

First and Second Corinthians

Portrait of Love

Lesson #7 for August 15, 2026

Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 13; Matthew 24:12; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Timothy 1:14; 1 John 4:8,16.

1. What is a “portrait of love”? What is love? Who has portrayed love?

[From the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=T-BSG:] Anna lives with her aging grandmother. Her friends often invite her out, but she chooses to stay home, cooking, cleaning, and reading to her grandmother, who sometimes forgets her name because of dementia.

One evening, Anna’s grandmother becomes frustrated and snaps at her, forgetting all the kindness Anna has shown. Instead of getting angry or walking away, Anna gently takes her hand and says, “It’s OK, Grandma. I love you.” She continues to care for her, even when there’s no gratitude in return.

Anna doesn’t serve for recognition or reward. She doesn’t seek praise. She simply loves—patiently, kindly, without envy, pride, or resentment. Her love endures, even when it’s difficult.

Paul describes this kind of love in 1 Corinthians 13—a love that isn’t just words or emotions but a daily choice to be selfless, forgiving, and steadfast. It’s the kind of love that reflects God’s love for us, the kind that never fails.—T-BSG* 93.††

[T-BSG:] First Corinthians 13, often called the “Love Chapter,” is one of the most profound passages in the Bible. **Paul places love at the center of Christian life, showing that it is superior to spiritual gifts, knowledge, and even faith.** [In this lesson,] ... we will look at the following three main themes of the Love Chapter: (1) **The Supremacy of Love** (1 Cor. 13:1–3). (2) **The Characteristics of Love** (1 Cor. 13:4–8). (3) **The Endurance of Love** (1 Cor. 13:8–13).—T-BSG* 93.††§

Divine Love (*Agapē*) vs. Human Love

[From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] Love can conquer all. That’s why Paul had so much to say about it. The word family of *agapaō*—the most common Greek word in the New Testament to express the concept of love—occurs more than 135 times in his letters. This represents almost half of all occurrences in the New Testament. This should tell us something about the central theme of Paul’s letters to the Corinthian church.

There are many remarkable passages about love in the New Testament—Romans 8:35–39, 1 Corinthians 2:9, 1 Corinthians 8:3, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:13, 1 Thessalonians 3:12, and more—but **nothing compares to 1 Corinthians 13....**

As we will see, love is not so much an emotion as an attitude, an attitude that must be expressed in life, in deeds, and in words; otherwise, it means nothing.

What love really is, and does, has been fully revealed in the life of Jesus.—BSG* for Sabbath Afternoon, August 8.^{†§}

[T-BSG:] **Background: Love in Greek Writings and Philosophy of the First Century A.D.:** In the world of the first century A.D., love was a widely discussed concept in Greco-Roman philosophy and literature and an important part of Jewish thought. However, the way love was understood varied significantly. Roman poets, such as Ovid in *Ars Amatoria* (“The Art of Love”), focused more on the idea of love as a skillful pursuit, often intertwined with manipulation and seduction. Love was frequently associated with beauty, desire, and conquest rather than selflessness.

The ancient Greeks and Romans had multiple words for love, each reflecting different aspects of human relationships. **Eros (ἔρως)** was mostly used to denote **passionate, romantic, or sexual love**. Eros was often seen as an intense desire or even a dangerous force that could lead to irrationality. Plato, in his work *Symposium*, however, discussed eros as something that could lead a person from physical attraction to a pursuit of higher, divine beauty. **Philia (φιλία)** was used to describe **friendship or brotherly love** and often characterized relationships between equals. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle described *philia* as essential for a virtuous and fulfilling life, particularly in friendships based on mutual goodness. **Storgē (στοργή)** described **familial love**, such as the natural bond between parents and children. This form of love was seen as instinctive and protective. Finally, **agapē (ἀγάπη)** often had the connotation of **selfless, unconditional love**. While this term existed before Christianity, it was not commonly emphasized in Greek philosophical texts. Paul’s writings—in particular his use of the word in 1 Corinthians 13—highlighted this love.—T-BSG* 93-94.^{†§}

2. The Greek word *στοργή* (pronounced *stor-gay*) means familial love **or** natural affection. It describes the instinctual, protective fondness that develops naturally among family members—most notably between parents and their children, or among siblings.—Wikipedia.

