

STRENGTH FOR THE STRESSES

“How Strength is Made Perfect in Weakness”

Study Number Three – “Love Lasts” – 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

We are endeavoring in this series of studies to bring to bear the scriptures on several practical problems. We’ve called this series, “Strength for the Stresses,” and these first three studies are on 1 Corinthians 13.

Our next passage is called “Triumph in Suffering,” with the hope that we will cover some principles that will help those in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Then in future studies we will be dealing with the subject of GUILT, FORGIVENESS and so on and so forth.

Now our section for this study is 1 Corinthians 13:8-13.

It was Emmet Fox who said:

There is no difficulty that enough love will not conquer; there is no division that enough love will not heal; no door that enough love will not open; no gulf that enough love will not bridge; no wall that enough love will not throw down; no sin that enough love will not redeem...

It makes no difference how deep seated may be the trouble, how hopeless the outlook, how muddles the tangle, how great the mistake, a sufficient realization of love will dissolve it all. If only you could love enough, you would be the happiest and most powerful being in the world.
(source unknown)

The poet Edwin Markham said:

He drew a circle that shut me out—Heretic, rebel, and a thing to flout. But love and I had the wit to win; we drew a circle that took him in.
(source unknown)

There are those who've been left out, and we'll try to bring them in. There are those who are left behind, and we will try to help them catch up. We will strive to listen in new ways—to the voices of quiet anguish, the voices that speak without words, the voices of the heart—to the injured voice, the anxious voices.
(source unknown)

Now we are going to read the passage from 1 Corinthians 13 and then bring to bear especially verses 8-13. We begin reading at, “and yet I will show you a still better or super-excellent way.” That's the last phrase in chapter 12.

1 Corinthians 13:1-7

If I am speaking with the tongues of men and of angels, but

I'm not having love, I have become a nosey brass gong, or a clashing cymbal. But if I'm having the gift of prophecy and all the mysteries and all the knowledge, and if I'm having all the faith so that I'm able to remove mountains, but I am not having love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions to feed the poor and if I give up my body in order that I may glory, but I'm not having love, it is profiting me nothing. Love is patient about everything, love is kind, is not filled with jealousy. Love does not brag, is not conceited, does not behave disgracefully or indecently, does not strive for ones one advantage, does not become irritated or angry, does not take evil into account, does not rejoice over injustice, but rejoices in the truth. Keeps confidential or covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

Love never fails. But if there are prophecies, they shall cease. If there are tongues, they will come to an end. If there is knowledge, it shall be done away. For we are knowing in part, and we are prophesying in part; when that which is perfect comes, that which is partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, I used to think as a child, I used to make plans or reason as a child. When I became a man I put away the things of a child. For now we are seeing by means of a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I am knowing in part, then I shall fully know, even as also I was known. But now there is remaining faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Now as we've broken the passage down, we have **THREE SECTIONS**:

1. we talked about **LOVE BEING ABSENT** in our lives—verses 1-3.

That is, what happens when this *agape* kind of love that we're talking about in this passage is absent from our life.

First, it's absent from our **ATTICULATIONS**,

Secondly, from our **ABILITIES**, and

Thirdly, from our **ACTION**.

In verse 1 when it's absent from our **LIPS**, there is sound and fury signifying nothing.

In verse 2 when it's absent from our **LIFE**, or our abilities, we are nothing.

In verse 3 when it's absent from our **LABOR** or our works, we are individuals who are profiting absolutely nothing.

In verses 4-7 we looked at the definition of love—this kind of love. And we called it **LOVE PRESENT**.

How are we able to tell when this love is present? There are **FIFTEEN CHARACTERISTICS** of it. We took these characteristics and defined each of them. And then it was our

pleasure, by the Spirit of God's direction, to allow the Holy Spirit to show us whether or not this kind of love is really present by the characteristics which we saw.

Now this brings us then to the concluding study in 1 Corinthians 13—verses 8-13. We have called this LOVE LASTS or Love's Guarantee.

When we buy something or we get involved in something, we want to know what the guarantee is. We want to know how long it's going to last. How well it will perform. This *agape* love we're going to see, lasts forever.

