



The Gathering



APRIL 2, 2023 / AGAPE LOVE / 1 CORINTHIANS 13

EVEN FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T GROWN UP AROUND THE CHURCH, 1 CORINTHIANS 13 IS PROBABLY A FAMILIAR PASSAGE. MOST OF US ASSOCIATE THE BEAUTIFUL IMAGERY OF LOVE WITH WEDDING CEREMONIES BECAUSE THAT IS WHERE IT IS READ MOST OFTEN. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT PAUL DIDN'T WRITE THIS CHAPTER WITH MARRIAGE IN MIND. THIS SECTION OF SCRIPTURE IS PRIMARILY ABOUT HOW THE CHURCH SHOULD INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER AS WE GATHER. BY DEMONSTRATING THE SELF-GIVING, AGAPE LOVE OF JESUS, WE GIVE A VIVID PICTURE OF JESUS TO THE WORLD.

1. Take a few minutes to think about some of the people who have displayed sacrificial love to you. Who comes to mind? How did they impact you?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. How does your perspective change when you realize this is written primarily as an instruction for the early church gathering rather than romantic relationships?
3. Notice the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Apart from love, each of these gifts can be abused and cause harm to others. Pick a gift that resonates with you (tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith, etc.). What would it look like to use this gift in love? What would it look like to use this gift apart from love?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 with the church in mind. Is this how you typically approach a church gathering? Where are your biggest areas for growth?
5. Paul expounds on "agape" love in other passages. Read over 1 Corinthians 13 again and summarize how each one describes agape love.
6. The message's main point was, "We gather to give, not to get." How does this way of thinking about church differ from our culture?
7. Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-13. What stands out to you in this section? How does love differentiate itself from the gifts the Holy Spirit gives God's people?
8. What personal challenge can you take away from this passage as you enter the week ahead?