

IN RESPONSE - 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3 (CON'T), LESSON II

by Dennis Prutow
Volume II, Number 8

We continue where we left off in our exposition of 1 Corinthians 13. At this point, we are reviewing Paul's comparison of love with the importance of special gifts of the Spirit listed in chapter 12. And we come to 1 Corinthians 13:3....

F. Finally we look at the philanthropic spirit and the spirit of self sacrifice. Are these, in and of themselves, evidence of the saving presence of the Holy Spirit? Not according to the apostle.

There are several ungodly reasons people give to feed the poor. A person might give to the poor to please himself rather than to please God. A person might give to feed the poor for public recognition. His self-esteem would be deeply enriched. A person might give to feed the poor as a means of gaining worldly fame. Each of these reasons is self centered. A love *of* God and a love *for* God is not the motive for such self sacrifice. Rather there is an insipid love of self. As the apostle says, "If I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."

A person delivering his body to be burned sends shivers up and down my spine. While serving in Vietnam as an Army chaplain, we heard more than one report of a Buddhist priest pouring gasoline over himself and then striking a match. Pictures of such scenes epitomized the protest against what was seen as senseless loss of life in this war.

But why would a person literally deliver himself to be burned? Many reasons might be involved. A person might give his body to the flames for public recognition. A person might give his body to be burned as a means of gaining world fame. To be sure, these Buddhist monks did gain public recognition and world fame. But again, these reasons are self centered. A love *of* God and a love *for* God is not the motive for such self sacrifice.

The point should again be clear. It is possible to have special gifts of philanthropy and self sacrifice but also be without an actual saving relationship with Christ.

G. Because what we have been saying is true, love is a superior mani-

festation of the Spirit. It is superior as a mark of the true Christian life. We may be misled by depending upon gifts as special marks of the Christian life. Special gifts may indeed be manifest within a life or a church, but without love, these gifts prove nothing.

Jesus is quite clear on this point.

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits (Matthew 7:15-20).

What is the prime characteristic by which the genuine Christians are to be known. The answer is their fruits. Twice Jesus asserts, "You will know them by their fruits." He does *not* say, "You will know them by their gifts."

This being the case, why do we insist that giftedness automatically places a person into the place of ministry? "Why, who can resist the Holy Spirit?" we exclaim. But giftedness is *not* the primary virtue denoting the presence of the Spirit. Love is *the* superior manifestation of the Spirit. And love is the superior quality denoting Christianity because, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). Yes, the first fruit of the Spirit is love. And you will know them by their fruits.

For this reason, more emphasis must be placed upon fruit in the Christian life. And, I believe, less emphasis should be placed upon people finding out their spiritual gifts. With fruit abounding in the Christian life, a person will have no trouble finding his or her place within the body of Christ.

Our Lord confirms all of this with the words that follow in Matthew 7,

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of

My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness' (Matthew 7:21-23).

The claim of superior spiritual gifts will not stand at the day of judgment.

The penetrating question at the judgment will be one of fruit born to the glory of God. As Jesus says in another place, "I am the vine, you are the branches; He who abides in Me and I in Him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Our Lord had already made it very clear, "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2). In similar fashion in the passage in Matthew 7 Christ explains, "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 7:19). Those cast into outer darkness and eternal fire will hear these awesome and telling words "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matthew 7:23, Psalm 6:8).

We will see the place of the moral law in the scheme of Christ in a moment. For now, it is imperative we understand the nature of love as *the* superior mark of the Christian. Without it, we are not Christian.

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Post Office Box 303
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IN RESPONSE - 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7, LESSON III

by Dennis Prutow

A. Given his uncompromising stand on the superiority of love, Paul now describes the love with which he is concerned. I say these verses are a description of love rather than a definition of love. Why? The grammar tells us. Take the first part of verse 4, "Love is patient, love is kind." What parts of speech are the words 'patient,' and 'kind'? They are predicated adjectives. They describe the subject, love. So what we have in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 is a solid description of love.

Paul is laying out, not *what* love is, but *how* love, whatever it might be, is characterized. He is giving us the character of love. But because Paul offers us a description, we must look elsewhere in Scripture for a definition of love.