1. LOVE LOST—verses 1-3,
2. LOVE IS—verses 4-7, and
3. LOVE LASTS—verses 8-13.

We're going to take the phrases in these verses and break them up. We don't have an outline of the passage because we're going to discuss what he's saying in each verse. We'll just take each little phrase and go over it and then have some things to say about it.

He starts then in verse 8 with this phrase:

v. 8 Love never fails. But if there are prophecies, they shall cease. If there are tongues, they will come to an end. If there is knowledge, it shall be done away.

“Love never fails.”

Now what does he mean by that? The Greek word for “fails” means it never comes to an end. Or when this Greek word is used the most in the New Testament, it’s the word “fall”—“to fall.” Somebody fell or somebody is falling or something is falling.

So many times we could say, “Love never falls”—“Love never fails”—“Love never comes to an end.”

Or another way this word is used is, “Love never becomes invalid.” Love, in other words, never gets old to the point where it has to be dependent. Love always takes the initiative. Love always is strong.

Song of Solomon 8:7 is a good verse to put with this first phrase, “Love never fails”:

Song of Solomon 8:7

Many waters cannot quench love, nor will rivers overflow it.

Love’s guarantee is forever.

To get the feel of that phrase, we can look at Lamentations:

Lamentations 3:22, 23

His love fails not, it is new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness.

We need to realize that when we commit ourselves to this quality of life, to be channels of this kind of love that we're talking about in this study, we are going to be someone who is going to endure forever.

Now stop and think, how would we like to be characterized as a person after we die? We'd like to be characterized as a person who loved. That's really the supreme desire that every person should have.

And the promise is that love will never fail. That we'll be long remembered, if this is a characteristic and quality of our life.

Now whereas "Love never fails," we're going to come to the other side and say, "You will fail"—"I will fail"—"Friends will fail"—"Life will fail"—"Money will fail"—"Fame will fail."

So our commitment to this point is to this *agape* love that will never fail. This kind of love would have solved every problem in Corinth.

All the problems they had in their relationships with each other, here's the therapy for the whole thing, tucked away in this thirteenth chapter.

Joshua 1:5

No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life, just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.

The fact that God IS this kind of love, that's His quality, that's His character. We can count on the fact that Jesus never fails. We can count on the fact that God will never fail us. Since this is true, and since God is love, this quality of love never fails.

Now let's look at the next phrases, because here we get into some sections where there's been a lot of theological discussion.

“If there are prophecies, they shall cease.”

Now he is comparing love in several things. In fact, he's using some of the spiritual gifts that he's talked about back in chapter 12 and he's going to continue to talk about it in chapter 14.

So let's just see these phrases in the context.

“If there are prophecies, they shall cease.”

Now why would he make a statement like that? The reason was because prophecy ended when the Revelation of God's word was complete. And so for someone getting a revelation from God to reveal to men, that was finished when we received the divine revelation.

When the book of Revelation was written, at the end of it, it says we're not to add or detract from that without penalty. So we assume that the gift of prophecy—in the sense of foretelling the future—the gift of prophecy, the function of prophecy in foretelling, has ceased.

“If tongues, they will come to an end.”

Now that's a little bit harder. There is no need for tongues since the Holy Spirit has come. There's no need for prophecies since the Revelation is complete.

And there's no need for tongues since the Holy Spirit has come, because this was the sign of the coming of the Holy Spirit. We see three manifestations of tongues in Acts.

What about people speaking in tongues today? There's a problem with people in the church today who are so dogmatic and so divisive in the body of Christ, that we have to channel everybody into the same experience.

Now just because somebody feels that they can express themselves through prayer in their personal devotional life in this matter, well, let them go ahead. In other words, it's not our responsibility to try to legislate their way of life. That they have to jump through our hoop and sign on our dotted line to be spiritual, because as we're going to see, it still says that we “only know in part.”

And a lot of times, in the body of Christ, we promote the vision

and a lack of *agape* love by our unwillingness to accept someone who has a different spiritual experience. That is tragic. Each person stands or falls before the Lord himself, with regard to his spiritual life.

But, on the other side of the fence, for someone who has spoken in tongues to think that everybody else has to do it, that is an absence of *agape* love. Who are we to question or to stop someone else from having their spiritual experience that way?

