

## Overview

All of us are born with natural cravings. With every breath you take you are satisfying a craving for air. Your meals throughout the day are meeting your craving for food. Besides these natural physical cravings you also have a craving for friendship. One of the deepest cravings you have is for love; both to give and receive.

John 13:34-35 reads: <sup>34</sup>“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” <sup>1</sup> Loving others is a distinguishable characteristic of being a Christian. If you were not allowed to say any words, would people know you are a believer by the way you love others? Does your love for others display your faith as much as the words you say?

What does it mean to love others? The Apostle Paul defines love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 which reads: <sup>4</sup>Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup>or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” <sup>2</sup> This is a tall order for love. To daily be patient and kind. To daily not be envious or boast. To daily not be arrogant or rude. To daily not insist on your own way. Loving consistently like this would be easier if you lived a solitary life, but all believers are part of a church family. Difference of opinion and personalities can make loving others a challenge. If the believers have trouble loving one another how difficult is it to love those outside the church?

Later on in 1 Corinthians 13 the Apostle Paul writes: <sup>11</sup>“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.” <sup>3</sup> He writes this at the end of the description of love. Childish ways is when we act impatient, rude, boastful or arrogant. Loving others requires putting aside childish ways.

## Bible Study: 1 Peter 4:8

1. Loving others requires effort. How do you maintain (keep) a love for others?
2. Read 1 John 4:19. In what ways does God's love for you motivate you to love others?

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 13:34–35). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Co 13:4–7). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Co 13:11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

3. Read 1 Peter 4:8. Love covers a multitude of sins. Discuss how you see the truthfulness of this statement in your life.
4. Why is love a defining characteristic of being a believer?
5. What steps can you take to love those who you think are hard to love?