B. We turn to 1 John 5:3 for our definition. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome." Here we see love defined in terms of the moral law of God summarized in the Ten Commandments. The parallel in 2 John 6 is even more explicit. "And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments." To love is to heed, to walk in, to observe, to keep God's commandments.

Immediately we are faced with the objection of legalism. We are faced with a concrete definition. But it is too concrete for many. It smacks of Pharisaicalism. But wait. Do we not have a jaundiced view of the law? Is not the law a gracious provision of God? We may ask, "What must I do to show God I really do love Him?" The answer from Scripture is plain, "And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments." Instead of looking at the law in a jaundiced way, suspecting it and ourselves of lacking grace, we should look at the commandments in a positive way. They are God's gracious provision. Through them we can show the world and show God that we love Him.

We are definitely not saying we may gain right standing before God by keeping the law. That is impossible. We are not justified by works. As a way of justification, we are not under law. Salvation is all of grace. But once converted, God also graciously provides believers the

vehicle for *converted people* to display their loyalty to Him. This gracious provision is the moral law.

C. Having defined love in terms of the Ten Commandments, let's take another step backwards to the underlying power of the Holy Spirit. As mentioned above, the promise of the New Covenant is the promise of a new heart. In addition, it is the promise of a new spirit and the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

When God causes a person to be born again, He places His own Spirit within that person. In this way, "the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Romans 5:5).

Of particular interest is the outcome of this new birth through the Spirit. "I will put My Spirit within you and *cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances*" (Ezekiel 36:27, emphasis added). Visible *fruit* from the new birth is promised. "I will...cause you to walk in My statutes." The presence of the Spirit will *impel* the newborn follower of Christ to walk in His commandments. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). And so the new power within the life of the believer born of the Spirit will incline the believer, indeed *cause* the believer, to walk in God's commandments.

This new inclination, buttressed by power from on high, will cause the believer to take utmost care in observing God's regulations for life. "You will be careful to observe My ordinances." This means mere outward conformity is realized to be a sham. Here we have heartfelt commitment to Christ and to His will.

This means we have several categories which come together in beautiful harmony to form the Christian life of love. First,

there is the *power* of love (Ezekiel 36:27). This results in the *conduct* of love (1 John 5:3, 2 John 6). But the *conduct* of love is carried out in a particular *manner* (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). All of this results in the *testimony* of love (Romans 8:8). The *power* of love is the love of God poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit. The *conduct* of love involves our obedience to the Ten Commandments. The *manner* of love takes us back to the description given to us by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. And the *testimony* of love takes us into the world as those who do bear fruit by the *power* of the Spirit through particular *conduct* carried out in a *particular manner*.

D. Getting back to the description of love given in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, we note the importance of this description.

Love is patient, love is kind, *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

As already stated, love as a test of true Christianity involves *particular conduct* carried out in a *particular manner*. One without the other falls short of the standard being set forth by Paul. This means a person may rigidly keep God's commandments but fall far short of love.

For example, telling the truth is absolutely essential to love. Truthfulness in marriage is of utmost necessity if there is to be love within the marriage. But we can tell the truth in many ways. The *manner* in which we maintain the truth is just as important as the truth itself. The loving person does not become impatient when the truth is not understood as he or she understands it. Love is patient. By the same token, the loving person is not unkind in delivering the truth nor is he unkind when the truth is not received kindly. The loving person, concerned for the truth, follows the example of Christ who, "while being reviled, He did not revile in return;

while suffering, He uttered no threats” (1 Peter 2:23). Love is kind.

At the same time, the loving person, while concerned for the truth, is not jealous of those who may have greater financial resources because they bend the truth. Or the loving boy will not be jealous when the girl of his dreams speaks to other young men. Love is not jealous.

In the context of truth and the maintaining of truth, the loving person will not shade the truth to his or her favor by bragging. Love does not brag. Nor will this loving person hold the truth over the heads of others in an effort to manipulate them. Love is not arrogant.

Neither does the loving person manipulate evidence from books, papers, or friends in order to bolster his position. Such actions are unbecoming to a Christian because love does not act unbecomingly. This is because a loving person is not out for himself. Love is others oriented.