Now all we're doing is just letting the scripture speak for itself. And this thought is probably a departure from what a lot of others feel that they have to say. They have all the saints set straight and lined up and clobbered with dogmatism and there is no *agape* love in that kind of thing.

It's interesting to see that Hal Lindsey in *Satan is Alive and Well*, is moving toward a more tempered experience along this line. He's beginning to show this kind of love and acceptance to people who differ with him in some theological perspectives.

We have to realize that. That we're all going to spend eternity together and we better be promoting *agape* love down here. As someone has said, "If we don't hang together, we're going to hang separately." And as part of the body of Christ, it is our responsibility to move in love and not to try to legislate that everybody has to do everything just the same way we do.

Now he is saying that prophecy is TEMPORARY and that

“tongues...will come to an end.”

Apparently the “prophecies...cease” when the Revelation is complete. That tongues ceased when the Holy Spirit came in that sense, as a means of showing the fact that the Holy Spirit had come. And the manifestation of the gift of tongues was a manifestation for the early church.

Now notice the next phrase:

“If there is knowledge, it shall be done away.”

A lot of people say, “Well, right there, that just proves that this is one gift that isn’t through.”

The definition of this gift of “knowledge,” ceased when the mystery of the church was revealed. When the apostle Paul, who knew and understood spiritual insight and received divine knowledge, received a revelation from God the Father, that there was going to be a ministry to Jews, Gentiles and to everybody. And the formation of the church, the body of Christ, when that revelation was made known, at that point this gift of spiritual insight or knowledge ceased.

We read in Ephesians:

Ephesians 3:3, 5

That by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief...Which in other generations was not

made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit...

He picked THREE GIFTS right there to show and play against the guarantee that love is permanent. Love's guarantee, it "never fails." Whereas:

1. "if there are prophecies, they shall cease."
2. "If there are tongues, they will come to an end."
3. "If there is knowledge, it shall be done away."

These gifts then are TEMPORARY in light of the fact that love is PERMANENT.

We read in Hebrews:

Hebrews 2:4

God also bearing witness with them both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

That verse says, "God also bearing witness with them." That is these people at the formation of the church, the body of Christ. These temporary signed gifts were manifested at that time to show that God was doing a work.

Now why is love a super-excellent way? Because gifts are

temporary and love lasts forever. That's all we can say. To go any further than that would just be to promote difficulty.

Now let's go on in the passage and let the passage just speak for itself.

v. 9 For we are knowing in part, and we are prophesying in part;

“For we are knowing in part, and we are prophesying in part;”

Now what does that mean? That means that we don't know it all and we don't see the big picture.

That principle and that phrase will lead to OPENNESS. If there's ever a time in the church of Jesus Christ that we need people to be open and receptive of people with differences, it's now. We're saturated with dogmatism. We're all divided. Many bodies, we're strong on basic doctrine but weak on love or charity.

We're more concerned about slicing each other up into little denominational groups and finding places where we divide and differ, than we are to magnify the things where we are unified and we have love for one another.

And one of the things we need to realize is that no matter how dogmatic we are, we still don't know it all. And we still don't have the total picture of what God's trying to do.

Ever considered that we could be mistaken? That the few missing facts would change our whole outlook in the situation that's before us?

If we have the kind of love that we're talking about, we're going to be able to be open and vulnerable at this point. We're going to be able to come out of our entrenched dogmatism and be able to open up and say, "Okay, I don't know it all and therefore I'm now ready to receive truth in the greatest sense of the word."

And that one phrase of the whole thirteenth chapter, if that happened among dogmatic, evangelical, bull-headed, stubborn, rebellious, entrenched in one's own opinions, evangelical Christians, it would be fantastic what would begin to happen in opening the doors to countless numbers of people who just want to find out about Jesus and want to know the way to spending eternity with Him.

Now, our facts and our insights are partial, if we read this right. And love never flourishes when we have this other side of the coin.

v. 10 but when that which is perfect comes, that which is partial will be done away.

"but when that which is perfect comes, that which is partial will be done away."

What's he saying here? He's saying that His coming is going to

clear it all up.

To meet some people it's almost humorous. You'd think that His coming is going to be totally inconsequential. They've already got all the facts and they've got God all figured out as to what He's going to do. And they have all the answers.