[T-BSG:] In Jewish thought, love was closely tied to covenant relationships, both between God and Israel and among individuals. The Hebrew Scriptures emphasized (1) *God’s steadfast love (hesed)* that described His covenantal love. This love is loyal, merciful, and enduring (for example, the refrain found in Psalm 136:2, “His steadfast love endures forever” [ESV]); (2) *love of neighbor*, as found in the command of Leviticus 19:18 (“Love your neighbor as yourself” [ESV]), a principle that Jesus later reaffirmed (Mark 12:31); and (3) *love in both family and marriage*, as depicted in Proverbs and the Song of Songs.

By the first century, Jewish teachers, such as the Pharisees, emphasized obedience to the law as an expression of love for God (Deut. 6:5). Paul’s description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 was revolutionary for his time. Unlike the competitive, status-driven love of the Greco-Roman world or the legalism of some Jewish teachers, Paul presented *agapē* as the highest

virtue—greater than knowledge, power, or even spiritual gifts. **Unlike eros, which sought personal fulfillment, the love Paul described in 1 Corinthians 13 was sacrificial.** The opposite of self-seeking, this love went beyond mere emotion and was enduring and action-driven. It represented a way of life, requiring patience, kindness, and humility.—*T-BSG* 94.†‡Ω§*

3. ***How could we ever come close to showing the kind of love that God showed in sending Christ to our world?***

[BSG:] In the power of Christ, we cannot let love grow cold in our homes, churches, and neighborhoods. We have the example of Christ on the cross, dying for us. What better and more powerful expression of this kind of love could there be? Though of course we could never equally express that kind of love, by God's grace we should strive to reveal it in our own lives to whatever degree we can.

What are some times when, indeed, an expression of this kind of love could have made a powerfully positive impression on someone who needed this love more than anything else?—*BSG* for Sunday.†§*

4. ***Could you describe God's love in your own terms? What is the most important part of God's love to you?***

[T-BSG:] Paul's vision of love aligned more with God's covenantal *hesed* than with Greek philosophical ideals; yet, his vision also transcended traditional Jewish views by insisting that love—not *torah*—was the foundation of Christian ethics.—*T-BSG* 94.†§* [Love meant to obey the law!][‡]

5. In the prior lesson, we studied about spiritual gifts which God gives through the Holy Spirit. Those gifts are to unify the church and advance God's work through the church. We found that love is the greatest of all spiritual gifts. Read 1 Corinthians 13. What was Paul trying to tell us about love?

[BSG:] Paul is not saying that tongues (*1 Cor. 13:1*), prophecy, understanding, knowledge, faith (*1 Cor. 13:2*), and benevolence (*1 Cor. 13:3*) are useless. **They are useless only if not driven by love.**—*BSG* for Sunday, August 9.†‡§*

6. ***How many of our activities each day are driven by agapē love? Can we even experience agapē love?***

[BSG:] The kind of love Paul is talking about is not expressed in such sentences as "I love strawberries" or "I love my friends" or even "I love my spouse and children." Neither is he talking about the kind of love that one sees in movies. And no, it is not erotic love, although this passage has been commonly used in wedding sermons.

This love cannot be reduced to affection, or charity, or virtue, or benevolence. Yet, they all represent it to a lesser or greater degree. **This love is a special grace bestowed upon us by the Spirit. Indeed, love in 1 Corinthians 13 is the Spirit-given motivation that leads us to act with affection, charity, virtue, and benevolence.** It is a total commitment of our actions, feelings, and thoughts toward Christ and our neighbors.

[Can you tell if you have ever exhibited that love?]

