



1 CORINTHIANS: WEEK 4

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Created by Ministry to Youth
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1 CORINTHIANS – SMALL GROUP SERIES

WEEK 4: God's Love Conquers All

Bible: *Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love. 1 Corinthians 16:13 (NLT)*

Bottom Line: God's love enables you to love others, even when it is difficult.

Summary of weeks 1-3.

Throughout the last three weeks, we've learned that the church of Corinth is very much divided for multiple reasons.

The lead cause for their division is that they are trying to be Christians living in a fallen world influenced by the world around them instead of being the new creations they are living as believers who follow Christ's guidance.

Paul writes to the church members describing in detail the ways they should be living not only as individual Christians but as a church body.

Paul is clear that there should not be division in the church.

He says that they need to work as one body and that each person has a gift and place in the church.

The church should honor God and not be influenced by worldly things.

TEACH

Read 1 Corinthians 13: The "Love" chapter.

1 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing.

3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

*4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud **5** or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.*

6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.

7 *Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.*

8 *Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever!*

9 *Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture!*

10 *But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless.*

11 *When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.*

12 *Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.*

13 *Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.*

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul emphasizes how important love is in the life of a believer.

He says that you can have spiritual gifts, help people, and bring joy to others, but if you do those things without love, your works (actions) are useless and meaningless.

Now, this isn't an issue of love versus spiritual gifts.

Believers should never have to choose between love and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Paul is emphasizing that the focus of the gifts should be love.

In verse 3, we read about the sacrifices that could be made for the cause of love.

But, if there is sacrifice without love to back it up, it is useless.

1 Corinthians 13:13 reminds us that love abides and lasts forever – it is permanent.

The gifts God gives are precious, but they were never meant to be the focus or goal of a believer's life.

Instead, we should pursue faith, hope, and love – which are all eternal.

These three words are so important.

They can help us prioritize what we do and give purpose to actions.

Faith, hope, and love are mentioned throughout Scripture...

1 Thessalonians 1:3 says... *As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Thessalonians 5:8 says... *But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.*

1 Peter 1:21-22 says... *Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory.*

You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters.

Love each other deeply with all your heart.

Colossians 1:4-5 says... *For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven.*

You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News.

But the greatest of "faith, hope, and love" is LOVE.

It is the greatest because it grows and will continue to grow.

When we are in Heaven, faith and hope will have fulfilled their purpose and we won't need them anymore.

We won't need faith when we see God face-to-face.

We won't need to hope once we are in God's presence.

But we will always love God and each other.

Love is eternal.

Love is also an attribute of God.

Faith and hope are not part of God's character.

For the Corinthian church, Paul wanted them to understand that without love as the motive and goal, the gifts are meaningless.

Without love, you have nothing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Paul describes Love in verses 4-7. Can you describe what love is to you?
2. What are the signs of someone not using their gifts without love? (example: selfishness)
3. How can we check to make sure our hearts are in the right place when we are doing God's work?

Summary of 1 Corinthians 14-16: Paul's final words to the Corinthian Church.

In 1 Corinthians 14-16, Paul gives his final instructions to the church of Corinth.

In Chapter 14, he goes into details about speaking in tongues and prophesying.

Paul tells the church that it is more important to prophesy than to speak in tongues.

The reason why it's more important to prophesy is that it gives an encouraging word to someone, whereas speaking in tongues is a personal language through the Holy Spirit.

If there isn't someone who can translate it, then no one will understand what is being said.

In Chapter 15, Paul reminds the church of the good news that Jesus came and died for us.

Paul continues to tell the church that just like Jesus who died and rose from the grave, we too will die and rise from the grave.

1 Corinthians 15:57: But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We will get our new bodies when Jesus returns and takes overall authority on earth.

In Chapter 16, Paul gives the church some final instructions on how to collect money for Jerusalem, and how to welcome Timothy.

Paul also mentions that he will be coming for a visit and in 1 Corinthians 16: 23-24, gives his final words to the church at Corinth: "May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is prophesying so important for the church?
2. If you hear a prophecy or are prophesying, how can you make sure that it is from God? (How can you “fact check”?)
3. What will you remember about our Bible Study on the Book of 1 Corinthians?

Summary of 1 Corinthians

Paul's first letter to the church of Corinth is such a helpful and practical book of the Bible that we can not only relate to but also use to guide us in our walk with the Lord.

Paul's letter is full of information on how believers in Christ should mature and grow.

His letter is not written in a harsh tone, where one feels condemned, but it is written humbly and lovingly to encourage young believers to grow in faith and mature.

The reason Paul is writing to the church of Corinth is that he has heard of their divisions in the church, and he wants to address these issues with them to set them on the right path.

In his letter Paul addressed the issue of division, living Godly lives, seeking spiritual gifts, loving one another, working as one body with individual parts, seeking biblical truths, the good news, and what we must look forward to on the glorious day when Jesus returns.

Overall, a new believer, young believer, or even a mature believer can get a huge amount of spiritual guidance from Paul's letter to the church.

To summarize, Paul's teaching to the church of Corinth is to seek God for all knowledge through the Holy Spirit and to treat everyone with love and kindness.