He has all the facts! He has the complete picture. Wow! What a Bible teacher! Never a question that He cannot answer, never a difficult passage that He cannot make plain—He wrote it. Never a concept that He can't communicate and never a passage that He does not understand.

So let's content ourselves by accepting the fact that we don't know it all and we don't have the big picture.

Now, we can say about these gifts that are going to cease—prophecies, tongues, and knowledge—that they'll come to an end “when that which is perfect comes”—Christ—at the second coming, if it weren't for the next verses.

It's true that all gifts will fade away “when that which is perfect comes,” because there's no need for these gifts to function anymore when He comes. That's true, but let's notice the next verse and see the illustration that he gives and try to understand the illustration in the context.

v. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, I used to think as a child, I used to make plans or reason as a child. When I became a man I put away

the things of a child.

“When I was a child,”

Why does he use the illustration of a child? This takes us back to the babyhood in chapter 3. He said, “You Corinthians have been living in the flesh and you have not grown toward spiritual maturity. You’re still little babies. And it is my supreme desire that you Corinthian saints will grow up and become mature in Christ.”

He’s coming back and using that as an illustration here on the subject of love and maturity.

“When I was a child,”—there are **THREE THINGS** that I used to do—and these are important:

1. “I used to speak as a child;”
2. “I used to think as a child,” and
3. “I used to make plans as a child;”

1. “I used to speak as a child.”

What he’s saying is, “When I was a child, I had not yet learned to verbalize.”

Why isn’t a child able to verbalize? He has a limited vocabulary. And by a lack of words, he is frustrated by his inability to communicate effectively.

2. “I used to think as a child.”

What he’s saying here is that a child has a limited thought. It’s limited in thought by a lack of experience.

3. “I used to make plans as a child.”

It’s limited judgment by a lack of proven concepts. This is childhood.

In WORDS,

in THOUGHTS, and

in ACTIONS.

In WORDS—“I used to speak as a child.”

In THOUGHTS—“I used to think as a child.”

In ACTIONS—“I used to make my plans as a child.”

“I was childish.”

EMOTIONS,

INTELLECT and

WILL.

What he's saying here is that from INFANCY to MATURITY there's a process—PHYSICALLY and SPIRITUALLY.

There is a process that begins when we receive Christ, that begins to move toward maturity and we will never reach the end of that until we're in His presence.

1 John 3:2

Soon we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Now what he's saying here is in view of the fact that gifts are temporary, our facts and insights are partial. Maturity is our goal.

“Love never fails.”

The gifts are temporary, our facts and insights are partial, so maturity ought to be our one goal.

We show our capacity to manifest this *agape* love by how much we've grown up in Jesus Christ. The one way someone can tell how old and mature we are spiritually is by the capacity that we have to manifest this *agape* love. That's how serious this matter is.

Paul says in Philippians 3:

Philippians 3:12-14

I forget those things which are behind, I press toward those things which are in front. I drive toward the goal of the mark of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

That was his supreme desire. That was the goal of it all.

Yes, there are spiritual gifts and they are important. Yes, there is insight and knowledge available through the Word. But all of these things are temporary and partial. The most important thing is that we become mature by exposing ourselves to the activity of the Holy Spirit and the study of God's Word.

Now how do we apply this illustration in the context of this passage?

Some project the idea that the infancy of the church had certain signed gifts. And during the baby stage of the church, these gifts were the gifts of prophecy, the gift of tongues, and also the gift of knowledge or insight, because it was needed at that particular point at the beginning of the church.

Now there are gifts for the maturing the church and these are recorded in Ephesians 4:

Ephesians 4:11, 12

He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the

equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ.

Those are gifts for the infant stage.

These gifts are for the maturing and the development of the church.

If spiritual maturity is our goal, then we would expect that these gifts which lend toward maturity and development in our life are going to be the gifts that will continue.

Notice the next phrase: “When I was a little child, I used to speak as a child; I used to think as a child, I used to make plans as a child.”

“when I became a man,”

The word “became” tells us that this was a process—“when I grew up physically.”

“when I became a man”—SPIRITUALLY.

“when I have become a man, I have put away the things of a child.”