I remember as a new pastor being very frustrated over how the bulletin was being done. I could not handle this detail of worship not being done *my way*. There was nothing sinful about the way the bulletin was done. There was nothing particularly bad about the format. It just wasn't the way I would do it. But “love does not insist on its own way” (RSV). Neither does the loving person become angry when the truth of a claim is not received. Projects, especially within the church, take time. Details must be worked out. Elders and deacons must be brought on board. The truth of a claim that we need higher visibility within our community and that this can be helped by good looking signs may not be readily seen by everyone. In the midst of such projects, love is not provoked.

No one would doubt the truth of Scripture that the church is to proclaim the gospel to a lost and dying world. But in every situation there is a multitude of ways to carry out the task. Divisions occur within congregations when young pastors launch ahead without support from the elders. People within the congregation become disgruntled. Both pastor and parishioners may begin to keep a list of faults they see in the other. Is this love? The pastor may maintain he is seeking truth and that truth is more important than unity. But love involves truth sought in a particular manner. “It keeps no record of wrongs” (NIV).

The loving person also will not laugh when someone else gets caught in a lie or some other sin. Many times we would enjoy saying with a chuckle, “I told you so.” But love “does not rejoice in unrighteousness.” Rejoicing in unrighteousness is the mark of unbelief. For example, when Paul speaks of homosexuals in Romans 1, he says, “Although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them” (Romans 1:32). In other words, those caught in the sin of homosexuality rejoice when others are trapped in the same perversion.

On the other hand, love rejoices in the truth. The truth is, homosexuals can be delivered from their sexual preference. Who would deny this is their preference? Yet it is a perversion of the most rank order. But when Paul lists homosexuals, among others such as drunkards, as those who will never enter God's heaven, he turns to the Corinthians and declares, “And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

After pointing this out one evening in a message concerning God's salvation, I was challenged by a young person who had just read a magazine article saying that drunkenness and alcoholism were the result of genetic problems. This was a disease of genetic origin. There was no rejoicing in the truth of Scripture here. Rather there was a rejection of the Word in favor of a magazine article.

Finally we see that love “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” Love will bear insult and injury for the sake of the truth. Love will take as true whatever is said in the counseling chamber until statements are proven wrong. That is, love takes people and what they say at face value. Love has great hope for those in which it comes in contact. It knows the truth of the gospel stands. It knows the way of forgiveness stands. And so it maintains great hope for those yet outside of Christ. And love endures. As truth endures, so love also endures. And a loving person manifests the character of endurance.

We could go through each of the Ten Commandments in the same way. But the point is made. If love demands a certain conduct; it also demands the particular manner in which this conduct is to be

played out. This is how Paul describes love.

E. Before moving on in 1 Corinthians 13, let me add one other thing. We have already seen the very first spiritual matter with which Paul is concerned. It is our confession of Christ. The confession of the Christian is, “Jesus is Lord” (1 Corinthians 12:3). This is a confession born of the Spirit. And it is born out by the Spirit in the lives of those who make the confession as just described.

My point is this. Love worthy of the name Christian is based upon a solid confession of the Lordship of Christ. It is within the context of and upon the foundation of this confession that we see the love Paul is expounding.

Several years ago when I was preparing for ordination, I was asked to write a paper outlining my faith in Christ and my understanding of basic Bible doctrine. The pastor assisting me through my examinations was one of the most cordial men I have ever met. He was courteous, caring, and from every outward appearance, most humble and loving.

But when this same pastor read my paper, and he came to statements I made concerning civil government which I based on the words of Paul in Romans 13, he said to me, “I'd delete this part.” When I asked him why, he simply responded, “I think Paul was mistaken at that point.” I was amazed. But I should not have been. Was this pastor a Christian? He manifested what appeared to be love. But did He love Christ? Did he love the Words of Christ and bow before them as before the Savior Himself? No. And so I have my doubts this man truly loved Jesus Christ.

Once again, my point is this: love worthy of the name of Christ is based upon a solid confession of His Lordship. It is within the context of this Lordship and upon the foundation of this Lordship that we see the love Paul is expounding. Outside the sphere of this confession, the counterfeits of love abound.