Read Matthew 24:12. What warning does Jesus give us here?—BSG*
for Sunday, August 9.^{†‡}

Matthew 24:12: “Such will be the spread of evil that many people’s love will grow cold.”—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*®* [GNT] (*Today’s English Version*) [TEV], Second Edition (Matthew 24:12). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV** or *GNB-TEV**].[‡] [Do you see *agape* in our world?][‡]

7. Paul pointed out that despite all the different aspects of the church body, there is only one thing that really connects them all together—the greatest spiritual gift—and that is love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3: ¹I may be able to speak the languages of human beings and even of angels, but if I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell. ²I may have the gift of inspired preaching; I may have all knowledge and understand all secrets; I may have all the faith needed to move mountains—but if I have no love, I am nothing. ³I may give away everything I have, and even give up my body to be burned—but if I have no love, this does me no good.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

[T-BSG:] Paul begins by emphasizing that without love, even the most impressive spiritual gifts and religious acts are meaningless. He lists three examples: (1) According to Paul, speaking “in the tongues of men and of angels” without love is just like “a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (*1 Cor. 13:1, ESV*). (2) A person with prophetic power, knowledge, and even faith is “nothing” (*1 Cor. 13:2, ESV*) without love. (3) Acts of extreme generosity and sacrifice will “gain nothing” (*1 Cor. 13:3, ESV*) for the giver if not motivated by love. Because God is love (*1 John 4:8*), “He can be fully known only through love. . . . Without love we cannot know God, and without God we are nothing.”—“1 Corinthians,” in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez et al. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2022), p. 1643. This section highlights the fact that spiritual gifts and religious devotion must be rooted in love to have true significance.—*T-BSG** 95.^{‡§}

[BSG:] Unfortunately, there was a tendency among the Corinthians to value some gifts to the neglect of others. To rectify the Corinthians from making this mistake, Paul called their attention to love, which is “a more excellent way” (*1 Cor. 12:31, NKJV*). In other words, no matter what the gift is, if practiced wisely and with love, it is pleasant to God.—*BSG** for Monday, August 3 (in the *BSG** for the prior lesson).^{‡§}

[BSG:] “Love is not one gift among many. It is the means through which all of the gifts reach their ultimate purpose.”—Carl P. Cosaert, “1 Corinthians,” *Andrews Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2022), p. 1643.—*BSG** for Tuesday, August 4.^{‡§}

[T-BSG:] **The Supremacy of Love** (*1 Cor. 13:1–3*): First Corinthians 13 is part of Paul’s teaching on spiritual gifts (*1 Corinthians 12–14*), in which he emphasizes that **love is greater than any gift or ability**. Love is greater than knowledge, power, or even faith itself. Paul describes love, not as an emotion, but as an attitude—patient, kind, selfless, and enduring. **This kind**

of love (*agapē*) is central to the Christian life. It is not just an ideal but a call to action, challenging believers to reflect God's love in every relationship and situation. [Is love a spiritual gift also?]

In 1904, Ellen G. White wrote [then, the following from *The Review and Herald* is quoted]....—T-BSG* 94-95.^{†§} [See also DA 83.4.][‡]

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] The Lord desires me to call the attention of his people to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Read this chapter every day, and from it obtain comfort and strength. Learn from it the value that God places on sanctified, heaven-born love, and let the lesson that it teaches come home to your hearts. Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless.—Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*,* July 21, 1904, par. 1.[‡]
[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p821.24458&index=0>][‡]

1 Corinthians 13:4-7: ⁴Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; ⁵love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; ⁶love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. ⁷Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

1 Peter 4:8-11: ⁸Above everything, love one another earnestly, because **love covers over many sins**. ⁹Open your homes to each other without complaining. ¹⁰Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God. ¹¹Those who preach must preach God's messages; those who serve must serve with the strength that God gives them, so that in all things praise may be given to God through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and power forever and ever. Amen.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

8. These passages raise a serious question: **How does love cover over sins?** Or, does it? We might recognize that it is easier for us to overlook errors made by someone we love. Is that what the Bible is talking about? We care for our loved ones despite their behavior!

