

31 Earnestly desire the greater gifts, and yet I want to show you a way that far surpasses them.

¹ Every question in verses 29 and 30 is introduced by the Greek negative particle ME, which indicates that in each instance the answer No is expected.

Chapter 13

If I spoke with the eloquence of men and even of angels, but lacked love, my oratory would amount to no more than unimpressive loquacity.

2 And if I had prophetic insight and knew all the secret truths and all the knowledge (available to man), and if I could exercise the widest range of faith -- even to move mountains -- but had not love, I would be nothing.

3 And if I gave away all my possessions, and actually sacrificed my body to be burned, but had not love, it would profit me nothing.

4 This love (to which I refer) is long-suffering and kind. It is not envious. It does not put itself on display. It is not arrogant.

5 It does not express itself in a rude manner. It is not selfish. It is not irritable. It keeps no record of evil (done to it).

6 It does not rejoice over wrong-doing but it rejoices with the truth.

7 It does not unnecessarily expose anyone. It is eager to believe the best (about everybody). It tries to find love in every situation. It perseveres in all circumstances.

8 Love will never lose its preeminence. Where there are prophetic activities, they will be terminated. Where there is eloquent speech, it will cease. Where there is knowledge, it will be transcended.

9 indeed, our knowledge is only partial, and our prophesying is partial.

10 But when that which is perfect comes, all that is partial will be superseded.

11 When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, I used to think like a child, I used to make plans like a child; but now I have become a man, I have given up permanently the ways of a child.

12 Actually, at the present we see only dim reflections as if we were looking in a mirror, but then (we shall see) face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know as fully as I myself am known.

13 And so faith, hope, and love remain -- these three -- but the greatest of these is love.

Chapter 14

Keep pursuing divine love (as for your foremost aim because It is indispensable), yet continue to be zealous for spiritual endowments, especially for the gifts of persuasive preaching.²

2 He who speaks in a foreign language speaks not to men but to God, for no one understand him.³ But by the Spirit he declares revealed truths.⁴

3 However, the one who preaches persuasively addresses men (in a way that brings) edification and admonition and consolation.

4 He who speaks in a foreign language edifies himself, but the persuasive preacher builds up (the spiritual life of) the church.