

# THE BEAUTY OF LOVE

Love is the activity that identifies us as true disciples of Jesus Christ.

## KEY POINTS

- ❖ In the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul was writing to a Church that had many challenges. To name a few:
  - Cliques
  - Spiritual immaturity
  - Immorality
  - Marital issues
  - Legal issues
  - Classism
  - Abuse of spiritual gifts
- ❖ After laying out his arguments, doing some teaching and prescribing the spiritual 'medicine' they needed, Paul brings it all together in 1 Cor. 13.
- ❖ To paraphrase him: "When all is said and done, what you need more than anything else is LOVE!"
- ❖ Love is the solution to the problem of factionalism, (as described in chapter 1; also see 1 Cor. 12:25).
- ❖ Love is the foundation of the glorious 'wisdom' of God demonstrated in the gospel of salvation (John 3:16).
- ❖ Love is the foundation for the use of all the spiritual gifts listed in chapter 12 (see 1 Cor. 13:2).
- ❖ Love is the motivating force behind suffering with the sufferer and rejoicing with the one who is rejoicing (1 Cor. 12:26).
- ❖ Love empowers us to be honest with each other (see Ephesians 4:15 – "speaking the truth in love"; written in the context of sharing doctrinal truth).
- ❖ We could be such blessings to each other if we would simply be honest in our interactions and pro-active in giving helpful, needful feedback to our brethren.
- ❖ And it's not even that hard to do – if we love our brethren. It will take some time and effort, certainly some tact and discretion, but we need to do it! Don't say it won't work until you've actually tried it.
- ❖ And if it doesn't work out well the first time, try it with someone else. Let's love each other enough to be honest with each other.
- ❖ Love is profitable to us (inverse of 1 Cor. 13:3b).

## KEY SCRIPTURES:

1 Corinthians 13; John 13:34-35, 3:16, 15:12-13; Ephesians 4:15; Romans 12:9

- ❖ Love edifies others. Love is enduring and never fails (1 Cor. 13:8). Love lives on, even beyond the grave (see v. 13). Will you leave behind a legacy of love?
- ❖ Love is the sign of our discipleship to Jesus (John 13:35), the clothing a Christian must wear. We don't have to hang a big sign around our necks saying "CHRISTIAN" for people to know who we are. Love is our identifier.
- ❖ It is a delight to be with those we love and with those who love us.
- ❖ Practical love is the visible outworking of our obedience to the command of Jesus – to love as He loved (John 15:12). 'Secret' love that is never demonstrated is not real.
- ❖ We feel honoured when we are treated in a loving manner.
- ❖ Let our love be genuine, sincere and without hypocrisy (Romans 12:9).

## DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Have you ever found the practical application of 'speaking the truth in love' to be hard to implement? Was it easier/harder based on your relationship with the person concerned?
2. Are you able to forgive a past hurt with ease, or is it a struggle? Are you the type of person to bring the situation to light, or would you rather never talk about it, forgive them in your heart and move on? Which method in your opinion, is a better approach?
3. If you had to define 'love' in one word, what one synonym best defines it for you? Discuss.
4. Have you taken the time to discern the best way to show love to the people closest to you, and followed through by showing them love that way? If yes, did the quality of those relationships improve? If no, reach out to one person this week and show them love in a way they would appreciate receiving it.

## Prayer Time

Lord, help us to be the conduits of Your love to others at all times, and especially when it may seem unreasonable to us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Start-up: Have you ever spent time in an activity you didn't enjoy, but did so only for the benefit of another? Describe the incident.

# WEEK OF SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2019

## NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🧠 (Think about)

✍️ (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↔️ (Must share)

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## PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

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Go deeper with your Life Group family.  
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD  
Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline