

After All Else Fails, What Remains?

First Corinthians 13:13 reads, "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." The three great pursuits of the Christian life are not miracles, power and gifts, but they are faith, hope and love. Since these are so important, we see them emphasized significantly in Scripture (1 Thessalonians 1:3; 5:8; Galatians 5:5-6; 1 Peter 1:21-22; Colossians 1:4-5; 2 Timothy 1:12-13). On what is your Christian life focused? What more do you really want in life?

Faith Makes Things Possible

The word "faith" is from *pistis*. Faith is belief and trust; it is believing in the facts of the Gospel and trusting in them to save. Faith and character are intimately related. Faith in the power of obedience to the commandments of God will forge strength of character available to you in times of urgent need. "Substance" (Hebrews 11:1), from *hypostasis*, means, "a setting or placing under, thing put under, substructure, foundation, undergirding." It is the same as the rock upon which the "wise man" built his house (Matthew 7:24). By faith, Abraham stood strong (Romans 4:20), Moses led strong (Hebrews 11:24-28), Elijah spoke strong (1 Kings 18:21), Joseph lived strong (Genesis 39:12) and Joshua chose strong (Joshua 24:15). Faith makes all things possible.

Hope Makes Things Bright

The word "hope" is from *elpis*, which means, "anxious expectation." Hope is the confident expectation of divine blessing; it is also the fear of offending God's love and incurring punishment. Hope is singular in nature ("one hope of your calling," Ephesians 4:4). Also, hope has its reasons (1 Peter 3:15). If you have hope for the future, there will be power to live each day. Think of the song, which says, "When the days are weary; the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares." The blessing of hope on this side of eternity is that it serves as the "anchor for our soul" (Hebrews 6:19). The stability that hope gives us in this life is characterized by the words "sure and steadfast." Therefore, hope makes all things bright.

Love Makes Things Easy

The word "love" is from *agape*, which means, "affection, good will, love, benevolence, brotherly love." My father always preached: "In **truth**, unity. In **opinion**, liberty. In **all** things, love." Families will grow stronger when love leads the way. Friendships will blossom when love runs deep. Churches will shine bright when love leavens the whole lump. It has been said: "The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves, or rather loved in spite of ourselves." **What is love?** It is silence – when your words would hurt. It is patience – when your neighbor's curt. It is deafness – when a scandal flows. It is thoughtfulness – for other's woes. It is promptness – when stern duty calls. It is courage – when misfortune falls. "I remember the morning that I first asked the meaning of the word 'love...'" Miss Sullivan put her arm gently round me and spelled into my hand, 'I love Helen'" (Helen Keller).

After all else fails, what remains? One day, we will close our eyes and sleep, but when we awake faith will be sight, hope will be reality and love will remain. .

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