

Studies in First Corinthians

Lesson XXXVIII: Creating a Culture of Love

TEXT: 1 COR. 13:1—7 (*Amplified*)

1 If I [can] speak in the tongues of men and [even] of angels, but have not love (that reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion such as is inspired by God's love for and in us), I am only a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose), and understand all the secret truths and mysteries and possess all knowledge, and if I have [sufficient] faith so that I can remove mountains, but have not love (God's love in me) I am nothing (a useless nobody). 3 Even if I dole out all that I have [to the poor in providing] food, and if I surrender my body to be burned or in order that I may glory, but have not love (God's love in me), I gain nothing.

4 Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. 5 It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong]. 6 It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. 7 Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].

Questions for Thought & Discussion

The focus of tonight's study is on creating a culture of love in the family of God. This is more difficult than meets the eye! It calls for a singular focus and all-out dedication. Make no mistake about it: if we neglect this God-given call, we risk jeopardizing the mission of the church of Christ. Every religious act, every benevolent work is empty without love. With love, however, the possibilities for changing people's lives are exciting!

1. Based on verses 4-7, would you describe love as a passive (feelings-based) or a proactive (choice-based) characteristic?

2. What attitudes and behaviors are red flags to warn us that love is not present in our relationships? (vv. 4-6)

3. Whose responsibility is it to ensure the church is living out the kind of love prescribed in the Bible?

4. What specific things can we say and do to better demonstrate God's love to others?

5. Let's talk *strategy*. What is your biggest "love challenge" and what do you need to do to address it, practically speaking? If the difficulty is with a particular person, what precautions will you take to embolden you to respond to him or her in love?