

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

## "THE ART OF LIVING IS LOVING" | 1 COR 13: 8-13 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

### WARM-UP QUESTION:

What are ways people have different levels of love?

### *"God is Love" 1 Corinthians 13: 8-13*

God loves the whole world with a perfect love, the same love He has for Jesus, and it never ends. **How does that impact your view of God? What does that view of God do to your life?**

### *"Eschatological Love" 1 Corinthians 13: 8-13*

Love is eternal. Other gifts and practices like prophesy and faith and hope are for people while we don't see Jesus. When he returns, people won't need faith or hope, but they will have the fullness of love. **How does knowing love is eternal impact how people should love?**

### *"The Permanency of Love" 1 Corinthians 13: 8-13*

Because love never ends, that means that people can't lose God's love or be separated from His love. We all fall short of loving like Him, and yet we can share His love with others. **How can people trust in God's love and let His love flow through them?**

### REFLECTION QUESTION:

God's love is complete and full and eternal. There aren't variations to it and it never changes. Noone really understands this, but they will experience this fully when Jesus returns. **What are ways you can meditate on God's love? What are ways you can share God's love? Ask God to remove your fears and doubts of His love and to live with confidence in His love.**

## The Art of Living is Loving

### I. Announce:

- A. \*Welcome to our church family **Online** and in the *Fellowship Hall*.
- B. **Slide1-5 BuildingOnFaith/Catalog**: Interview w/Jen.
- C. **Slide6a** Today is the *Int. Day of the Unreached* (help give everyone a chance to know *Jesus*)
  1. A **3rd** of the world is still denied access to the gospel. That means more than **3 billion** people have never heard the name of **Jesus**. They haven't even had the chance to **accept or reject** the love of **Jesus** and His work for them on the cross. They don't know anything about it.
  2. **90%** live in **Gospel resistant groups** (like our H-people & the Roh).
  3. **Slide6b Share**: draw **3 lines** on your hand, share with those who ask (it's reminding me to pray today for ...). **Post a picture** on your IG/FB with the hashtag **#athirdofus**.
  4. **Pray**: for soften hearts, provide believers to them, create churches, **and** give them the Bible in their heart languages.
  5. **Serve and Support**: ask God to give you ideas for how you can help.
- D. **Prayer**: the unreached. our finances. **Love** (the *gold standard* behind what we want to be known for)

### II. **Slide7 Intro**: *The Art of Living is Loving*

- A. **Read Text**: 13:8-13
- B. **Slide8** (10) **But when the perfect comes** – is this **the completion of the NT**, **or Jesus' 2nd Coming**, **or** the **perfect age** in which these gifts will no longer be needed.?
  1. Some interpret it to be the **Completion to the NT**, **thus** the **gifts** are not for today (cessationist). [but then *what about vs.12?* Now, *we are already see face to face?* Now *we know fully?* **Nope**]
  2. Some interpret it to be **Jesus' return**. Similar wording is found in 1Jn.3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed*

*what we shall be, but we know that when **He is revealed**, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

3. Some interpret it to be the completion/maturation/perfection of the **Church** (continuationist, *but cautious*). I think this holds most weight as it flows best in its context to the following vss. [Lit. when the state of perfection comes]

a) Paul speaks of a slow maturing process from infancy to adulthood.

b) 1 day ending in Paul seeing God, as God now sees Paul. 1 day partial knowledge would be displaced by the perfect knowledge of God.

(1) Mt.5:48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

C. Slide9 (12) We see in a mirror dimly (cloudy mirror to clear mirror) - Corinth was famous for their mirrors. [the *modern mirror*, w/its *perfect reflection* as we know it today, didn't come around until the 13th century]

1. The Corinthians mirror was made from *highly polished metals*. And even at its best, gave but an *imperfect reflection*.

2. Today, we know Christ *like the clarity of seeing our own reflection in a stream*. But one day, face to face.

D. Faith, hope, and love *Triples of Christian piety*.

E. Love is better than *really good things* (*i.e.* all the gifts. faith & hope). Because it is eternal. Rightly prioritize your view of gifts, in the light of love.

### III. Slide10a WE LOVE ON LEVELS

A. I love Kelly, I love my children, I love a good cup of coffee, I love Mexican food, I love my hobbies, and I love our dog ... *usually*.

1. We love on levels, rank, steps, in groupings, classifications. Those *closest to us* we love much more than *a stranger*. *We are fallible this way*. **God is NOT!** [Human love is *object* oriented. God's love is *subject* oriented]

B. Slide10b **God** doesn't know levels of love, or variations of love, like we do. **He** knows perfect love. **He** knows One love. **He** knows love that is unconditional.

