



# GOSPEL DAILY DEVOTIONAL

WITH JOSH WEIDMANN

A MINISTRY OF GRACE CHAPEL

For Individuals

## THE GREATEST GIFTS

Start with prayer, then read...



**READ:** 1 Corinthians 13:8–13



**REFLECTION QUESTION:**

How have you seen faith, hope and love demonstrated around you in the last week?



**REFLECTION QUESTION:**

Of these three words— faith, hope and love— which do you say the most in your life right now?

## DIGGING DEEPER

The Corinthian church was having trouble with some people thinking certain spiritual gifts were more spiritual than others. Paul spends the whole of chapter 12 explaining that all spiritual gifts are equally important. More importantly, Paul says that none of the spiritual gifts mean anything without love. He ends by telling them that these spiritual gifts which they are bragging about won't last into eternity. In heaven, there will be no need for prophecy, speaking in tongues, or spiritual knowledge because we will see God face-to-face. We won't need supernatural gifts to hear His voice or understand His will because we will be in His very presence and we will "know fully" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

So, what will remain into eternity? Faith, hope, and love.

Paul tells them that instead of arguing over prophecy and tongues and knowledge, they should focus on developing the lasting spiritual gifts of faith, hope, and love. Different parts of the body have different gifts for their roles in the body, but every believer needs faith, hope, and love.

## APPLYING IT TO LIFE

Faith, hope, and love are inextricably intertwined. They are the motivation behind everything we do as believers. When Paul commended the Thessalonians as a shining example to the rest of the churches

across the known world at the time, he said their work was produced by faith, their labor was prompted by love, and their endurance was inspired by hope (1 Thessalonians 1:3). The Thessalonians endured suffering and persecution, and yet they were able to stand strong because of faith, hope, and love.

We are living in difficult times right now too. Sickness and death, job loss and economic instability, fear for our loved ones and uncertainty about what may happen next. If we are going to endure through the next weeks, months, and even years, we are going to have to cling to faith, hope, and love. But before we start beating ourselves up about not having enough faith, being a little short on hope, or not doing a good enough job being loving, let's remember the context of 1 Corinthians 13—a teaching on spiritual gifts. Faith, hope, and love are not things we try harder to do better, they are gifts given to us by God.

- *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8–9).*
- *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).*
- *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God” (1 John 4:7).*

If we want more faith, hope, and love, we don't try harder to do better, we ask God for them (Matthew 7:7–11). We bring our doubt, despair, and selfishness to God and ask Him to give us faith, hope, and love instead. Some days, we may feel like the man who cried out through tears, “Lord, I do believe! Help me overcome my unbelief” (Mark 9:24). That's okay. Abiding in Jesus is a daily discipline. And staying connected to Him is how we bear much fruit (John 15:1–9).

To abide in Christ just means to remain, to stay. That's all you have to do. Stay with Jesus. Cling to Jesus. Cry out to Jesus. Come back to Jesus. He can give you faith that moves mountains, hope that doesn't disappoint, and love that never fails. You too can endure to the end.



#### **REFLECTION QUESTION:**

Right now, what is making it hard for you to have faith? Hope? Love?



#### **REFLECTION QUESTION:**

How can you focus on abiding in Christ today? How about when life goes back to “normal”?

## **SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: CELTIC STYLE DAILY PRAYERS**

The ancient Celts lived through hard lives. Because they had to work from dusk till dawn, they didn't have time for long meditation, prayer, or Bible study. Instead, they made every routine activity an opportunity for prayer. They had prayers for rising in the morning, for getting dressed, for making their bed, for washing their face, and so on throughout the day. They also made sure to include all three persons of the Trinity in each prayer. As they washed their face, for example, they splashed water with each line— *“The palmful of the God of life, the palmful of the Christ of love, the palmful of the Spirit of peace, Triune of grace.”*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Esther de Waal, *The Celtic Way of Prayer* (London, UK: Canterbury Press, 2010).

The simplicity of the prayers matched the simplicity of the people. But their faith was living and active, inspiring every moment of their daily life. Prayer was not a formal exercise; it was a state of mind. These were people who really lived under the shadow of God's wings, sought His help and His wisdom in all things, and truly prayed without ceasing.

Today, to practice abiding in Christ the way the Celts did, say a short prayer over every activity of your day, however mundane or routine. While you brush your teeth, wash your hands, peel the potatoes, mop the floor . . . Your prayer doesn't have to be eloquent. Just keep it simple. While getting dressed, for example, say, "Thank you, God, that I have clothes to wear. Help me to clothe myself with compassion, humility, and love today." Practice it throughout your day and see what difference it makes in your heart and your attitude today.