

LOVE IS ACTION

FEBRUARY 18, 2024

WORSHIP

Suggested Worship Songs:
Your Grace is Enough, By
Your Love, What He's Done,
Amazing Love (You are my
King), Lamb of God, The Love
of God

WELCOME

How do you usually show
love to family and friends on
Valentine's Day? How about
on "ordinary" days?

WORD

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8,13

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails... ¹³ But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Mahatma Gandhi read the Bible and saw the power of the teachings of Jesus when he was in London to study Law. He worked in South Africa and visited a church where he experienced rejection from some unloving Christians for his skin color! Years later, as Prime Minister of India, he was asked what must be done to evangelize Indians. He answered – "I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ". There are many good Christians, but there also "Christians" who are so un-Christlike. Let's continue to rediscover what God says about love through Paul the Apostle.

Aristides, a Greek scholar, wrote the Roman emperor about Christians and testified about their great love for other people, describing them as moral and upright, loving their neighbors and extends comfort even to those who injure them, "**eager to do good to their enemies**". Christianity had great impact in history – orphanages, hospitals, and the like were all displays of the brand of love that Jesus championed. **Francis Schaeffer** said, "**Love is the final apologetic. It is the defense for which there is no defense**". Jesus commanded followers to love one another as He loved them (**John 15:35-35**), that's the new standard of love— **unconditional commitment towards imperfect people, to seek their highest good, which is costly and may require sacrifice. LOVE IS ACTION!**

1 Corinthians 13, one of the most famous chapters in the Bible, gives the greatest description of love (**vv. 4-7**) with 15 verbs to describe LOVE. The Jewish people follow 613 commandments; 365 "thou shall not", and the remaining are "thou shall" do's. Jesus summarized the Law in two commandments (**Mark 12:28-33**). But what is a truly mature Christian? Some myths people use to define spiritual maturity are knowledge (**1 Corinthians 8:1**), zeal (**Romans 10:2**), activities (**Matthew 6:1**), success (**2 Chronicles 26:16**), position (**Luke 11:43**), spiritual gifts (**1 Corinthians 13:1-2**) and sacrifice (**1 Corinthians 13:3**).

1 Corinthians 13 begins with Paul making a very important point (**vv.1-2**): even if you have the gift of tongues, prophecy, knowledge, and faith, but you do not have LOVE, we "**are nothing**". Even if we are generous givers, willing to sacrifice ourselves as martyrs, but do not have love, there is no profit in that (**v.3**). When you think of Christ, the Greatest Person and Lover of all times, He exhibited a different level of love, and we must grow into Christlikeness and the love He had shown. David Jeremiah said, "**Love is worthless unless it's expressed in deed and behavior**".

WHAT LOVE IS:

Love is **PATIENT** and **KIND** (**1 Corinthians 13:4**). "Patient" in Greek is makrothumeo – long-suffering. People long to love and be loved, but the hurdle is our very own imperfections. God's amazing love is that He chose to love us even with our imperfections. We must be patient with others if we want to love. "Kind" in Greek is chresteuomai. Christians were once called chrestinai – a combined word describing one who is full of kindness and grace (**Romans 2:4**). Are we patient and kind to others? Even in challenging situations and interacting with frustrating people?

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WHAT LOVE IS NOT:

Love is **not JEALOUS** (Gk. Zeloo) (**1 Corinthians 13:4**), this is different from jealousy that protects (God is a jealous God, meaning a protective ownership). When others are blessed, be happy and rejoice with those who rejoice. You don't have to own everything to enjoy it – let us not be covetous. Love does **not BRAG** (Gk. perperuomai). Our usual mistake is to take credit for things that happen to us, and we brag about it (culture even calls it “humble brag”). Love is also **not ARROGANT** (Gk. phusioo). Arrogance is something we must all avoid. **Deuteronomy 8:14-18** reminds us that God is the one who gives us power, and the ability to make wealth – so we charge everything to God!

Love **does not ACT UNBECOMINGLY** (Gk. aschemoneo) (**1 Corinthians 13:5**). We should not be rude and act in a way that doesn't reflect Jesus; **not SEEK** (Gk. zeteo) **ITS OWN** insisting its own way with selfishness; love is **not PROVOKED** (Gk. paroxuno), or quickly irritated. Instead, let us withhold our words first and avoid being reactive. Love does **not TAKE INTO ACCOUNT** (Gk. logizomai) a wrong suffered, not counting mistakes and keeping records of wrongs; instead keeping good relationships. God is after our character and allows challenges to make us better Christians. God will vindicate us from these challenges someday but let us not allow these to destroy our testimonies. All of these is possible by the power of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**) – this verse means one fruit – a combination of all these good virtues. This is not produced on our own. We need to have God, and the result is that Christ lives in and through us. It is also fostered in deep meaningful relationships (like in a small group).

Love does not **REJOICE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS** but instead rejoices in the truth (**1 Corinthians 13:6**). **Proverbs 24:17** tells us not to rejoice when our enemies have problems. Love covers a multitude of sins (**1 Peter 4:8**) – there is forgiveness and grace, but we must stick to what is right in the sight of God.

Finally, Paul also expressed **what love should always do**, that we should always strive to do:

Love bears (Gk. stego), believes (Gk. pisteuo), hopes (Gk. elpizo), and endures (Gk. hupomeno) **ALL THINGS**. It speaks of having the right perspective and shown by how we give others the benefit of the doubt, disengage in gossip, and protect. You must believe people can change by the power of God! He who began a good work in us will be faithful to **COMPLETE** it (**Philippians 1:6**). True love **NEVER FAILS** (Gk. pipto). God never fails – so we follow what Jesus commanded – to do unto others what we want to be done to us. It's about living a life that reflects the brand of love that Christ taught us, putting them in **ACTION**.

DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

How different is your understanding of what love is as compared to how 1 Corinthians 13 describes it?

2. Setting It Right.

What do you need to improve on based on 1 Corinthians 13? Which actions or verbs are you doing right now and which ones do you find difficult to apply?

3. Living It Out.

What practical steps can you do to apply what true love is?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE
IN ACTION

Pray for the people in your life to see God's love in action through His people. Do your part in showing Jesus' kind of love for His people, and for all people. Share the gospel to someone who may be curious to know more about Jesus and what His family (church) is like.

WEEKLY
PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God's help and comfort, salvation for Israel, wisdom for their leaders in government, military and their soldiers as they defend themselves against terrorists' attacks. PRAISE GOD for the release of hostages so far! Continue to pray for the release of the remaining ones.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; conflict in African, East Asian and Middle East countries to stop. Pray for Christians from different countries who have been persecuted, attacked and killed in recent weeks.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

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