Think evil.

Rejoice in iniquity.

* + - * 1. Positive qualities cont. – Love does **(v. 6b-7):**

Rejoice in the truth.

Bear all things.

Believe all things.

Hope all things.

Endure all things.

* + - 1. The permanency of love **(13:8-13).**
         1. Love’s permanency in contrast to spiritual gifts **(v. 8-12).**

Love will never fail, but prophecies, tongues, and knowledge (spiritual gift) will vanish **(v. 8).**

Spiritual gifts are partial contributions to a whole. When the whole (*“that which is perfect”*) has come, the partial will be done away **(v. 9-10).**

Illustrations of said logic **(v. 11-12):**

Speaking and understanding from childhood to manhood **(v. 11).**

From looking in a mirror to seeing clearly as if face to face **(v. 12).**

* + - * 1. Love’s abiding nature **(v. 13).**

Faith, hope, and love will abide beyond the existence of spiritual gifts **(v. 13a).**

Love is the greatest of these three **(v. 13b).**

**Questions**

1. How does the topic of love fit in the context in which Paul is currently writing?
2. What is *“that which is perfect”* **(v. 10)?** How can we know?
3. Why is love the greatest of the three mentioned in **verse 13?**

**Another Question to Consider**

How can **1 Corinthians 13** be used to refute the claim that the age of miracles continues today? What characteristics were included in the miracles recorded in scripture which show the alleged miracles today are fraudulent?