

THESE THREE

“But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”
1 Corinthians 13:13

Faith, according to the timeless wisdom and relevance of the Bible, is defined in Hebrews 11:1 as the confident assurance that the things we hope for will actually come to pass. Most translations are a little more poetic, but the essential truth is that faith is an unwavering assurance in Jehovah God and firm confidence in His fidelity to His promises. It is the essential component in any serious endeavor to live a Christian life. By faith we are saved. That’s the starting point of a transformed life for those who embark on a relationship with the invisible God. Faith is what connects the finite with the infinite.

Hope sustains the connection. It is the part of us that is certain there is a God in heaven who can and does intervene in our circumstances and has a purpose for our lives that continues into eternity. It is a gift from God to each of us that we can also give to one another. How good of God to let us join the fun! We can offer hope to one another, bear one another’s burdens and, “comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Cor. 1:4) We comfort ourselves and others with the hope that God is at work and we have not been abandoned regardless of how bleak things might seem at a particular moment.

Interestingly, they are not eternal qualities but tools for life in this fallen world. The instant we see God face to face, our faith will be rewarded and our hope realized and when they are, it will be more extraordinary than anything we can possibly imagine. Faith and hope are grace gifts from God to help us navigate this life. They will be unnecessary in the one to come.

But love? Ah, love is eternal! God is love and God is eternal, therefore our faith and hope will culminate in the unending and ecstatic enjoyment of Divine perfection and love. It’s the greatest of the three because it is the perpetual and sine qua non (without which not) nature of God.

How magnificent of the Lord to give us the tools we need while we are “alive and remain,” then sweep us into His heavenly home to dwell with Him forever in the bliss of perfect love and fellowship. One thing is sure; I will cling to faith and hope tenaciously in this life, but will gladly lay them down when it’s my turn to enter the supreme satisfaction and rest of the next.