

Empowered
“Without this, nothing else matters”
1 Corinthians 13
Growth Group Discussion Guide

Opening Questions (get everyone involved in discussion):

- ❖ What is the best food you have ever tasted? Do you ever find yourself striving to re-create it, either by going out or cooking it yourself?
- ❖ In our community and in the circles where you run, what kinds of things do people strive for in the pursuit of a successful life?
- ❖ When you picture a successful life in your own mind, what things stand out as the benchmark for which to strive?
- ❖ Prepare your minds with a moment of silence, then pray and ask for God’s Spirit to shape you all through his word.

1. Read 1 Cor. 12:31b, then discuss:

- Paul has been discussing spiritual gifts. Recap what he has said so far, in chapter 12.
- What does it sound like he is getting ready to do, based on v. 31b?

2. Read 1 Cor. 13:1-3, then discuss the following.

- What spiritual gifts does Paul reference in these verses?
- To what other teachings of Jesus do you see Paul alluding?
- What stance toward the gifts and to these teachings does Paul seem to take here?
- How would you summarize the over-arching point being made in this section?
- Pastor Josh described it this way on Sunday: **The very best thing we can pursue in life is love.**
 - To what extent do you agree with this statement, and why?
 - Does this claim raise any questions for you?
 - How often do you find yourself thinking about striving to love others? Or how important would you say this pursuit is to you?

3. Read 1 Cor. 13:4-7, and discuss the following.

- Take some time to discuss each description of love in these verses. As you do, here are some discussion prompts:
 - Is the meaning of the descriptor clear? What is confusing?
 - How easy or difficult do you find this quality?
 - How does our culture work against this quality?
 - What else stands in the way of you loving like this?
- Pastor Josh summarized this description of love as “God-like love.” How have you experienced God loving you in one or more of these ways?
- On Sunday, Josh said, **“only when you have your deepest need for love met in Jesus Christ, will you even have a chance at starting to love other people this way.”**
 - In what ways does the love of Jesus for us enable us to carry out this love for others?

- How can you practically experience his love in a way that will empower you to love in this way?

4. Read 1 Cor. 13:8-13, and discuss the following.

- Some people think that Paul is hinting here that the gifts of the Spirit would end after he and the other apostles died. What evidence do you see here that this conclusion is inaccurate?
- What point do you think Paul is making here, with regard to the relationship between love and spiritual gifts?
- How does it affect you to know that you are already “fully known” to God?
- How do you feel about the fact that one day, you will know God just as fully as God knows you?
- How do spiritual gifts enable us to have a partial knowledge of God in the present?
- On Sunday, Josh summarized this section, saying, “**God-like love is the most lasting, eternal quality you can possess.**” In what ways might this fact help you to let love be the defining mark of your life?
- What practical insights or action steps will you take from this study?

Prayer:

- Take a moment to share, and pray for any other needs that exist among your group members.