

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 SUPREMACY OF LOVE" | 1 COR 13:1-7 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

Who is someone who has modeled how to love well?

"Love is Supreme" 1 Corinthians 13: 1-3

People are challenged that all their gifts and service lose any meaning or impact if they are not done in love. **How can people serve or use their gifts without love?**

"Love Is" 1 Corinthians 13: 4-6

Love produces patience, kindness, and it rejoices with truth. **How are these descriptions of love different than what movies and music say about love?**

"Love Isn't" 1 Corinthians 13: 4-6

Love isn't envious, boastful, arrogant, rude, irritable, resentful, insisting on its own way and it doesn't rejoice at wrongdoing. **Which of these characteristics are the most difficult to not have or avoid? Why?**

"Love Does" 1 Corinthians 13: 7

True love is seen in the actions of bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things and enduring all things. **How does the word "all" make these virtues of love more impressive? How do these virtues point to Jesus?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

This famous passage elevates love to being the greatest and the mark of a person truly changed by God and led by His Holy Spirit. But many people misunderstand what love is and it is good to meditate on what love is and is not and what loving actions look like. **Have you been using your gifts and living your life through God's love or your own strength lately? What characteristics of love challenged you? How can you let Jesus fill you with His love? Pray and ask God for forgiveness and a renewal of His love.**

The Supremacy of Love

I. Announce:

A. **Welcome:** those online & in Fellowship Hall.

B. 2 songs, 2 min greet - Video's, spec song, MD Video, me.

C. **Slide1 Mother's Day:** Today's **Mother's Day** theme is *In Her Shoes*.

1. **Moms**, your children are going to *walk in your shoes*. They may learn love to dance, sing, read, or say their I love you's, *because you do it well*. They will also *walk in your shoes spiritually*. Point your children (regardless of age) **to Christ** by *praying for them, modeling faith and character, and training them in wisdom*. When you mess up, *and you will*, show them how to **apologize & give yourself grace**.

2. **Mothers**, I'd like to challenge you to think about **all the women who have gone before**: *The moms, the grandmas, and the nurturing women in your life, whose shoes you now walk in*. Place your feet in their footsteps. There is so much you can learn from them. *They have mothered you, led you, served you, befriended you, and reflected Christ to you*. Let's say **Thank You** to **all the women in your lives** who have *gone before you and walk beside you*.

D. **Prayer:** Lord, empty us so You can fill us: *melt me, mold me, fill me, use me*.

Lord, we're not after just, *the good life ... but a love life*. A life of love.

II. Slide2/3 Intro: The Supremacy of Love READ 1-8

A. **Slide4** G. Campbell Morgan wrote, *Examining this chapter is like dissecting a flower to understand it. If you tear it apart too much, you lose the beauty*.

1. Let's **slow down and smell** this chapters fragrance.

B. Let's not focus so much on getting **informed**, but on being **transformed**.

C. **The Greek word** agape (8x's) **love** seems to have been *virtually a Christian invention*. A new word for a new thing. [word group, rarely used in *intertestamental time*, til LXX]

