

Rise Up And Build

"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18

March 20, 2022

“The Geatest Of These Is Love”

Continued from March 6, & 13

A Study of I Corinthians 13

By Marc Gibson

Editor’s Note: This issue of **Rise Up And Build** brings to a conclusion bro. Gibson’s excellent article based on I Corinthians 13 wherein the characteristics of love are listed. Specifically, as stated in the two previous articles, Love: (1) Suffers Long (2), Love is Kind, (3) Love Does Not Envy, (4) Love Does Not Parade Itself, (5) Love is Not Puffed Up, (6) Love Does Not Behave Rudely, (7) Love Does Not Seek Its Own, (8) Love Is Not Provoked, (9) Love Thinks No Evil, (10) Love Does Not Rejoice In Iniquity, (11) Love Rejoices In the Truth, (12) Love Bears All Things, (13) Love Believes All Things, and (14) Love Hopes All Things. In this article, the last two characteristics of Love (as per I Corinthians 13) are discussed, the first one being:

Love Endues All Things

The last of the four characteristics of love linked together with the like phrase “*all things*” is that love “*endures*” all things. The Greek word translated “endure” is *hupomeno* which means “to abide under, to bear up courageously (under suffering),” Vine. This word is different from the word that describes love as “*suffers long*” (v. 4), which is the attitude of patient longsuffering toward other persons.

To “*endure all things*” is the steadfastness of love in the face of spiritual conflict with the world. It is the steadfastness of the Christian as he “contends against the various hindrances, persecutions and temptations that befall him” and the endurance “under the difficulties and tests of the present age” (Mike Willis, *I Corinthians* 375). The Christian’s love for truth gives him the strength to resist the devil, steadfast in the faith (I Peter 5:8-9). This love is not passive but filled with fortitude to overcome. Love does not have a passion just for conflict, but for the victory of righteousness and truth.

Weak faith will wilt at the first sign of trouble, like the seed sown on stony ground (Mark 4:16-17). Greater faith results in stronger love that will endure any and all trouble that evil may bring. When the devil makes your life more difficult because you are a Christian, may true love for God keep you steadfast in the faith!

Love Never Fails

The final characteristic of love listed by the apostle Paul in this wonderful divinely inspired list is that love “*never fails.*” It is a fitting conclusion to all the aspects of love that have been previously mentioned. This word “*fail*” (Gk, *pipto*) is also found in Luke 16:17 where it is affirmed that the law of God will never be rendered without force or value by man. Likewise, true love is always effective and desirable, and it will never fail to be so.

In keeping with his overall con-text of spiritual gifts (chs 12-14), Paul draws a contrast between the abiding nature of love and the fact that spiritual gifts will not abide. He notes that prophecies will fail, tongues will cease, and knowledge will vanish away when the “*perfect*” has come (3:8-10). This “*perfect*” refers to the full revelation of truth in Christ Jesus, which was accomplished when “*the faith*” was once for all delivered (Jude 3), thereby ending the temporary era of spiritual gifts.

Love never fails because it is a spiritual principle found in the eternal character of God (I Jn. 4:8). Jesus is a perfect picture of love in word and deed. Paul concludes, “*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the **greatest** of these is love*” (v. 13). Heavenly hope will be realized someday as faith becomes sight, but **love** will abide eternally. Let us learn and apply each and every aspect of this great love that never fails!