[T-BSG:] **The Characteristics of Love (1 Cor. 13:4–8):** In the following verses, Paul explains the nature of love. Love is not simply an emotion but an active way of living. Intriguingly, Paul uses verbs not adjectives to define the nature of love. In total, he uses 16 verbs, nine of which describe a negative value and seven with a positive or constructive value. The following table offers a visual overview (and is based on a table found in the *Andrews Bible Commentary*, p. 1644):

Positive Qualities	Negative Qualities
Love is patient (vs. 4)	Love does <i>not</i> envy (vs. 4)
Love is kind (vs. 4)	Love does <i>not</i> boast (vs. 4)
Love rejoices in the truth (vs. 6)	Love is <i>not</i> arrogant (vs. 4)
Love endures/protects all things (vs. 7)	Love is <i>not</i> rude/disrespectful (vs. 5)
Love believes all things, and always trusts (vs. 7)	Love is <i>not</i> self-seeking (vs. 5)

Love hopes all things (vs. 7)	Love is <i>not</i> easily angered (vs. 5)
Love endures all things, and always perseveres (vs. 8)	Love does <i>not</i> keep a record of wrongs and thinks no evil (vs. 5) Love does <i>not</i> delight in evil (vs. 6) Love <i>never</i> fails (vs. 8)

This list contrasts with the Corinthians' behavior. The Corinthians were struggling with pride, division, and competition over spiritual gifts. Paul calls them to a higher standard of love, a notion also affirmed in the writings of Ellen G. White. [Then, Ellen G. White is quoted; that is expanded below.]—*T-BSG** 95-96.^{†‡§}

[EGW:] **The attribute that Christ appreciates most in man is charity (love) out of a pure heart. This is the fruit borne upon the Christian tree.** “Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.” [1 John 4:7.] The Lord Jesus has said, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” [John 13:34, 35].—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 16, 1892.** [*Letters and Manuscripts,** vol. 7 (1891-1892) p.1.5584] [7LtMs, Ms 16].^{†‡Ω}
<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p14057.6857006&index=0>[†]

9. ***Can you imagine belonging to a church where all the members practice all these positive things and none of the negative qualities? Would they let us in?***

What Love Does (Positive Qualities)

[BSG:] **First Corinthians 13:4–7 is the heart of the chapter.** Paul focuses on **the features of love**—showing what love is and what it is not, or what love does and does not do. He personifies love so that we can have a glimpse of how a person filled with Spirit-driven love behaves. In his portrayal of love, Paul uses a series of verbs. For him, love is more about actions than about feelings or emotions.

What, then, does love do?

Shows patience (*makrothymeō*)....

Shows kindness (*chrēsteuomai*)....

Rejoices (*synchairō*) in the truth....

Bears (*stegō*) all things....

Believes (*pisteuō*) all things....

Hopes (*elpizō*) all things....

Endures (*hypomenō*) all things.—*BSG** for Monday, August 10.^{†‡§}

What Love Does Not Do (Negative Qualities)

[BSG:] **Read again 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. Why doesn't Paul mention negative rather than only positive characteristics of love?...**

[Earlier in the lesson,] ... we focused on seven things love does; [now,] ... we will look into **eight things it does not do**. Love . . .

Does not envy (*zeloō*)....

Does not boast (*perpereuomai*)....

Does not puff up (*physioō*)....

Does not behave rudely (*aschēmoneo*)....

Does not seek (*zēteo*) its own [rights]....

Does not get easily irritated (*paroxynō*)....

Does not keep records (*logizomai*) of wrongs....

Does not delight (*chairō*) in wrongdoing.—BSG* for Tuesday.^{†‡QS}

10. **Following Satan and his selfishness has had devastating effects on human beings.**

[EGW:] Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,—every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,—could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire.** They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 542.2-543.0.^{†‡} [Underlining of text is added for emphasis.][‡] [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.2459&index=0>][‡]

11. **Do worldly people have any idea what selfishness is doing to them? Do you see love growing? Or, do you see selfishness spreading all over the world? Could selfishness be stopped? See GC 662-678: <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.2989&index=0>.**

A Portrait of Jesus

[BSG:] As we read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7, we may feel frustrated at realizing that, to a lesser or greater degree, we fall short of displaying all those features of love. Likely, Paul had the person of Jesus in mind when writing 1 Corinthians 13. Indeed, **only Christ perfectly revealed all those characteristics of love.** Thus, **ultimately, Paul’s portrayal of love is a portrait of Jesus. [And Jesus is a “perfect portrait” of His Father (as stated by Ellen G. White below)!]**—BSG* for Wednesday, August 12.^{†‡}

