

LOVE CULTURE

God has called us to embrace His unchanging culture that supersedes all others: The Love Culture.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ A sentence we all need to internalize and live by is this: "I want our church to *look* like Heaven and *act* like Heaven."
- ❖ And to see this happen, we all have to go beyond our individual human cultures and adopt the best culture one can be a part of: God's "LOVE CULTURE."
- ❖ God is love and His culture is a culture of LOVE. Everything He does is based on this eternal reality.
- ❖ "Culture" can be defined as all the ways of life that are passed down from generation to generation including codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, art, norms of behaviour (such as law and morality), and systems of belief.
- ❖ So, when we hear terms like western culture, hip-hop culture, cancel culture, etc., this definition will help us understand the idea of culture a little more clearly.
- ❖ The text of 1 Corinthians 13 never fails to challenge those who read it. It's packed with both theory and application on how love needs to work in our minds, our hearts, and our actions.
- ❖ First and foremost, as verse 2 tells us, if one does not have true, genuine love (i.e., *God's* love) in their heart, **THEY ARE NOTHING!** We must never forget this.
- ❖ 1 John 3 then tells us that Love Culture is much more than nice words and clichés; it must be lived! (See vv. 10-18, 22-23.)
- ❖ Jesus acted out His love by dying on a Roman cross for our sins. And through John, the Lord is telling us that we also ought to lay *our* lives down on behalf of our brethren.
- ❖ It may never come to that for us, but John was speaking about a reality so many of our brothers and sisters faced in the early church. Numbers of them were arrested and imprisoned, whipped, tortured, and persecuted, and some even faced death. But they stood firm in their love for their brethren.
- ❖ As John writes, it is also needful for us to share of our worldly goods with those around us who are in need. That's something each and every one of us can do on a routine basis. That's Love Culture.
- ❖ As we continue to read 1 John 3, we are told that there are two very important commandments we need to obey (v. 23).
- ❖ Originally, John gave us the first commandment in chapter 6 of his gospel (v.29). After Jesus had fed the 5,000, the people flocked to Him the next day, looking for more food. Jesus told them that there were more important things in life than just chasing after food; *we must believe in Jesus Christ.*
- ❖ And the second commandment John referenced?

KEY SCRIPTURES: 1 Corinthians 13 [vv. 4-7 (NIV)]; 1 John 3:10-18, 22-23; John 6:27-29; Mark 12:28-33; Leviticus 19:18, 34; Luke 6:31

- Simply: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31).
- ❖ In Mark 12:28-33, we have Jesus stating the greatest commandment, followed by a scribe accepting it as totally valid for his life. Jesus' response to him was: "[My friend,] you're not far from the kingdom of God" (v. 34).
 - ❖ We should all follow the scribe's example and understand how critical it is to embrace the Love Culture.
 - ❖ The concept of loving our neighbours as ourselves may sound very 'New Testament' to our ears, but it actually originates in Leviticus, the book that teaches priests and Levites how to do their job (see Leviticus 19:28, 34).
 - ❖ This is core to God's character: Love your neighbour as yourself because I am the Lord! (See Matthew 22:39.) His culture, His manner of life, does not change. Love is the key.
 - ❖ Finally, let's take a look at "The Golden Rule": "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).
 - ❖ That's the outworking of Love Culture in one short verse, the practical application of these commandments that Jesus summarizes in one simple sentence. Let this be the standard we use for all of our interpersonal interactions.
 - ❖ In summary, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV) tells us: Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
 - ❖ So, let us embrace and continue to develop God's LOVE CULTURE in our lives.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Share instances where the positive or negative aspects described were demonstrated in your life. How did each make you feel?
2. What are the steps we can take to both develop and demonstrate patience, kindness, trust, hope, etc., in our lives?
3. Pray and ask God that His Love Culture will be active in your life.

PRAYER TIME

Lord, I want our church to look like Heaven and act like Heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Start-up: What is your "love language" (i.e., words of affirmation, acts of service, gifts, quality time, physical touch)? Was this always the case?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, 2022

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)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

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