LOOK BACK
Discuss how God’s Word had an impact last week.

1. Considering last week’s sermon from 1 Corinthians 13, how has your understanding of the nature of God’s love been deepened? Has your response to Him and love toward others been impacted as a result? Share this with your group.

LOOK TO GOD’S WORD
Study and apply God’s Word as a group.

1. Read this week’s passage:

1 Corinthians 14:1-26 (English Standard Version)

1 Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 2 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. 5 Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

6 Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? 7 If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? 8 And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? 9 So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. 10 There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, 11 but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. 12 So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

13 Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. 15 What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. 16 Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? 17 For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. 18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue. 20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. 21 In the Law it is written, “By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” 22 Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. 23 If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

26 What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

2. Recap what God is saying to all of us through the passage:

• **Pursue love.** Work at it with everything you have. Christian love is the biggest threat to Satan’s kingdom. Cultivate, work for, and pursue love...for God and for others.
• **Prioritize that which most builds up the church.** Prioritize building each other up, encouraging and consoling each other, and helping each other in God’s Word, for the sake of each other’s faith AND for the sake of people around us in need of Jesus.

• **Prioritize that which best leads people to Jesus.** Operate as a church in such a way that people see what is happening among you and are drawn to worship God.

3. As you reflect on Sunday’s sermon, what insight was particularly helpful, distinctive, or challenging to you? What insight was difficult to grasp? What aspects of this sermon do you hope we talk about as a group?

**LOOK FORWARD**

*Consider the implications of the passage for His body and His mission in the world.*

1. In your life, when or where do you most clearly see and sense God’s loving pursuit of you? How has He encouraged you? When has He consoled you or relieved your pain? How has He drawn you closer to Himself? How might you need to respond to Him as a result?

2. Read Psalm 103:11, John 15:13, 1 John 3:16, Philippians 2:4-11, 1 John 4:19, 1 John 4:7-8, John 12:25, and Galatians 2:20. In a world broken by sin, we all desperately need what only the Lord can give. Reflect on what commitments you should personally make to pursue love in your midst (e.g., in your home, church, marketplace, city, and world). How might you more steadily fix your eyes on Jesus, more solidly hold fast to His Word, and more sacrificially follow Him as you pursue this love?

3. How do we know if something is, or is not, a priority in our lives? What does it mean to prioritize building up Christ’s body, the church? How can we, as our MBC family, excel this very week at building up our church and making that a priority in our lives? How might we know if our priorities lie elsewhere?

4. What does it mean that God has called His church to prioritize that which best leads people to Jesus? Consider your specific context (e.g., your neighborhood, street, school or workplace). How might you prioritize your words, time and/or actions in a way that helps other to know and follow Jesus?

5. How do these two callings on our lives (prioritizing building up the church and prioritizing leading people to Jesus) go hand-in-hand for disciples of Christ?

6. Take time to break into smaller groups for more specific sharing and deeper prayer. One way to do this is to pair up group members into groups of 2-4 people of the same gender. In these smaller groups:

   • Share any questions, concerns, fears, or doubts you have that might discourage you from more freely receiving and knowing God’s love. *Note: If you aren’t comfortable sharing your thoughts with the group, consider sharing them with your group leader.*

   • Share an area where you need to respond in obedience as you pursue love towards others.

   • Take time right now to encourage and build one another up.

   • Pray for specific requests.

7. Finally, as you come back together with your entire group, consider building one another up by reciting 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 aloud together. If you have not yet memorized this passage, please take the opportunity to do so this week.

McLean Bible Church