

WHAT LOVING ONE ANOTHER LOOKS LIKE

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-7

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE – NOVEMBER 23, 2025

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Corinthians 13:1–7 (ESV)

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.

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant

5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

ICE BREAKER QUESTION

What is one idea that culture (TV, social media, family upbringing, etc.) teaches you about “love” that differs from the 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 definition of love?

SERMON RECAP

This passage shows why love is essential for every follower of Jesus, what true Christlike love looks like, and how we practically pursue this love:

1. Why this kind of love is important (vv. 1-3)
 - Without love, we are nothing, and we gain nothing.
 - Without love, even the greatest gifts and sacrifices are empty.
 - Love is the essential Christian virtue—and a foundation of the church’s witness.
2. What this kind of love looks like (vv. 4-7)
 - Agape (type of love described here) is defined as “choosing to selflessly serve and care for others, regardless of their response.”
 - Love is patient and kind—selfless, others-focused, and shaped by truth.
 - Love refuses sinful attitudes, rejects evil, and consistently bears, believes, hopes, and endures. This is the “more excellent way” God calls His people to embody.
3. How we pursue this kind of love
 - Accept God’s perfect love for us — We love because God first loved us.
 - Emulate Christ’s love — Jesus displayed perfect, patient, sacrificial love.
 - Rely on the Holy Spirit — Only the Spirit produces and sustains this love in us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observation: What does this passage say?

1. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 aloud as a group. Share initial observations:
 - What repeated ideas or contrasts stand out?
 - What contrasts do you see between the “spectacular” spiritual gifts in vv. 1-3 and the simple, ordinary actions of love in vv. 4-7?
 - How do the “even if” statements (vv. 1-3) emphasize the importance of love?
2. What actions and attitudes define love in vv. 4-7?
3. How would you summarize the main message of this passage in your own words?



Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. Why this kind of love is important (vv. 1-3)
 - Why are the most impressive gifts and sacrifices worthless without love?
 - What does it reveal about the nature of God that love is such an essential element of being a follower of Christ?
2. What this kind of love looks like (vv. 4-7)
 - Which specific description of love in vv. 4-7 feels the most counterintuitive or unnatural to you—and why do you think that is?
 - According to Matthew 5:43-44, to whom should Christians show agape love?
 - If the church truly lived out this picture of love, what would be different about our relationships, our unity, and our witness to the world?
3. How we pursue this kind of love
 - Accept God's love for us
 - Read 1 John 4:8-10 — How does accepting God's initiating and sacrificial love free and transform us?
 - Emulate Christ's love
 - Read Philippians 2:5-8 — What would it look like to imitate Christ's humility, patience, and self-giving love in our day-to-day lives?
 - Rely on the Holy Spirit
 - Read Romans 5:5 and Galatians 5:22-23 — How do these two passages help us understand that if you have trusted in Jesus, God has given you everything you need, through the Holy Spirit, to love others in this way?
 - Why is pursuing Christ Himself—accepting His love, emulating His example, and relying on His Spirit—essential to becoming people who love like this?

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

1. Why this kind of love is important
 - Where do you feel tempted to value ability, knowledge, sacrifice, or success more than love?
 - Are there current areas in your life where you are “doing good things” or “serving,” but it's not coming from a heart of love? How might you address that going forward?
2. What this kind of love looks like
 - Which of the descriptions in vv. 4-7 do you most need God's help to grow in right now?
 - Who is one person God may be calling you to love with patience, kindness, or forgiveness this week?
3. How we pursue this kind of love
 - How can remembering the gospel reshape your responses in difficult relationships this week?
 - What step can you take this week to intentionally pursue Christlike love at home, work, school, or church?
 - What spiritual practices (prayer, scripture meditation, confession, community) help you actively rely on the Holy Spirit to grow in love? How can you better pursue those practices this week?

LEADER NOTES

2025 MINISTRY REPORT | The 2025 Ministry Report is now available! The stories, the numbers, the testimonies—they all represent real people whose lives have been transformed by the Gospel. Let's take a moment to celebrate what God has done, thank Him for His faithfulness, and look ahead with expectancy for what's to come! You can view the report here: mcleanbible.org/ministryreport.

CHURCH FAMILY MEETING | Please join us for our next Church Family Meeting at 7 pm on December 10 online. We will be voting on new members and on the 2026 budget at this meeting. Copies of the proposed 2026 budget will be available at all of our locations beginning on November 30.