

- 1 **Be concise.** Please share your thoughts and answers, but be considerate so that others will have time to share their answers also. Be charitable and kind. Be willing to share with the group, but do not try to dominate the conversation. Use the time after the class to find help with any personal issues or problems you may be confronting in your life.

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."

(James 1:19–20)

- 2 **Be thoughtful with your answer.** Consider your words. Do not simply regurgitate what you have always heard. We have the tendency to speak in "Christianese" — words that only people who grew up on the pews would understand. Think about how your words will be heard by others. Will they understand what you are saying? Is what you are about to say going to be useful for the building up of the faith of others? Or will your words be confusing, cause hurt, or worse, damage someone's faith? Speak without harshness or anger, but with kindness and humility.

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

(Ephesians 4:29)

- 3 **Rely on the scriptures for truth.** It is easy to rely upon conventional, worldly wisdom as truth. Bible study is about seeking God's answers for our lives, not dispensing the advice of the world. We must consider that our natural answers may be the wrong answers if they are not founded on God's word.

"For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength."

(1 Corinthians 1:25)

What can you give? You may think you do not have much. You may be struggling financially. You may have recently lost your job. You may have received a surprising medical bill that will be difficult to pay. You may feel like everyone makes demands of you and you have nothing left to give. What can you give?

The Corinthian church was a divided church. There was not harmony. Rather, there was competition and strife. Some in the church were elevating themselves over others in the church because of the spiritual gifts they possessed. They made distinctions between themselves because of their physical and spiritual circumstances. The book of James addresses the same problem:

1 My brothers and sisters, do not show prejudice if you possess faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. 2 For if someone comes into your assembly wearing a gold ring and fine clothing, and a poor person enters in filthy clothes, 3 do you pay attention to the one who is finely dressed and say, "You sit here in a good place," and to the poor person, "You stand over there," or "Sit on the floor"? 4 If so, have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil motives? (James 2:1–4 NET)

The world teaches us to look at all the wrong things in this life. We look at externals and fail to see the greatest gift that we have to give to God, to each other, and to the world: LOVE.

**So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
(1 Corinthians 13:13 ESV)**

The thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians gives a description of love. You may know that chapter fairly well. But we frequently pass over it quickly and do not allow the descriptions of love to sink into our hearts and change our lives. The Corinthian church possessed all kinds of spiritual gifts. Yet they were lacking the greatest gift. It was not that these Christians did not possess the greatest gift. Rather, they refused to give the greatest gift they could offer. It is easy for us to do the same. You possess the greatest gift. It is the greatest gift you can give. In this study you will look at the qualities of love and consider how you can give this gift to God, to your family, to your church, and to others.

Your Greatest Gift

1

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. **3** If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1–3 ESV)



1. Look at verse 1. Speaking in different languages was a very important miraculous spiritual gift to communicate God's word with different people in the Roman Empire. But if these Christians did not have love when using this gift, Paul says they are like noisy gongs and clanging cymbals.

How can lacking love while speaking God's truth could be just an irritating noise? Have you seen situations where this has happened? Discuss.

What are ways that you failed in this so that you have become an irritating noise toward your husband, children, family, friends, fellow Christians, co-workers, neighbors, or others?

2. Look at verse 2. Having prophetic powers and having knowledge of God's will was a very important miraculous gift in the first century when they did not possess the New Testament scriptures yet. Yet Paul teaches that if these Christians did not have love, they are nothing even if they have all faith and knowledge of God's will.

Consider: Why would lacking love make us nothing before God? Explain.

3. Look at verse 3. Paul also addresses Christians who are willing to make great sacrifices for the Lord. They are willing to give away their possessions to others. They help those who are in need. They will even sacrifice their bodies for others. However, Paul teaches that if they did not have love, all of their sacrifices and giving have gained the person nothing.

Why would giving our wealth, time, and even ourselves to others without love gain us absolutely nothing before God? Explain.

Have sacrificed yourself for your husband, children, family, friends, fellow Christians, co-workers, neighbors, and others and it gained you nothing before God?

TRANSFORMATION:

What can you do to make sure that love is the basis for your godly teaching, giving of your wealth and time, and sacrifice of yourself so that God is pleased?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is patient and kind (1 Corinthians 13:4 ESV)

Love suffers long and is kind (1 Corinthians 13:4 NKJV)



Love practices being patient or long-suffering, literally, “long-tempered.” The word is common in the New Testament and is used almost exclusively of being patient with people, rather than with circumstances or events. Love’s patience is the ability to be inconvenienced or taken advantage of by a person over and over again and yet not be upset or angry. Chrysostom, the early church Father, said, “It is a word which is used of the man who is wronged and who has it easily in his power to avenge himself but will never do it.” Patience never retaliates.