Philippians 1:6

You which hath begun a good work will continue to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

What can we expect that will be different from what we have read about a child?

When we became a man, our speech became coherent. Our thoughts have been matured by experience and exposure. And our judgment is more certain because we are now operating on the basis of proven concepts.

v. 12 For now we are seeing by means of a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I am knowing in part, but then I shall fully know even as also I was fully known.

“For now we are seeing by means of a mirror dimly,”

Corinth was a center of making mirrors. Now they didn't make mirrors like we have today. They polished metal and shells. And all they'd get was a very faint image. Sort of a shadow almost cast on the best of mirrors.

There was a limit of vision. And the reason he is saying “by now we see through a mirror dimly,” he's saying there are faint images which come to us of God's plan from the prophecies.

The prophets were limited by what they could see. Many times they saw the first and second coming of Christ together.

They just had faint images of God's program. And when we

read the prophets we just get a faint image. This lends to the fact that we have partial knowledge.

Now the Word of God is like a mirror in James 1. Remember he says the most important thing is to “be a doer of the word, not just a hearer only.” And one of the things we have to do if we’re going to grow up is to start implementing what we know from the Word of God.

And he says it’s like a person who comes to look into a mirror, the mirror of God’s Word, and he sees the face of his birth and he doesn’t do anything about what he saw. He just goes his own way and he hasn’t changed.

He says we look into a mirror to examine needs. To see hair which is disheveled, a face which needs to be shaved, to see other things that need to be cared for. And so we look into the mirror for that express reason. And we look into the mirror of God’s Word to have it reflect us as we really are. And as a result of that reflection, we move out into action, changing what needs to be changed.

“but then face to face;”

“now we are seeing by means of a mirror dimly, but then face to face;”

Remember Thomas? Thomas missed the Bible study one night when the Lord chose to come. It’s a really terrible experience for Thomas and he went for a whole week living in unbelief.

But the Lord knew that Thomas, with his melancholy temperament, would live in deep depression and isolation. And he wouldn't believe anything that the disciples said. When they said, "We've seen the Lord," he says, "You've had a hallucination. I won't believe it unless I can put my finger in the prints of the nails in His hands and I can put my hand in His side."

Thomas happens to get back with the disciples though, and he's at Bible class the next week. And when he's there the Lord walks in. He walks right over to Thomas and says, "Thomas, put your fingers there. Here, put your hand over here."

Thomas, with eyes that are swimming in tears and a quivering lip says, "My Lord and my God!" Face to face.

The Lord has to pronounce commendation upon all those who exercise faith who are not able to see at the present. It's going to be a fabulous day when we say, "My Lord and my God! It is as real as You said it would be."

Notice he goes on to say:

"now I am knowing in part,"

Limited in knowledge and this is hard to accept.

"but then I shall fully know even as also I was known."

“Just as sure as I’m standing here, so I will know. My vision is blurred and my knowledge is partial, but this is only temporary.”

And notice the next phrase:

v. 13 But now there is remaining faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

“Now there is remaining faith, hope, love, these three;”

Here are the three things to concentrate on:

“faith, hope, love.”

These are the three things that Paul commended in the Thessalonian saints.

In 1 Thessalonians 1 he says:

1 Thessalonians 1:3

I thank God for your work of faith, your labor of love and your patient endurance of hope.

He’s grateful to God that these saints in Thessalonica are concentrating on the things which unite us.

If we’re a Christian, the thing in our life that unites us to each

other is that sometime in our past there's been a work of faith when we received Christ as our Savior. We are involved in a labor of love. We're expressing by the service and the sacrifices which we make that we love Him and that these days have been given to us as an allotment and a stewardship to service Him in love.

And we have the same patient endurance of hope. We're going to spend eternity together. Thank God for that.

And because of that, these are the things that we concentrate on.

Concentrate on the BACKWARD look to our faith when we received Christ.

Look at the PRESENT labor of love which we're all involved in to help others come to know Christ.

And look FORWARD to the future with anticipation of the patient endurance of hope, which is ours in Christ.

"but the greatest of these three is love."

What a statement. The most powerful tool in our hands is not our testimony over a work of faith in the past or an anticipation of that glorious hope which is ours, which is fantastic. But our greatest tool is the love which we have in our hands, which is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit living in us and manifesting this love to a lost and dying world.

