

Teen Devotion

Year C – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Victorious



One truth shared: Christ's love for us both motivates and equips our love for him and others.

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8

Selfless Love Marches Victorious Over Self-Glorification

"I love you" is a phrase said in a myriad of situations between many different individuals. It's shared between spouses, family members, and friends. It's said to express genuine affection.

"I love you" is also a phrase where the words uttered don't match the actions carried out. In fact, *love* is endangered in a world that today is so dominated by anger and hate.

We have to admit that we too are guilty of this, aren't we? "I love you" might be said over and over again with words. But what about our actions? Too often we fall far short of being motivated by love in how we interact with others.

The apostle Paul knew this. He knew that a lack of love was something that not only affects us each day of life, but also was threatening the well-being of an entire congregation near and dear to his heart—the one in Corinth.

So Paul, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes what has come to be known as "the great love chapter of the Bible." He shares with his readers—then and now—exactly what *love is* and how it *reveals itself* in the lives of those who are in Christ Jesus.

We find an example of what true love really is in Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. Notice how selfless he was in everything. Notice how he was resolute in his concern for others when things seemingly crumbled around him.

All for us. He did it all for us. And his resurrection? It's proof that his sacrifice was more than sufficient to pay for our every unloving action and to assure us of our heavenly home built with God's love for us.

So we learn this: Love is not all about us. It never has been. It never will be. Flee the temptation to become so caught up in self that you don't reach out to those in need. Fight against focusing so much on "me, myself, and I" that there's no room left to say and show "I love you" to others. All because of Jesus. All empowered by Jesus.

Prayer: Your love for me is selfless, timeless, and immense, O Lord. Thank you for everything, especially your Son, who is the personification of your love for me. Guide me in my life, heavenly Father. In this world of hatred, let me be a beacon of your love and an ambassador of your grace. Amen.

Foundations Teen Facilitators Guide

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Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

What's your take on Valentine's Day? What are some good aspects of it?! What don't you like about it?

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

"I love you" is one of the most spoken phrases in any language. Let's come up with some different definitions of what the phrase means and how it is abused.

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- In what ways does the apostle Paul hold up love as something of utmost importance in the first three verses of 1 Corinthians 13? What point is he making?
- Evaluate the following: "It's not only *what* you do; it's *why* you do it."
- Paul lists a lot of things beginning with the phrase, "Love is..." In your estimation, which is most important? Why did you choose that one?
- Verse 8 begins "Love never fails." What does Paul mean with this simple phrase?
- Re-read verses 9-12. Let's discuss some limitations that God's people have while still on earth. According to these verses, how will things change for us once we get to heaven?

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

Christ's entire ministry on earth was one big "I love you" to us poor, miserable sinners. Let's look at some ways in which our lives as God's children on earth can better proclaim "I love you" to either those we are close to or those we are not (think close friends, marginalized classmates, parents, girlfriend/boyfriend).