

1 CORINTHIANS: LESSON 35

Chapter 13: Charity, a More Excellent Way

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This chapter teaches us that God is more concerned about our heart condition than He is about anything we may learn from Him or do for Him and for others. In all that we do, we must be sincerely kind and caring towards others. If you leave charity out of your service, it counts for nothing at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There comes a time in our Christian life when we must grow up and take a more Christ-like approach in our ministry. If we don't, all our work will be ineffective, and we'll have nothing to show for it. We are not Christians if we are not like Christ.

CHARITY = Love put to action. Your actions are the true expression of your love. Words are not enough (James 2:15-16).

Vs 1 Words are not enough. Words (in any language) (no matter how true) —will not be received if those words are not accompanied by charity. You've got to have a genuine care for the people you're speaking to. People will reject the truth if your life doesn't exhibit what you're saying.

Vs 2 Being a gifted Christian and learning the Bible is not enough. There are many gifts that Christians receive, but charity is the gift you give. Don't just be a taker; be a giver.

Vs 3 Doing good deeds is not enough. Those deeds ought to be the result of true charity of the heart.

An unsaved man is not able to discern spiritual things because he doesn't have the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:11). But his human spirit is quite capable of reading your human spirit. He'll know if you really care about him or not. That's an important part of evangelism. You've got to win a person to you (spirit of a man) —before you can win them to the Lord (Holy Spirit).

THE MEANING OF VERSES 8-10, ACCORDING TO THE CONTEXT OF CHAPTERS 12-14 AND EPHESIANS 4

What is the context? Many members make up one body. Many gifts are distributed by one Spirit. The Holy Spirit operates in many individual lives, but for the benefit of the "**one body fitly framed together.**" We ought to focus on getting the body to function as one.

Vss 8-10

The *common* teaching: "**That which is perfect**" (vs 10) refers to the Bible. Now that we have a perfect Bible, everything that came before it (prophecies, tongues, knowledge) "**shall vanish away.**"

It would not be possible to do away with the partial (*imperfect*) parts of the Scriptures without affecting "that which is perfect" (the completed Bible). Therefore, it must have a different meaning.

EPHESIANS CHAPTER 4

Ephesians 4 also speaks of the spiritual gifts and helps to shed some light on the interpretation of “**that which is perfect.**” Ephesians 4:1-3 says we ought to do things that will draw us all closer together and endeavor to “**keep the UNITY of the Spirit in the BOND of peace.**” The emphasis in verses 4-6 is “ONE” (Seven are mentioned. This is the number of perfection).

Anything God does for you *individually* is for the purpose of promoting unity among the *body*! God wants us to recognize our UNITY in one body so that we can function AS one body for the benefit of the entire body.

Eph 4:11. God gave gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the **perfecting** of the saints (vs 12)...till we all come in the **unity** of the faith...unto “**a perfect man**” (vs 13) —The body of Christ ought to resemble the Lord when it reaches “perfection” (completeness, unity).

If we isolate ourselves from other members of the Body of Christ, it is impossible to reach the perfection the Lord desires of us. The other members of the Body give us trials that will help us to grow up.

NOW APPLY THE CONTEXT TO 1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-10

“**Tongues shall cease**” —One part of the body received the gift of tongues.

“**We know in part.**” —One part of the body received the gift of knowledge.

“**We prophesy in part.**” —Another part of the body received the gift of prophecy.

“**When that which is perfect is come...**” —When the parts come together in unity to form one body...

“**Then that which is in part shall be done away.**” —You won’t see a bunch of individuals (parts) doing their own thing; you’ll see one body (**that which is perfect**) functioning like Jesus Christ.

Chapter 12 clearly identifies the words “part” and “parts” as individual members of the body (see 12:23-25).

Vs 11 “**When I was a child, I spake as a child...**” Children are selfish; they need a lot of attention. Spiritual babies are the same. We need to grow up and start looking out for others.