That is the greatest thing we have to concentrate upon.

It's not our faith, it's not our hope, it's not our sacrifice, not our commitment, but our capacity to love that the apostle Paul magnifies in this passage of scripture.

Our capacity to love reveals our level of maturity.

If we have submitted totally and completely to the Holy Spirit, if we have surrendered our rights, and if we are an individual who is growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord by reading His Word, we are individuals whose lives are clean and open to be a vehicle for the kind of love we're talking about.

So it's:

Love Lost,

Love Is, and

Love Lasts.

May God find a clean channel, a vehicle through which He can manifest the kind of love that we've talked about.

Love is giving with no thought of getting. It is tenderness enfolding with strength to protect.

It is forgiveness without further thought of the thing forgiven.

It is understanding of the thing forgiven. It is understanding of human weakness, with knowledge of the true man shining through.

It is quiet in the midst of turmoil. It is trust in God with no thought of self. It is the one altogether lovely, the light in the mother's eyes, the glory in the sacrifice, the quiet assurance of protection.

It is the expectation of our Father's promise coming true. It is the refusal to see anything but good in our fellow man. It is the glory that comes with selflessness and the power that comes with assurance of the Father's love for His children.

It is the voice that says "no" to our brother, though "yes" might be more easily said. It is resistance to the world's lust and greed, thus becoming a positive law of annihilation to error.

Love...the one thing no one can take from us, the one thing we can give constantly and become increasingly richer. Love can take no offense, for it cannot know that which it does not of itself conceive.

It cannot hurt or be hurt, for it is the purest reflection of God. It is the one eternal, indestructible force for good. It is the will of God, preparing, planning, proposing always what is best for all of His universe.

Philippians 1:9

I pray that your love may abound still more and more.

Let's pray together.

Our heavenly Father, we pray that somehow overriding even the differences of opinion, might be a receptivity to manifest an *agape* love. Lord, we know that You must feel terribly disappointed by the fact that we are so entrenched in our opinions and ideas that we fail in our love for one another. Lord, we realize that all we can do is relate to Your Word as a total revelation. Reveal what we feel You have taught us by Your Spirit. And then Lord, You have promised to bless when our lives line up with an openness and a conformity to Your known will of God from what we read in Your Word. And so Lord, we rest in this great fact and we ask that Your Holy Spirit might seal to our minds and hearts where there are differences in opinion, the willingness to accept and to love each other. We realize that when we do this we prove the fact that we're mature individuals. Lord, we thank You and praise You for all that You're doing. We ask that Your Holy Spirit might continue to work in lives in these latter days. That many people might come to know Jesus Christ as Savior through our lives and through our witness. For it is in the name of our Savior we pray these things. Amen.

STRENGTH FOR THE STRESSES

“How Strength is Made Perfect in Weakness”

Study Number Three – “Love Lasts” – 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

Notes

v. 8 Love never fails. But if there are prophecies, they shall cease. If there are tongues, they will come to an end. If there is knowledge, it shall be done away.

v. 9 For we are knowing in part, and we are prophesying in part;

v. 10 but when that which is perfect comes, that which is partial will be done away.

v. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, I used to think as a child, I used to make plans or reason as a child. When I became a man I put away the things of a child.

v. 12 For now we are seeing by means of a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I am knowing in part, but then I shall fully know even as also I was fully known.

v. 13 But now there is remaining faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: We should concentrate on the BACKWARD look to our faith when we received Christ.

LESSON #2: We need to look at the PRESENT labor of love which we're all involved in to help others come to know Christ.

LESSON #3: We must look FORWARD to the future with anticipation of the patient endurance of hope, which is ours in Christ.

LESSON #4: The most powerful tool in our hands is the love which we have, which is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit living in us and manifesting this love to a lost and dying world.

LESSON #5: Our capacity to love reveals our level of maturity.

LESSON #6: Love is giving with no thought of getting. It is tenderness enfolding with strength to protect.

LESSON #7: Love is forgiveness without further thought of the thing forgiven, it is an understanding of the thing forgiven, and it is understanding of human weakness, with knowledge of the true man shining through.