IN RESPONSE - 1 CORINTHIANS 13:8, LESSON IV

by Dennis Prutow

Our text, 1 Corinthians 13:8, says,

Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

Paul now gives us his final distinctive characteristic of love. Love endures. And he compares this with the fleeting quality of prophecy, biblical tongues, and special knowledge.

A. Love never fails. For Paul's discussion, this is the keystone of the character of love. And this must be true. "God is love" (1 John 4:8). God cannot fail. Therefore love never fails.

But in what way does love never fail? The Revised Standard Version says, "Love never ends." This is closer to the meaning of the text but it is still lacking. The word used by Paul literally means "fall." The picture Paul seems to be drawing is that love will never collapse. It will endure; it will always carry on; it will always be.

B. The contrast being drawn in the text bears out this interpretation. "But if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away." That is, prophecy, tongues, and special knowledge will fail. They will fail in that they will come to an end.

Remember, we are talking about special gifts of the Spirit. These three gifts are among those enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. They are special gifts which were distributed at the will of the Spirit and they *were* special manifestations of the presence of the Spirit.

C. But now we come to *the* nagging question. When do prophecy, biblical tongues, and special knowledge cease? And does Paul give us guidance in answering this question? The answer to the latter question is a resounding, 'Yes.' And the guidance is found in the following verses.

But before we launch into a discussion of verses 9-13, let me lay out the standard interpretation of these verses .

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as

a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Paul seems to be saying we are waiting for the perfect to come. The perfect is heaven and the life to come. Using the example of his own life, Paul says we experience the childish in this life. In heaven, all that is childish and immature will be put away. Then Paul uses a second example, that of a mirror. We see only a dim reflection in the mirror (Corinthian mirrors were polished metal) but when we get to heaven, we will see face to face. Only then will we know fully.

It all seems very plausible. But there is a problem. It is the matter of spiritual gifts and their full blown operation within the church. Paul is telling us *when* to expect the cessation of these special spiritual gifts. We can expect prophecy, biblical tongues, and special knowledge to cease "when the perfect comes" (verse 10), when we see "face to face" (verse 12), and when we "know fully" (verse 12).

Now if we are describing heaven and the experience of the believer in heaven, prophecy, biblical tongues, and special knowledge *have not ceased*. They are still extant. Those of us who have been saying the gifts came to an end upon the completion of the apostolic age are greatly mistaken. If the standard interpretation is true, those within the ranks of the old line Pentecostals and the neo-charismatics are correct. And since the Word of God is on their side, we had better close our doors and join with them in their celebration of the gifts of the Spirit.

Much to my chagrin, I have found no standard commentary which speaks to the issue I've just raised. Perhaps there is one I have missed. If anyone can point me to it, I will be grateful. Next, I'll deal with this anomaly and attempt to show the 'perfect' to which Paul refers is Scripture.

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IN RESPONSE TO CORNERSTONES, PART II

by Dennis Prutow
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Last time I began a response to the article by the editors of *Cornerstones* called “Woman’s Desire or What Do Women Want? There they challenged my interpretation of Genesis 3:16.¹ *Cornerstones* caricatured my view by saying, “In Rev. Prutow’s opinion the sinful desires of women are the fundamental cause of strife in the husband/wife relationship and the driving force behind the current discussion of women’s issues in the church.”² After showing how the *Cornerstones* assessment of my position is in error, I concluded by saying, *Cornerstones* thinks it has exposed my view that *women are the problem*. This is not my view. But the remainder of their article is based on this false premise.

Building on this false premise, *Cornerstones* insists, “According to Rev. Prutow, many Christian women refuse to accept biblical teaching on marriage because of their sinful nature.”³ To verify this statement, the editors of *Cornerstones* quotes from my Biblical Submission, Part II as follows. The emphasis was added by the editors of *Cornerstones*. “This concept of submission is absolutely repugnant to many women. **They simply cannot find it within themselves to follow the Word of God in this regard.** Why is this the case? The answer is simple. God said in the garden long ago that one of the results of the fall within the family would be the rebellious attitude of wives regarding the concept of submission.”

Unfortunately, *Cornerstones* once again fails to make the distinction between believer and unbeliever. In Biblical Submission, Part II, I wrote the words just quoted to describe those who are *fallen and unredeemed*. The whole thrust of this article was to display the results of the fall. I was, in my article, in no way attributing these attitudes to “Christian women” as stated by the editors of *Cornerstones*.⁴ The editors are simply wrong at this point.