PATIENCE

1. How is showing patience a way of showing love?
2. What are ways that you can show patience/long-suffering with your spouse and children?
3. What are ways that you can show patience/long-suffering with other Christians, neighbors, and friends?

KIND/NOT RUDE

4. How is showing kindness a way of showing love?
5. In verse 5 we see that “love is not rude.” How does being rude not show love?
6. What are ways that you can show kindness and not be rude with your spouse and children?
7. What are ways that you can show kindness and not be rude with other Christians, neighbors, and friends?

TRANSFORMATION:

What can you do to make sure that love is displayed through patience and kindness?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4

Love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant. (1 Corinthians 13:4 ESV)



NOT ENVIOUS

The Greek word translated "envy" means "to have intense negative feelings over another's achievements or success, to be filled with jealousy, envy toward someone." Another way to think of envy is resentment.

1. What causes resentment?
2. How is envy not showing love?
3. What are ways that you can not be envious toward your spouse and children?
4. What are ways that you can not be envious toward other Christians, neighbors, and friends?

NOT BOASTFUL/ARROGANT

Boast means "to vaunt one's self." Arrogant means "to inflate, puff up; to inflate with pride and vanity."

5. Why do we act boastfully and arrogantly?
6. How are arrogance and boasting not a showing love?
7. What are ways do we act boastfully and arrogantly with our spouses and children?
8. What are ways do we act boastfully and arrogantly with other Christians, neighbors, and friends?

TRANSFORMATION:

What can you do to make sure that love is displayed without envy, boasting, or arrogance?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:5

It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; (1 Corinthians 13:5 ESV)
it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered. (NIV)



NOT SELF-SEEKING/INSISTING ON OUR OWN WAY

1. Why is self-seeking and insisting on our own way so easy to do, even as Christians?
2. How is being self-seeking and insisting on our own way not showing love?
3. What are ways that you can not be self-seeking toward your spouse and children?
4. What are ways that you can not be self-seeking toward other Christians, neighbors, and friends?

NOT IRRITABLE/EASILY ANGERED

5. Why do you think you are easily angered? Please consider that we like to blame others for our irritability, but never does. The problem is within ourselves. Identify what within you brings out your anger easily.
6. How is being easily angered/irritable not a showing love?
7. What are ways do we are irritable and easily angered with our spouses and children?
8. What are ways do we are irritable and easily angered with other Christians, neighbors, and friends?

TRANSFORMATION:

What can you do to make sure that love is displayed without irritation or anger?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:5

It keeps no record of wrongs. (1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV)



The NIV reflects the literal idea of what love looks like: it keeps no record of wrongs. It is a bookkeeping term that means to calculate or reckon, as when figuring an entry in a ledger. The purpose of the entry is to make a permanent record that can be consulted whenever needed. In business that practice is necessary, but in personal matters it is not only unnecessary but harmful.

1. Why is keeping a record of wrongs committed against us so easy to do, even as Christians?
2. How is keeping a record of wrongs committed not showing love?
3. Is it fair to keep a record of wrongs committed against you? Do you want people to keep a record of your wrongs?
4. How is keeping a record of wrongs particularly sinful when we consider the love of God? Does he keep a record of wrongs committed against him after being forgiven?
5. What are ways that you can stop keeping a record of wrongs committed by your spouse and children?
6. What are ways that you can stop keeping a record of wrongs committed by other Christians, neighbors, and friends?

TRANSFORMATION:

What can you do to make sure that love is displayed without keeping a record of wrongs committed against you?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:6-7

It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:6–7 ESV)



1. Why does love not rejoice wrongdoing? Explain why wrongdoing would not be a characteristic of love?
2. Why does love rejoice with the truth? Explain why truth is a characteristic of love.
3. Explain how “love bears all things.”
4. Explain how “love believes all things.”
5. Explain how “love hopes all things.”
6. Explain how “love endures all things.”
7. How do we see these above characteristics concerning love in the nature of God?
8. How can you show these characteristics of love (bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things) toward your spouse and children?
9. How can you show these characteristics of love (bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things) toward other Christians, neighbors, and friends?

TRANSFORMATION:

What can you do to make sure that love is displayed with truth? What can you do so that you with bear, believe, hope, and endure all things?

Your Greatest Gift



SELF-STUDY WORKBOOK

by: Brent Kercheville