**1. Motivate**

How many different ways might you complete the statement, “I love \_\_\_\_\_\_\_” ?

* my wife/husband
* Jesus
* cherry pie
* pizza
* springtime
* Blue Bell Ice Cream
* my garden
* baseball
* golf
* to fish
* my kids
* my grandkids
* my new car

Note the different meanings of the word love:

* preference for a particular flavor, activity, time, place
* total dedication to someone

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_9zx68bf5> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/mrcaeh7w>

* this is an important part of your life

**2. Transition**

Today ⇨ we investigate the kind of love God demonstrates

* We seek to learn ways to demonstrate that same kind of love for others

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Love Sustains All

Listen for the necessity of love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV) If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

What hypothetical experiences or situations did Paul identify that could be an occasion for boasting about one’s spiritual gifts?

* speaking in tongues
* prophecy – good at foretelling and/or forthtelling Truth
* able to problem solve
* great knowledge
* faith that can “move mountains” …
* generous with your resources
* even be a martyr

What results when I do these things with the wrong motive?

* I only make a lot of noise … noisy gong, clanging cymbal
* I am nothing
* I gain nothing

What kinds of wrong motives might we have?

* want to get noticed by others
* hope to impress people
* I do something nice for you hoping you will be nice to me
* looks good on your resume
* hope to impress God

Why might it be easy to use a spiritual gift without love?

* you spiritual gift may parallel some of the above natural skill sets or accomplishments
* you gain notoriety by exercising your talent/spiritual gift
* the success becomes your motivation
* we are naturally selfish, want to be popular, impose awe over others

How can using our resources and gifts *without* love *minimize the value* of their expression to others … to ourselves?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| To others | To ourselves |
| * people often sense your insensitivity
* the deed is really not appreciated
* God may not bless the gift or the deed the same
 | * God is not pleased, not impressed
* We do it to *look* good on the outside, when we *are not* really good on the inside
* it is not Christ like
 |

The kind of love Paul is writing about here is that same love God has for us, *agape* love.

* Determined good will that has its object’s best interests at heart
* Self-giving (instead of self-serving)
* Expects nothing in return
* Goes on offering itself, even when rejected
* Acts on others’ behalf without considering their worthiness

How did Jesus exemplify this kind of love?

* died on the cross for our sins … “while we were yet sinners”
* pursues unbelievers … mercifully forgives even the vilest of sinners
* even when rejected, continues to offer salvation
* even though we are unworthy, we receive blessings – Mt 5:45 (KJV) *for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

3.2 Love Reflects Christ’s Character

Listen for how love reflects Christ’s character.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV) Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, 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.

What do you see that love is *not* or does *not do*?

* does not envy
* does not boast
* is not proud
* is not rude
* is not self-seeking
* not easily angered
* keeps no record of wrongs
* does not delight in evil

Why are these things *difficult* **not** to do … or we could say *too easy* to **do**?

* we tend to look out for self first
* we want to make ourselves look good
* we do so by boasting, by “tooting your own horn”
* we also do so by putting down others … hoping we look good when we make someone else look bad
* we keep track of all the bad things someone has done to us so that when we get in an argument/debate/discussion we can bring up these points and “zing ‘em”

What words does Paul use to describe what love is or does?

* patient
* kind
* rejoices with the truth
* always protects
* always trusts
* always hopes
* always perseveres

How will agape love as we’ve defined it be *demonstrated* in some of these contexts?

* patient with a child, teenager, spouse … even though they don’t deserve it
* kindness expressed by doing nice things for people without expecting reciprocity
* continue to be kind to an ornery neighbor, even when that kindness is rejected
* repeatedly express your belief that good things will happen in your child’s life … even when they are discouraged or lacking self esteem
* faithfully praying for an unsaved and rebellious loved one
* driving a car full of noisy children to VBS

3.3 Love Does Not Fade Away

Think of some things from your past that were “cutting edge” when you first had them but are obsolete now.

* a new car

Makes you wonder what will replace the “latest and greatest” items you now enjoy.

* a polyester leisure suit
* a TRS 80 Radio Shack or Apple ][ computer
* vinyl LP records
* flip phone, car phone, bag phone

Listen for *spiritual gifts* that will become obsolete.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13 (NIV) Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

What gifts are listed that will cease to exist or become obsolete?

* prophecies
* tongues
* knowledge/wisdom

Why won’t prophecy, knowledge, and tongues be necessary when Jesus returns?

* we won’t need to know the future
* we won’t need to be given additional Truth
* no need to express Truth in other languages

How do these verses affirm that love (charity) is permanent, perfect, and preeminent?

* most of the spiritual gifts mentioned are of no consequence in eternity
* there is no reason for some of them beyond this life
* contrast that with the agape love Jesus demonstrated

Why do you think Paul would say, “Love never fails”?

* God *is* love and He is eternal
* even though we won’t need prophecies and we will no longer need the gifts of the Spirit, we will still experience love *from* God and have love *for* God

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Why is love the greatest of these three—faith, hope, and love?

* no need for faith when Christ returns
* our hopes will be realized
* we still have the feelings and motivation to love God
* we will worship (declare the worth) of God and His love for us throughout eternity

Application

Consider.

* Think about genuine vs. counterfeit love.
* Write down ways you may have been influenced by definitions of love that aren’t true.
* Choose to focus on the character of love as described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

Connect.

* Whom do you know that exhibits and expresses the genuine love of God?
* It could be a family member, someone in your church, or someone in your Bible study group.
* Take five minutes this week to share with that person how you see God’s love in his or her life and express appreciation for their example.

Care.

* You know someone who needs to know of God’s love.
* Ask God to show you ways to live out the love described in 1 Corinthians 13 before that person.
* Invest time in the individual and love them like Christ does.

Crossword Puzzle

Words and Clues taken from 1 Corinthians 13:1 – 13 (NIV)



Help and other Family Activities at <https://tinyurl.com/mrcaeh7w>