

Small Group Guide: Love Never Fails - The Movement Toward Love

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you felt frozen or uncertain in a public moment (like Mark at his cousin's wedding). What were you worried about in that moment?

Introduction (5 minutes)

This week we concluded our series on 1 Corinthians 13, focusing on verses 8-13. While the earlier verses describe what love IS and DOES in the present, these final verses shift our attention to what love WILL BE—pointing us toward the future completion of all things in God's kingdom.

Key Takeaways

1. Love is Permanent - While spiritual gifts, knowledge, and prophecies are temporary tools for building God's kingdom now, only faith, hope, and love remain forever. Love never fails because God is love.
 2. We Know in Part, But Will Know Fully - Our current experience of God and love is like seeing through a screen or mirror. In the future, we will know God face-to-face and be fully known as we already are in heaven.
 3. Maturity Means Moving Toward Love - Growing spiritually means putting away childish things and increasingly embodying love's characteristics: patience, kindness, trust, hope, and perseverance.
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Discussion Questions

Section 1: From Temporary to Permanent (20 minutes)

1. Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 together as a group.
2. Mark shared how moving from temporary to permanent employment changed his life. What are some temporary things in your life that you've been treating as permanent? (This could be material possessions, status, comfort, approval, etc.)
3. Paul says that spiritual gifts like prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will cease, but love remains forever. Why do you think the Corinthian church (and we today) are tempted to prioritize spiritual gifts or other temporary things over love?

4. The sermon states: "If only what is love is permanent, that means our future is love." How does this truth give you hope regarding current struggles or hardships you're facing?
5. What would change in your daily life if you truly believed that "only what is in love will remain"? What would you start doing? What would you stop doing?

Section 2: From Part to Full (20 minutes)

6. Mark compared our current knowledge of God to seeing someone over Zoom versus face-to-face. In what ways have you experienced the limitations of knowing God "in part" rather than fully?
7. The sermon explains that spiritually we are already "seated with Christ in heavenly realms" (Ephesians 2:6), but we still live with the reality of sin on earth. How does understanding this tension help you make sense of your Christian experience?
8. Mark says, "As we grow in love...we get to glimpse and understand more fully who God has made us to be." Can you share a time when choosing to love revealed something new about your identity in Christ?
9. What sins, worldviews, or attitudes currently act as a "screen" separating you from experiencing God's love more fully? How can this group support you in addressing these barriers?

Section 3: From Immaturity to Maturity (20 minutes)

10. Paul writes, "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." What does spiritual maturity look like in practical, everyday terms?
 11. Mark asked: "Are you talking, thinking, reasoning like a spiritual child or like a spiritual adult?" Be honest—where do you see yourself on this journey from immaturity to maturity? (Consider not just Sunday mornings but your entire week.)
 12. Looking at the qualities of love from verses 4-7 (patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not proud, etc.), which one represents your biggest area for growth right now?
 13. The sermon emphasizes that "no one here has reached the destination yet." How does knowing that we're all "in the middle of the movement" encourage you? How does it challenge you?
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Practical Applications (15 minutes)

Personal Reflection

Choose one of these practices for the coming week:

- **Inventory Check:** Make a list of where you're investing your time, energy, and resources. Which items are temporary and which are eternal (rooted in love)? What needs to change?
- **Mirror Exercise:** Spend time in prayer asking God to show you how He sees you—your true identity in Christ without the distortions of sin. Journal what He reveals.
- **Maturity Assessment:** Review the characteristics of love in verses 4-7. Rate yourself honestly in each area (1-10). Pick one to focus on this week and ask God to help you grow.

Group Challenge

The Love Remains Challenge: As a group, commit to one specific act of love this week that prioritizes what is permanent over what is temporary. This could be:

- Sacrificing time or comfort to serve someone in need
- Choosing reconciliation over being right in a conflict
- Investing in a relationship rather than a material purchase
- Standing up for someone vulnerable or marginalized

Share your commitments with the group and plan to report back next week.

Closing Reflection (5 minutes)

Read together: "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Reflect: How does knowing that God is love and remains with you in every moment—past, present, and future—change how you'll live this week?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Pray together, incorporating these themes:

- Thank God that He is love and that love never fails
- Ask Him to help you prioritize what is permanent over what is temporary

- Pray for growth in maturity and the ability to embody love's characteristics
- Invite the Holy Spirit to draw you deeper into experiencing God's love

Optional: Have each person pray for the person on their right, specifically asking God to help them grow in one area of love they mentioned during discussion.

For Next Week

- Continue reading and meditating on 1 Corinthians 13
- Journal about moments when you chose love over self-interest
- Prepare to share how your Love Remains Challenge went.