

It's All About Love

I Corinthians 13 | Week Nine | Participant Guide

Preparing for the Session

Read: I Corinthians 13:1-13

Memorize: "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." - I Cor. 13:13

Looking at the Text

13:1-13

1. Verses 1-3 form the first section of the chapter. What point is Paul making in these verses?

2. Compare 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 with Galatians 5:22-23. How is "the fruit of the spirit" passage in Galatians similar to the 1 Corinthians descriptions of love? Why do you think Paul emphasized these insights in his writings?

3. In verse 5 we read that love is "not irritable or resentful." What sorts of things irritate you or cause resentment in your life? How could you respond to those things in love instead of with irritation or resentment?

4. Verse 12 says, "For now we see in a mirror dimly." What does this suggest about the extent of our knowledge in this world? How should love play a role in how we relate to others when it comes to understanding truths about reality?

5. In verse 13 the three so-called theological virtues are listed—faith, hope, and love. Why do you think Paul emphasizes these three? Why is love "the greatest of these"?

6. Western culture often presents love exclusively as feelings related to personal pleasure. Christian love is rooted in God, selfless, and should move us to have an outward focus. How can you cultivate true Christian love in your life? What obstacles stand in your way—your schedule, your focus on your academic pursuits, distractions and diversions? How can you overcome them?

- 1 | The Problem with Knowledge
- 2 | Wisdom of Man & Power of God
- 3 | Servanthood & Stewardship
- 4 | Sex, Holiness, and Worship
- 5 | Singleness, Marriage, & Calling
- 6 | Knowledge, Idolatry, & Surrender
- 7 | The Anatomy of an Idol
- 8 | All in the Family
- 9 | It's All About Love
- 10 | Spiritual Gifts & The Church
- 11 | The Resurrection & The End

"Few chapters in the Bible have suffered more misinterpretation and misapplication than 1 Corinthians 13. Divorced from its context, it becomes 'a hymn to love' or a sentimental sermon on Christian brotherhood. Many people fail to see that Paul was still dealing with the Corinthians' problems when he wrote these words: the abuse of the gift of tongues, division in the church, envy of others' gifts, selfishness (remember the lawsuits?), impatience with one another in the public meetings, and behavior that was disgracing the Lord. The only way spiritual gifts can be used creatively is when Christians are motivated by love."
Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*

A Passage Applied

Try substituting your name in the place of love (vs 4-7). Do you feel the overwhelming task to "love as Christ loves?" Make a list of people that are difficult to love and let Jesus love them through you.

