



# the Source

*Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...*

A couple of weeks ago, we were headed back to Round Rock from Troy, and encountered a traffic problem around Belton. The car's GPS started directing us to an alternate route. I was intrigued to see how it got us past the wreck on I-35. I thought (and I was right) I knew a better way to get back onto the highway. We all believe we have better ways to do a lot of things!

Paul is dealing with a Corinthian congregation full of people who knew how to do church, even though they couldn't quite agree who was in charge. They had each chosen favorite roles and gifts and were sure their own was most important.

Now Paul sets them straight. There is one best way, but it is none of their chosen gifts. It is no role at all, but an attitude, a life style, which works with all the others. "I can have all these, but lacking this one thing, they are empty." Without love, nothing else works. Paul urges the church to use this glue to restore the unity of the body of Christ.

Love has perhaps always been misunderstood. There are physical aspects, to be sure, and the emotional weight of romance steers us in that direction so often. The harmony of *phileo*, or brotherly love, is sought by communities everywhere. But Paul sees a Godly love which has a deeper strength and is not shaped by circumstances. This is the love which is the better way.

— Dr. John Clifford, Retired Clergy-in-Residence

## Consider the Source 1 Corinthians 13

### A Family Affair

Do you love God? Why or why not? Is it something you have thought about before? Sometimes people who have grown up loving God have never questioned why. As a family, share the answer to these questions. Then read 1 John 4:7-12, 17-19 aloud together.

First John tells us God loved humankind before we loved him. God desires, but does not require, our love in return. He wants us to want to love him in return. God loved humankind so much, he sent his Son to live among us, so that we could learn how to live in relationship with Him and others. God's love for us is a model for how to love and a power that enables us to love others. Talk about some examples from the Bible about how Jesus showed love to others.

First Corinthians 13 defines love. Read this passage together. Using the words from 1 Corinthians, and God's model, how do we show love to others? Make a plan together for how each of you can show love to each other, to your teacher, to friends, and even to strangers. Start a journal so you can keep track of when and to whom each of you were able to demonstrate God's love.

*Dear God, thank you for your amazing example of love. Help us to remember to share it with others each day. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

—Children's Ministry

### Monday: 1 Corinthians 12:31

Have you noticed the changes in light bulbs recently? Incandescent bulbs are reserved now for special conditions; CFL (florescent) bulbs are harder and harder to find; and LED is the primary style. Better light bulbs keep appearing. We are looking for "better!"

- How can our relationships become better?
- What other areas of your life might be improved?

### Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 13:1-4

Paul observed that all the gifts the Corinthians argued about were incomplete. There is one missing ingredient: love! Like a recipe, one missing item ruins the results.

- Love is Paul's "special sauce." How can you add more of it to your life?
- Are there "incomplete areas" in your life? Do they need more love?

### Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 13:5-6

Life is full of "don't's!" Many we call "laws," others are customs. All are designed to help smooth relationships. Paul provides a "master list" of some of what love avoids: envy, boasting, rudeness, etc.

- Think of how these things hinder friendships and community.
- Are any of these your habits?

### Thursday: 1 Corinthians 13: 4, 6-7

Paul also mentions some positives...ways love behaves which build others up. Patience, celebrating truth, enduring...these make life go better! We need to make these our style.

- Doctors "practice" medicine, always seeking to improve.
- Which of these characteristics do you need practice at making habits?

### Friday: 1 Corinthians 13: 8-13

Ours is a throw-away culture, where we don't expect much to last very long, and we are quick to replace what is old. But Paul suggests some things, built on God's love, do last, even forever. Faith, hope, and especially love.

- Are we careless with our relationships, expecting them to come and go? Can they change and remain strong?
- And are we as careless with our relationship to God?

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