

“The Power of Three”

The 13th chapter of I Corinthians is often called the love chapter of the Bible. In it, the apostle Paul expounds on the attributes of love. It is a beautiful outline of what love should look like. It is verse 13, the last verse of this chapter, that recently brought me an “aha” moment.

As often as I have read that verse, my focus has always been on “the greatest of these is love”. It just seemed like the emphasis that Paul was trying to make. He had spent several verses telling us what love is and is not, so it made sense that he would wrap it up by emphasizing that love is the most important thing we can have and give. During Bible study a few weeks ago, however, Pastor presented another understanding of what that verse means.

“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” As born-again believers in Christ, these attributes are foundational. We’ve just got to have them! Love is the greatest, because God is love. We cannot be Christians without love. (Selah.) How can we say that we’ve reborn with God’s Spirit and not possess the essence of who He is? But, neither can we please God without faith, which is the foundation for our hope. Bible hope is enduring. Hope says that because I have faith, it will happen. Our need for hope is God’s invitation to a divine encounter. Any area of our lives that is without hope is under the influence of a lie and will weigh us down in sin.

Faith is the groundwork or confidence for everything for which we are hoping. It is the roadway upon which your hope travels towards our goals. It is the authority upon which we rely with inward certainty. It is not based on head knowledge or understanding. Faith is trust in the unseen. It is not trust in the unknown, because we can know by faith what we cannot see with the eye. It is always the beginning of the request brought first to God. Faith puts feet to our hope – it is hope in action!

Faith gives reality or substance to things hoped for. Hope needs faith and faith needs hope to be operative. Faith, hope, and love are the basic tenets for all believers in Christ. We may nibble around the edges of new life in Christ, but we are only kidding ourselves if we don’t see evidence of these principles in our lives. It is a sad fact that some believers have no faith, but it is sadder still when they have no hope. We have a great Biblical example for overcoming this. David’s hope was from God. When he got a Word, hope arose and victorious faith came. His expectation of good came from God’s Word to him and was accompanied by his faith in God. Even when he had to wait. Even when he was pursued by Saul and his own son, Absalom. Even when it seemed that God was silent. David hoped in God and had faith to believe that what he hoped for would come to pass.

For us to walk by the faith we need to sustain our hope, we have to fill our minds with the Word of God. Remind yourself every day that God loves you, and share that love with others. We must have all three – faith, hope, and love – to live victoriously and with power. Are you living under the power of three?

4: Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

5: It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6: Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

7: It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8: Love never fails....

13: And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13 (NIV)

1: Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

6: And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

Hebrews 11 (NIV)

1 <http://encouragementfortoday.org/Hope.htm>

2 The Wycliffe Bible Commentary

3 <http://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-hope.html>

Father, thank You for always giving us the right amount of all that we need to live in You. You have given us a measure of faith. That measure of faith is the foundation for our hope in You. Covered by Your amazing agape love helps us to grow up in You and live according to Your will. Thank You, Lord, for covering us with the power of these three – faith, hope, and love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Something to think about:

“Biblical hope is a reality and not a feeling. Faith is the action which brings what we hope for to life.”

Be blessed in the Lord!