They compound their error by saying, “Rev. Prutow brings these unfortunate views into play in a personal attack on a sister in Christ, Kathy Stegall.”⁵ I respond in three ways. First, as already shown, the editors of *Cornerstones* have

falsely imputed to me “these unfortunate views.” Second, these views falsely imputed to me have therefore had absolutely nothing to do with my attack on the teachings of Kathy Stegall. Third, the editors of *Cornerstones* do not show where my critique of Kathy Stegall is in error. I have said Mrs. Stegall’s teaching is a perversion of the doctrine of the Trinity. Am I wrong? If so, show me where I am wrong. The editors of *Cornerstones* make no attempt to show where my assessment of Mrs. Stegall’s views is incorrect.

But isn’t this where the debate should be engaged? I have critiqued the *teachings* of Kathy Stegall. *If my critique* is shown to be inaccurate or incorrect, I will recant and burn my articles. It will not do to vilify my critique as a personal attack and fail to show where I err. On the other hand, I am taking pains to show exactly where the editors of *Cornerstones* are in error in their assessment of my interpretation of Genesis 3:16.

Cornerstones goes on to say, “According to Rev. Prutow, woman’s basic sinful nature is **rebellious, controlling, manipulative and tricky**. Even the biblical studies of women cannot be trusted because the concept of submission is so naturally repugnant to women that many of them will **pervert the truth and embrace error**.”⁶

Again, the editors of *Cornerstones* fail to make the vital distinction between the redeemed and the unredeemed. Do I describe *Christian* women as indicated? No I do not. It goes without saying that fallen *men and women* have dispositions hostile toward God. Fallen young ladies often manifest rebellion against the biblical notion of submission. In like manner, fallen young men often fail to love their wives but rather act in dictatorial ways. As pointed out in Biblical Submission, Part II, the results of the fall are just as devastating in the lives of men as they are in the lives of women. We must never forget this.

As a result, many a man has perverted the Scriptures in order to satisfy his own sinful inclinations. A cursory review of how so called “Christian homosexuals” handle the Sacred Text is a case in point.

And so I by no means think women have a corner on the market when it comes to perverting the truth and embracing error.

Without making the distinction I think I have been careful to make, the distinction between fallen unredeemed sinners and believers, the editors of *Cornerstones* attribute to me a view which I do not hold. They pointedly ascribe these words to me. “Even the biblical studies of women cannot be trusted because the concept of submission is so naturally repugnant to women that many of them will **pervert the truth and embrace error**.”⁷ The implication, they think, is very clear. I warn against reading the biblical studies of women who love Jesus Christ and who are committed to the inerrancy of Scripture.

The response is forthright. “The *Cornerstones* editors reject this view.”⁸ I also reject this view which is wrongly attributed to me. And I fully agree with the editors of *Cornerstones*. “We believe that women are fully redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ, set free from the power of sin—in the same way that men are.” To this I say, “Amen!” This to me is wonderful evidence that when we make the proper distinctions, and thus properly understand Scripture, we come to agreement.

That the editors of *Cornerstones* are falsely attributing to me the view that Christian women doing biblical studies cannot be trusted is easily dispelled from another perspective. My wife, also member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, teaches in the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Sterling College. In fact, she teaches classes in Christian Education. And as a part of her duties as an assistant professor she teaches college students *how* to study the Bible. If I really held the position attributed to me by the editors of *Cornerstones*, would I be supportive of this important ministry carried on by my own wife? I think not.

The editors of *Cornerstones* then set forth their view of the desire of Christian women. “Women, as well as men, may claim the promise of Scripture.”⁹ Because *Cornerstones* has erected a straw Rev. Prutow, and built a case against my

non-existent views, they seem to infer I do not think women can claim the same promises from Scripture as men. If this were true, I would, without doubt, be unfit for the ministry. Of course the inference is not true.

Romans 8:5 is then quoted, "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature *desires*; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit *desires*."¹⁰ The quote from NIV highlights the idea of desires. And the editors of *Cornerstones* tell us, "The Bible has a lot to say about *desires*."¹¹ I agree. They then quote Galatians 5:24, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires." The quote is set in bold to emphasize the truth of this fact. A cursory review of these texts and Genesis 3:16 might indicate a consistent use of the word *desire*.

