



Week #32 Leader's Guide – November 27, 2016

Straight Talk: Bold Letters to the Corinthians
SDBC Community Groups

“The Way of Love”

Key Passage:

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

1 If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have 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 do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 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.

8 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 completeness comes, what is in part 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 the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a 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.

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Questions

1. After teaching on the spiritual gifts, Paul says this at the end of chapter twelve: “And I will show you a still more excellent way.” The “more excellent way,” is the way of love, which Paul highlights in chapter thirteen. Why is it important for you to live in the way of love when you’re using your spiritual gifts to build up the church?
2. In vv.1-3, Paul highlights the gift of speaking in tongues, prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, faith, and cheerful giving, and says that these gifts mean nothing if we do not have love. Have you ever used your spiritual gifts in a way that was lacking in the way of love? What were the consequences of using your gifts without love? How could you have utilized your gifts in a more loving way?
3. vv. 4-7 explains what love is and what it isn’t. Paul says love does not boast. He relates love to humility. Read Philippians 2:1-11. How is humility connected to love?
4. In v. 6, Paul says that love “does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.” What does this imply for how we should love as a follower of Jesus?
5. Love isn’t just an emotion. Our model for the way of love should be found in our Lord Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 5:1-2, Paul urges the Ephesian church to “be imitators of God,” and then he implies that imitating God means “[walking] in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” How is self-sacrifice connected to love?
6. As a community group, how can you practice this way of love together? How can you love one another humbly, truthfully, and self-sacrificially?
7. As a community group, how can you practice this way of love to love others outside of your group? Plan a way to do this in the near future.
8. As a local church, how is SDBC practicing the way of love in our community? What can we do to strengthen the way of love in our church community?