

Take a Look in God's Mirror

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I Corinthians 13

Many people get confused and tangled up in problems when they study I Corinthians, chapters 12-14. The issues in various churches, concerning the gifts of the Spirit, is quite confusing. In this study we cannot deal with all of those issues. We must focus on what Paul said is always the most important thing – Love. Love will cover the confusion, eliminate the competitive spirit, and give us a working relationship with all true believers. Conversely, pride, impatience, and fear will promote division and strife – spoiling our testimony with the world (John 13:34-35; 17:20-26).

So, chapter 13 gets us centered and focused on love. I Corinthians 13:9-13 emphasizes the limitations of our knowledge and abilities now. Spiritual gifts are useful for ministry in this life, but faith, hope and love are the priorities. However, love is the greatest. If you think about it (Hebrews 11:1), faith and hope are not needed in heaven because we will have a face-to-face relationship with the Lord. All promises will be fulfilled. We shall see reality with no shadows of doubt or confusion. However, love is something that will continue for all eternity. It cannot become obsolete or be replaced.

This brings us to the subject seeing through a looking glass (mirror) darkly (dimly). At the time this was written, mirrors were not made of glass. Rather they were objects of highly polished metal. The images seen were not crisp and clear. You had to put your face close to them to see detail. Even then it was a little blurry. We are going to consider three references to this mirror and get an idea of how we can apply this to our lives.

I Corinthians 13:12-13. We are to seek knowledge from God's word. Love "rejoices in the truth" and "believes all things" (I Corinthians 13:6-7). Since faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17) we have a picture of knowing God and discerning His will through Scripture as our looking glass. We do not have faith in mere faith. We do not have hope because of blind optimism. The source of our faith and hope is the Word of God, as it is revealed to us by God's Spirit (II Peter 1:2-4; John 5:24; 6:63; 8:30-32; Colossians 3:16; I John 1:4; 5:9-13).

II Corinthians 3:18. We should seek to know God's glory and to be transformed by that knowledge. When we read the Scriptures we are to have an open / unveiled face. If you study all of chapter 3, you will see commentary on the story of Moses, on Mt. Sinai, beholding God's glory (Exodus 34). When he came down from the mountain, his face was shining so brightly, that it hurt the eyes of them who saw him. They asked for a veil to be put on Moses' face. God's glory was hidden to them. We, now are to view the glory of God, with no veil. That means that through Christ, the Gospel and the Spirit of Christ we can know the Lord and be transformed ("*changed*" = Greek "*Metamorphosis*" *cp. Romans 12:2*) into His likeness (Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 3:8-10; I Peter 3:18; II Peter 1:2-4).

James 1:21-25. We should look at the scriptures so that we can examine our life and our attitudes, removing that which is contrary to God's glory. See Psalm 119:9-11,59-60; Ephesians 4:21-32; Colossians 3:5-17; Hebrews 12:1-15.