[EGW:] **Had God the Father come** to our world and dwelt among us, veiling His glory, humbling Himself, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed in unfolding its record of His own condescending grace. **In every act of Jesus, in every**

lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father.—Ellen G. White, *Letter 83, 1895*,* par. 25 [10LtMs, Lt 83, 1895, par. 25].^{††} [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p14060.5690031&index=0>][‡]

[BSG:] Read John 13:1, 34; John 15:9, 12; 1 Timothy 1:14; 2 Timothy 1:7, 13; 1 John 3:16; and 1 John 4:7–12, 19–21. What can we learn about love from these passages?...

God is love (1 John 4:8). He loves us so much that He gave His only Son (John 3:16). Jesus is the full expression of this love (Heb. 1:3). If we want to know how love expresses itself, we must take a long look at Jesus. If we pay close attention to the portrayal of Jesus ..., we will realize that **all the positive features of love in 1 Corinthians 13 are seen in Him**.

Jesus is patient. “But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience [*makrothymia*]” (1 Tim. 1:16, NIV).

Jesus is kind. The Bible says that “the Lord is kind” (1 Pet. 2:3, LEB). The word “Lord” in this passage refers to Jesus. The term “kind” renders the Greek word *chrēstos*, which comes from the same root as the verb *chrēsteuomai* (“to show kindness”) in 1 Corinthians 13:4.

Jesus rejoices in the truth. Jesus experienced joy as He followed the will of the Father and felt His love for Him (John 15:9–11, John 17:12–14).

Jesus bears/endures all things. Hebrews 12:2, 3 says that Jesus “endured the cross. . . . [He] endured such hostility from sinners against Himself ” (NKJV). Nobody has endured so much as Jesus (Phil. 2:8). He did this for the joy set before Him! [See DA 753.]

Jesus believes all things. When Ananias [in Damascus after Saul’s “Damascus road experience”] questioned the genuineness of Paul’s conversion (Acts 9:13, 14), Jesus answered, “He is a chosen instrument of mine” (Acts 9:15, ESV). **Jesus sees people not only as they are but as they will become through His power.**—BSG* for Wednesday.^{†‡Ω§}

12. How similar are the characteristics described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and those in Galatians 5:22-23 (the “fruit” of the Spirit or the gifts of the Spirit)?

Galatians 5:22-23: ²²But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³humility, and self-control. There is no law against such things as these.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

[BSG:] **What are other ways that Jesus reveals to us what true love really is?**—BSG* for Wednesday, August 12.[‡]

1 Corinthians 13:8: Love is eternal. There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

Faith, Hope, and Love; But the Greatest Is Love

[BSG:] Thus far, we have learned that love is patient, kind, joyful, resilient, believing, hopeful, and enduring (or perseverant) because Jesus is all these

things. **Once we see these qualities in Jesus, the next step is to imitate Him.** That was Paul's wish for the Corinthians. **However, if we remove the "not" in the eight negative features of love, "we get a pretty good description of the Corinthians' conduct within their church circle: envious, boasting, arrogant, rude, self-seeking, easily offended, and looking to see what others were doing wrong.** Paul is tailoring the verbs he uses here to the Corinthian situation."—Verlyn D. Verbrugge, "1 Corinthians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans–Galatians*, revised edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), p. 372.

The Corinthians had much to learn. So do we. After describing what love does and does not do, Paul concludes his section by emphasizing the everlasting nature of love so as to stimulate the practice of genuine love.

One day, prophecies will no longer be necessary; we will speak only one language; and flawed human knowledge will be replaced by a brand-new knowledge of God (*1 Cor. 13:12*). The gifts of the Spirit will cease only when the purpose for which they exist has reached its fulfillment (*1 Cor. 13:10*). "But love will last forever!" (*1 Cor. 13:8, NLT*). [Is this seen in our churches?]

