**[Great Chapters: 1 Corinthians 13](https://lakeshorebiblestudy.com/2020/08/18/great-chapters-1-corinthians-13/)**

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

Everyone is familiar with 1 Corinthians 13’s wonderful description of love but most people are not that familiar with the context of the chapter as a whole:

CONTEXT:

Verses 1-3 speak clearly about how love is essential. It is easy to see how this is a natural introduction to 4-7.

Verses 8-13 are more challenging. Here love (which never fails) is contrasted with prophecies, tongues, and (miraculous) knowledge which will fail, cease, and fade away.

1 Corinthians 13 is the middle chapter of 3 chapters about miraculous spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:1 begins “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant” and the topic of spiritual gifts continues through the end of chapter 14.

QUESTIONS:

Why, in the middle of a discussion about spiritual gifts, does Paul give a beautiful description of love? (The answer to this is found in chapter 12).

The last thing he says about love is that it will never \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (8).  But what does verse 8 say about prophecies, tongues, and knowledge?

Verse 8 says that love never fails. How is this also expressed in verse 13? In fact 3 things in verse 13 will “abide”. What are they?

Verses 8-12 are challenging and there is debate as to their meaning. He is talking about a time when the spiritual gifts would cease, fail, and vanish away. When does verse 8 say the these gifts will cease, fail, and vanish away?

The question then becomes what is “that which is perfect”?  Some think it refers to Jesus or to heaven. Some think it refers to the completion of the revelation. Give some thought to the passage and come to your own conclusion.

Setting aside the controversial parts of the chapter, what impresses you most about Paul’s description of love in 1-8?