III. Slide5 LOVE IS SUPREME/super-above (1-3) READ (love 1st, Importance of)

- A. You've probably heard this at a wedding, where you heard *ahhhh*. But in Paul's day they heard, **Doh!** (esp. vs. 1-3, it was a *flashbang* in their ears) [*gifts were out of order*]
- B. **Gifts** are temporary "*containers*" of God's work; **Love** is *the work itself*.
1. **Problem:** It's is easier to be **orthodox than** to be **loving**. It is easier to be **active** in **church work than** to be **loving**.
 2. If you think your gifts or your success in the church are **dials on the dashboard**, to tell you what is really happening in the engine, **you're wrong**. *Tim Keller*
- C. **Giftedness** is not the measure of **maturity**, the display of **love** is. The Corinthians had spiritual **gifts**, but not spiritual **graces**.
1. **Illust:** **Love** is like a pair of reading glasses: **One**, lens represents **Love**. **The other** represents **any truth or service, gift or obedience**.
 - a) When you pop out the lens of **love**, it all starts to *blur*. Love should be **yoked with everything**.
- D. **The gift** of *tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith, & giving* is **useless** without **love**.
1. These gifts standing alone just become *an annoying noise*, *empty knowledge/faith*, or *a meaningless sacrifice*.
- E. Paul's saying, Stop looking at your gifts, look what is **behind/underneath** them.
1. If you have, lets say *the gift of teaching*. If you're always getting your feelings hurt, or you're always cast down, you just put on a smile while sharing your gift, but *there's no joy or delight in what God means to you then ...* "You're not drawing off of **His love**, you're working off your gifts."
 2. **And** it's nothing more than a noisy gong or a clashing symbol, which is pagan worship. In Corinth, and the pagan temples, it was normal when worshipers came in, they'd crashed a symbol or hit a gong ... getting the attentions of the gods, and it was very inspiring for the worshipers. (I've seen this so many times in all the Hindu temples today in Nepal. *They ring a bell at the entrance, informing the deity of his/her arrival*)

F. Paul's **flash-bang** was: *you can have spiritual gifts in general, and miraculous gifts in particular, and not be a Christian at all.*

1. Eg. Judas did miraculous works (Mt.10). God spoke **prophecy** through the wicked Balaam. King Saul. Yet they never give their hearts to the Lord. [and this was not thru satan, but God]
2. Jesus said, *On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'* Mt.7:22,23

IV. Slide6 **LOVE IS (4-6) READ** (*ingredients* of love, definition of, description of)

A. I broke this list into 2: **Love Is & Love Isn't.**

B. **First**, where did Paul get this list?

1. Did friends of Paul sitting around at a bbq ask him, *What is love?*
2. Or did they ask him, *What's love got to do with it, got to do with it? What's love, but a second-hand emotion?*
3. **No**, actually if you read Corinthians closely you'll see the same words in this list have been used already. (ch.8 puffed up/**proud**. ch.10 self-seeking/**love insists not on its own way**. ch.7 rude/**rude**)

C. **Slide7** *This word **agapao** has little to do with mere emotion; it indicates love which deliberately, by an act of will, chooses its object, & through thick or thin, regardless of the attractiveness of the object concerned, goes on loving continually, eternally.*¹

D. **Slide8 3 POSITIVES** (*patient, kind, honest or, rejoices with the truth*)

E. There is *a quality of love* that produces the 3.

F. **Patient** - *to be even tempered while enduring trying people* (**note**: Gk word, describes *patience with people*, not *patience with circumstances*). Lit. It means *"It takes a long time before fuming and breaking into flames."* LKGNT

¹ Alan Redpath, pg.156.

1. It's the first quality love displays. Chrysostom said, *It is the word used of the man who is wronged and who has it easily in his power to avenge himself and who yet will not do it.* (eg. David in En Gedi w/Saul) [*patience is a strength not a weakness*]

G. **Kind** - to be or become *warmhearted, considerate, humane, gentle and sympathetic.*

1. So we are not just to endure trying people, but to be **kind** towards them.

a) eg. **Jesus** showed *the greatest kindness* to **Judas** who betrayed him.

H. **Honest/rejoices with the truth** - Love rejoices in this truth/*i.e. the gospel message*, because the gospel **demonstrates God's love**. *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Rom 5:8 (love **joys** in this truth)

V. Slide9 **LOVE ISN'T (4-6)** (things that hinder love)

A. **8 NEGATIVES** (does/is not: *envy, boast, arrogant, rude, insist on its own way, irritable, resentful, rejoice at wrongdoing*)

B. *With all the rest* there is **nothing to produce**, just get these things that are hindering, *out of the way ... so The 3* can manifest themselves.