But again, we must differentiate between different types of desire. The word *desire* may refer to different things. For example, when we talk about God's desire, do we mean the will of His decree hidden in His eternal counsels, His preceptive will revealed in His Word the Bible, or do we refer to His attitude toward His creatures? These are very distinct ways of viewing the single term, *desire*.

When we speak of human desires we may speak of human cravings like the craving for chocolate. This is a very subjective view of *desire* in terms of emotions. We may also speak of desire in terms of the human will. It is my will, my desire, that my children attend church regularly. In this light we also have a will hidden within our minds so that our wives or husbands or children may ask us, "What do you want?" Translated this means, "What is your desire?" Then we may *express* our will or desire. It may come in the form of information or it may come in the form of a command. Here we have the more objective *desire*. Of course we never separate the emotional and the volitional completely.

Some of these nuances are picked up in the different words of the Greek language used by the writers of the New Testament. And interestingly enough, Romans 8:5, Galatians 5:24, and Genesis 3:16 in the Greek version of the Old Testament use three different words for desire.

Romans 8:5 refers to the disposition, inclination, or mind set of an individual. The lives of those founded upon principles contrary to God, the flesh, are inclined to oppose God. Their basic desires and cravings are disposed against God. Those who are born again and have lives founded upon the principle of new life produced by the Spirit are inclined to follow "what the Spirit desires." There is a new inclination, a new craving, a new propensity.

This does not mean the old passions and lusts are no longer present. Crucifixion of the sinful nature means the dominion and rule of the sinful nature has been broken. The inclination of the heart has been changed so that it is no longer "only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Sin remains. It does not reign.

And so we must work at bringing the inner cravings and desires of the heart into conformity to the revealed will or desires of God. This means careful study and application of the Word of God. *Cornerstones* says, "With regard to women and study of the Bible, Psalm 119 says, 'I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. I have not departed from your laws for you yourself have taught me.'"¹² Two comments. First, Psalm 119:99-102 is not just written to women. It applies *equally* to men and women. Second, I have more insight than my teachers and more understanding than the elders when I study and obey the precepts of God, when I obey His revealed desire or will. Women as well as men should examine the Scriptures and test the teachings they hear by the Scriptures.

The editors of *Cornerstones* conclude their article by mentioning Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus. They commend this position. "May we all have the courage of Mary who set her mind on 'what the Spirit desires' and may we sit at the feet of Jesus when others would shame us away."¹³ On the point of biblical submission, I do not think the editors of *Cornerstones* really understand 'what the Spirit desires.' If they did, I am confident they would bring the *desires of their hearts* into conformity to God's *written desires* at this point. But the editors of *Cornerstones* do not think I understand biblical submission either. Hence the debate.

I repeat the closing statement of the editors, "[M]ay we sit at the feet of Jesus

when others would shame us away."¹⁴

No one is attempting to shame the editors of *Cornerstones* away from the feet of Jesus. If I am guilty at this point, I am a false pastor, a wolf in sheep's clothing. At the feet of Jesus we are in the place of submission. At the feet of Jesus our inner desires may be changed and inclined to God's truth.

Here is my question. Psalm 119:100 points us to the precepts of God. These precepts are the *written desires* of God. Are we all attempting to bring our *inner desires* into conformity to God's *written desires*? This should be the case for both Christian men and women.

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¹ *Cornerstones*, Second Quarter 1993, p. 1. All references to *Cornerstones* are to the editor's article "Woman's Desire or What **Do** Women Want?", Second Quarter 1993.

² *Ibid*, p. 1.

³ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁴ A careful reading of In Response-Biblical Submission, Part II will verify the emphasis of that article on the *results of the fall*. Biblical Submission, Part III sets forth the Pauline answer to the problem described in Part II.

⁵ *Cornerstones*, p. 4.

⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ The italics added by the editors of *Cornerstones*.

¹¹ *Cornerstones*, p. 4.

¹² Psalm 119:99-102.

¹³ *Ibid*.

¹⁴ *Cornerstones*, p. 4.