Likewise, when Christ returns, faith will give place to sight (*2 Cor. 5:7*), and that which we have long hoped for will be reality (*Rom. 8:24*). And, most of all, love will endure as an emblem of the character of our triune God. Yet, there is a sense in which faith and hope will also last forever. Faith as the experience of salvation (*Rom. 4:3*), and hope as the desire and expectation of new delights and knowledge in the new earth, will mark the experience of the redeemed forever. Yet love, God's love, will eternally prevail.—BSG* for Thursday, August 13.^{†‡§}

13. Remember, "Faith is a word we use to describe a relationship with God as with a Person well known!" Our faith will surely improve when we get to heaven!

[BSG:] Very soon, we will see our Lord face-to-face (*1 Cor. 13:12*). Until that day comes, we are supposed to define our lives with these three virtues: **faith, hope, and love.** This triad is representative of the fullness of Christian life through the Spirit. That is why it was often referred to among Christians (*Rom. 5:1–5; Gal. 5:5, 6; Eph. 1:15, 18; 4:1–5*). Love, however, is the greatest; after all, it is the only virtue used to describe the very nature of God Himself (*1 John 4:8*).

Dwell on the statement "God is love." How are we supposed to understand exactly what that means? And though we can grasp the idea only in part, why is that phrase such good news for us?—BSG* for Thursday, August 13.^{†‡§} [Try to imagine God, the Father, washing feet!][‡]

[T-BSG:] **The Endurance of Love** (*1 Cor. 13:8–13 [sic]*): Paul concludes by showing that love is eternal, whereas spiritual gifts are temporary. "Love never ends" (*ESV*), writes Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:8, but gifts (prophecies, tongues, knowledge) will pass away. These gifts are needed only in our imperfect, earthly state, but they will no longer be necessary when we reach full knowledge in God's presence. In 1 Corinthians 13:12, Paul reminds his audience that human sight, at its best, sees only "dimly." He contrasts this

dim awareness with the assurance that we will see “face to face” in the kingdom. **Paul compares our current understanding to looking at a blurred reflection in a mirror.** In eternity, we will fully know God and be fully known by Him. Of the three virtues of faith, hope, and love, only love will remain, for love **“is the greatest” of the virtues.** While faith and hope are vital in our current lives, love is the only one that will continue forever in eternity. [Is that true?][†]—*T-BSG** 96.^{†§}

14. ***Do you agree that faith and hope will disappear in eternity? If faith is a relationship with God as with a friend, how could it disappear in heaven?***
15. ***When the Bible states that God is love and asks us to become like Him, shouldn't it be clear why love is so central to our faith? If we want to be more like God, we need to be more loving!***

The Essentialness of Love

[BSG:] **Read 1 Corinthians 13** [again]. **Summarize what he [Paul] is telling us about love.**—*BSG** for Sunday, August 9.[‡]

[EGW:] No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ.—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles** 318.2.[‡]

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p127.1407&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p127.1407&index=0)[‡]

[EGW:] **We have an abundance of sermonizing. What is most needed at our camp meetings and conference sessions is love for perishing souls,** that love which comes in rich currents from the throne of God. True Christianity diffuses love through the whole being.—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 156, 1900,** par. 5 [*Letters and Manuscripts,** vol. 15 (1900) p.1.2847] [*15LtMs, Lt 156*].^{†‡}

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p14065.9520011&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p14065.9520011&index=0)[‡]

[EGW:] The word here translated “restore” means to put in joint, as a dislocated bone. How suggestive the figure!... “Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one.” **Only the love that flows from the heart of Christ can heal. Only he in whom that love flows, even as the sap in the tree or the blood in the body, can restore the wounded soul.**—Ellen G. White, *Education** 113.2.^{†‡}

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p29.545&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p29.545&index=0)[‡]

[T-BSG:] Paul’s discourse on love in 1 Corinthians 13 emphasizes that love is the foundation of Christian faith and relationships. Love (or *agapē*) is not about emotions, attraction, or personal benefit. Rather, it is a self-giving, enduring, and transformative principle that mirrors God’s love for us. Paul challenges believers to embody this love in their daily lives, making it the highest virtue in both their faith and actions.—*T-BSG** 96.^{†§}

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