C. **Love does not envy** - to be a become painfully desirous of another's advantages.

1. For there is **no love** there will inevitably be in **envy**. (envy was the 1st seed of murder)

D. **Love does not boast** - parade itself. Exhibit self importance. *When a person boasts they're often advertising their emptiness.* **Jesus never showed off.**

1. *True love will always be far more impressed with its own unworthiness than it's own merit.* William Barclay

2. The true lover cannot ever get over the wonder that he is loved. (for me by God, or by Kel)

E. **Love is not arrogant** - proud puffed up w/air. not inflated wi/their own importance.

1. **William Carey** (father of modern missions) *once a shoe cobbler, became 1 of the greatest missionaries & linguists the world has ever seen.* (he translated at least parts of the bible in approx 34 Indian languages). *When he came to India he was*

treated w/dislike and contempt. At a dinner party a **snob** trying to intimidate him, said, *I suppose you once worked as a shoe-maker.* - *No your lordship,* answered Carey, *not a shoe maker, only a cobbler.* He did not even claim to **make** shoes, just **mend** them.

F. Love is not **rude** - unbecoming. It's always courteous.

G. Love is not **insist on its own way** - love does not insist upon its **rights**, **but** finds its joy in **serving others**.

H. Love is not **irritable or resentful** - love never *flies into a temper*.

1. **Irritable** - incited or stirred up in: emotions, feelings, or reactions.

2. **Resentful** - lit. means *to tally evil - to keep count*. [count the kind things done to you, **not** the wrongs you have suffered]

3. It's one who is temperamental, thin-skinned, easily offended, quick to be **resentful**.

I. Love is not **rejoice at wrongdoing** - in Jesus interview with the woman taken in adultery, He did not condone her sin, **but** He **protected** and **forgave** her.

VI. Slide 10 **LOVE DOES (7) READ** (love's 4 virtues) [bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things]

A. Spurgeon called these virtues, *Loves 4 sweet companions*.

B. Love **bears** all things - to bear up, to support. *It gets under the load of life & bears it to the limit.*

C. Love **believes** all things - *it takes God at His word*. Love always believes the best about other people. (not that love is easily deceived, nor blind).

1. It means love is **not basically suspicious**. *It takes the kindest view of others in every circumstance ... as long as it possibly can.*

D. Love **hopes** all things - not never ceases to hope. How sad when a parent says, *you'll never amount to anything* (that's *the homicide of hope!*).

E. Love **endures** all things - it never gives in. Such love to Jesus to Cavalry. This ability to love can only come from loves source.

F. Slide11a **Love**. This is a call to **Action!**

1. **But** Brian, you don't know **MY** situation, you don't know how hard it is at work, you don't know what it's like being married to them, you don't understand. **No I don't**. *But you and I are still called to do it.* (so muster up love and go do this list? **No!**) **Not** go do this *in your own strength*, it is impossible to do *in your own strength*.
2. A.L. said Wed night, when you're looking for your application don't ask **What do I have to do?** (because any **unbeliever** can do that). **Slide11b** Ask, **what does Jesus change about me here?** (how can I who, *insists on my own way*, or am often *arrogant, rude, irritable, resentful* live out vs.4-7?)
3. **That's why** we need **Jesus**. **That's why** He came. **That's what** He taught. **That's why** He died. **That's why** He rose ... to show us this love.
 - a) He **didn't only** die for our sins, **but to display sacrificial love** in a profound and eternal way. (*no greater love than this, that someone lay down his life for a friend*)
 - b) See all of this list in **the life of Jesus**.

G. **And** this wasn't a secret, He said this plainly. In John 13:34,35 *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.* result? *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*

1. **Love** shows us **who** we belong to, **and who** we are.
2. **Slide11c Jesus** is not only *the perfect embodiment of love*, **but also The One who enables us to love** (*don't miss that!). **That's why** He gave us *the Comforter, the Helper, the Holy Spirit*, to empower us, and to enable us to **love ... through the HS**.
 - a) Romans 5:5 *God's love/agape has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us*. [when we become NT Christians *agape's born in us*]
 - b) **What does Jesus change about me here? We HAVE His love in us!**

H. **Why** all this talk about love? because *love is permanent*, *Love never ends*.

1. Love will stand. Love will never let you down. Love survives everything. It is invincible love. It is love that will never go extinct.

I. **Prayer:** more of you, less of me.

J. Keywords: Love, gifts,