#### IV. Slide11a **GOD IS LOVE**

- A. Love already is the greatest, **not only because** it will outlast the other virtues, beautiful and necessary as they are, **but because** it is inherently greater by being *the most God-like*. God *does not have faith or hope*, but **GOD IS LOVE** (1 John 4:8).
- B. Love does not define **God** (He's more than love), **but God** defines **love**.
1. Love is a language **God is fluent in** ... **and that we are trying to learn**. (think Rosetta Stone or Babble).
- C. We are **loved** by God, **not merely pitied**, **but delighted in**. **As** an artist delights in his work, **or** a father in a son.
1. **The Father loves Brian as much as He loves Jesus**. (did you know that? can you say that?)
  2. Slide11b Listen to John 17:23 (Jesus' prayer) ***I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me***. (the *them* is us!)
  3. And He loves us with such a **perfect love**. A love we haven't begun to **understand**. It's **untainted love**. We've never loved anyone like this.
  4. Yet, we still ask God, ***If You love me, why did you let this happen to me?***
    - a) We can even **trust** God with *someone else's sin against us*. Remember *others sin* put Jesus on the cross, and look what the Father did with it.
  5. You have **no fear** for someone who loves you unconditionally.
- D. **This love** is given to you by God, **not when** you were on your A game, **not when** you're deserving of it. He isn't waiting for you to be good enough, holy enough, it's given to you at your **lowest**. When you didn't like Him, when you didn't know Him, when you didn't care if He even existed, when you were running far away from Him. That's when he smiled and said, ***Here I am, come unto Me***.

- E. The Father **loves** the Son. The Son **loves** us. **And** we in turn are to **love** others. But how??? Slide11c Jn.17:26 (ends w/) *that the love with which You have loved me may be in them, and I in them.* [Fathers love in us - Christ in us]
1. This is to be a love that flows **deep & wide & passes over any rocks of petty differences.**
- F. Christian love is **visible & tangible**. God not only **tells** us He loves us, He **shows** it.
1. Slide11d Rom.5:8 **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**
  2. True love *demonstrates, illustrates, proves, & confirms* itself. Christian love is **visible, tangible, and radical.**

## V. Slide12a **ESCHATOLOGICAL LOVE**

- A. Paul says something here about the **future** in relation to the **present**.
- B. What does **eschatology** (ἔσχατος, last) have to do with **ethics**?
- C. What has *the new heavens and the new earth* in which we long, *have to do with my moral struggles* here?
1. Slide12b I'll tell you, **Love is** not our **duty**, it is our **destiny**.
  2. **Love is** the language they speak in the new creation **and** we get to learn it here! Slide12c N.T.Wright said, *Oh, it is difficult. There are a lot of irregular verbs. There is vocabulary that will be very difficult to get into your head and twist your tongue around it. **But learn it!***
  3. **And one day you'll be *singing in it*. And Faith and Hope** are pretty much the same. You have to **practice them**. [**hope** not just *optimism*, but total trust that the creator God, is **God of the future**] [**faith** is the utter trust in God the Creator and Redeemer].
    - a) At the moment, **faith** is very *hard to practice*, **like** learning a difficult sport.
    - b) I remember getting an informal golf lesson from a friend, where he was changing up my total grip, where it feels so unnatural and awkward.

(1) It isn't comfortable until 100's of swings ... then it becomes natural. It happens automatically.

c) That's what it's like with Faith. It's hard now and we should expect it to be hard. It's unnatural and even awkward at times. It's like a grip, let somebody teach you. Be a learner.

(1) But one day, one day we will know, as we are known.

## VI. Slide13a THE PERMANENCY OF LOVE

A. Romans 8:38,39 NLT *I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from **God's love**. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow - not even the powers of hell can separate us from **God's love**. 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below - indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the **love of God** that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

1. So who can Separate us from His love? No one! Because we are Secure sheep, Advantaged sheep, Acquitted sheep, Conquering sheep, and especially Loved sheep! Understand saints, you cannot exhaust this topic. We will forever be learners of love.

B. Slide13b When true love is the standard we fall short. That's the point of the gospel

1. When pure self sacrificial life-giving love, with no expectations in return, is the standard ... all of us fall short in someway.

2. We are simply supposed to be being conformed into His love.

3. So as believers, we can't approach this love text and say, *I can't express perfect love, I'm not God, I'm not perfect.* And we can't say, *Nailed it!* Or, *I did that.*

4. When shoots of agape love spring up out of our lives, it is only because of the source of love that lives inside us, God Himself!

C. Frederick Lehman - Lyrics & Composer, 1868-1953.

D. Could we with **ink** the **ocean** fill, And were the **skies** of parchment made,  
 Were every stalk on earth a **quill**, And every man a **scribe** by trade,  
 To write **the love of God** above, Would drain the ocean dry.  
 Nor could the **scroll** contain the whole, Though stretched **from sky to sky**.

1. The **1st 2 stanzas** are Lehman's own work, **but** this **3rd**, *by his own account, he heard in a camp meeting sermon*. They were apparently lines that had "*been found penciled on the wall of a patient's room in an insane asylum after he had been carried to his grave*". (words from an Aramaic poem, *Haddamut*) written in 1050 by Rabbi Meir of Worms, Germany.

E. End: @Risk Mtg, Brian Robertson, 3pm/Agape.

F. Keywords: Love,

G. Our 1st love was *a Parental Love* - such an important foundation toward our understanding of love. **Yet** even if you didn't get to experience this *parental love*, the psalmist says in Ps.27:10, *Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close*.

1. **So even better is God's Love** - *who knows everything about you & still loves you anyway*.