

Bible Study Group Notes

1 Corinthians 13

THE BIG PICTURE

1 Corinthians 13 is often heard at weddings, but Paul first wrote it to a church marked by comparison, competition, and people insisting on their own way.

So this chapter is not a beautiful interruption. It is central to Paul's teaching about life together. If God has given us to one another in Christ, then love must govern what we do.

Christian activity without love is empty. Gifts, knowledge, faith, service, and sacrifice may look impressive, but without love they are nothing. True love seeks another person's good, and it will last when every gift and role has passed away.

INVESTIGATE

Read 1 Corinthians 13.

1. Look at 13.1-3. What impressive gifts or actions does Paul describe? What does he say they are worth without love?
2. Why do you think Paul begins with gifts that might look especially spiritual or sacrificial?
3. In 13.4-7, which descriptions of love are about what love *does*? Which are about what love *refuses to do*?
4. Look closely at 13.5. What does it mean that love "does not insist on its own way"? How does that fit the problems in the Corinthian church?
5. In 13.6, how does Paul hold love and truth together?
6. In 13.8-12, what things will pass away? Why will they no longer be needed?
7. Why does Paul say that love is greater than faith and hope? See 13.13.

REFLECT & APPLY

8. Where are you most tempted to do a right thing without love – serving, speaking, giving, organising, correcting, or persevering?
9. How can Christian service become a way of proving ourselves, feeling needed, staying in control, or keeping score?
10. Which part of 13.4–7 most searches you at the moment? Why?
11. Love “does not insist on its own way”. Where might that need to shape our shared life at St Peter’s – in preferences, rotas, children’s work, music, meetings, welcome, or pastoral care?
12. Paul says love is not irritable or resentful. How can we serve faithfully without allowing resentment to grow underneath?
13. What would it look like for our church to rejoice with the truth, rather than avoid hard things or excuse what is wrong?
14. If love is what will last, what should that change about the way we think about roles, ministries, gifts, responsibilities, and recognition?

PRAY

- Thank God that he has not merely spoken about love, but has shown his love in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Ask God to forgive loveless service, resentment, pride, passivity, and self-protection.
- Pray that St Peter’s would be a church where gifts are governed by love and used for the good of others.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help us love in ways that take practical shape: noticing, welcoming, serving, speaking truth, forgiving, persevering, and seeking one another’s good.

NB The Church Prayer Pointers for September are available in church or on the WhatsApp group.