

The Greatest Gift is Love
International Bible Lesson
Hebrews 13:1-3 & 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Sunday, September 30, 2012
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“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Corinthians 13:13—KJV).

“Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13—GNB).

“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13—NRSV).

Faith is “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). To approach God, we must “believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him” (Hebrews 11:1, 6). The Bible teaches that faith in God can bring lasting happiness, but learning that we have lived disobedient to God and displeasing to others and ourselves can give us endless sorrow. Understanding that Jesus Christ came into the world to solve the problems our sins have created can give us hope. Accepting the way to eternal happiness that God provided for those who trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior can fill us with love for God the Father, love for Jesus, love for those who shared the good news of saving faith with us, love for those who teach us the Scriptures, love for those who encourage us, love for those the Holy Spirit leads us to serve according to the will of God, love for our friends and enemies.

Faith in God inspires us to trust God daily with the hope that we will receive what we cannot yet see; that is, what God has planned and prepared for those who love Him. When we meditate on how much our loving God sacrificed to justly uphold the laws of behavior upon which human happiness depends, so God could mercifully forgive us for our sins and empower us to live rightly, we cannot help but respond with love for God and grow more in love with God. No wonder Paul declared that faith, hope, and love abide, and love is the greatest of the three.

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Thinking Further

1. In what ways can mutual love among Christians be expressed?
2. In a society where Christians suffer persecution, in what ways can Christians love one another while protecting one another from being persecuted or arrested for their faith?
3. Why is love more important than persuasive speaking skills? In what ways can persuasive speaking skills without love be dangerous?
4. Consider various faith communities today. Which faith communities emphasize the love Paul commended to his readers?
5. Read through the “let us” verses listed in the *International Bible Lessons Commentary* on Hebrews 13 or in your concordance of the *Letter to the Hebrews*. Which one speaks the most directly to you. Why?