

ALL IN DAY

1 CORINTHIANS

*all together
as one church*



The Most Excellent Way

1 Corinthians 13

Study Big Idea

As members of Christ's body, the most excellent way of exercising the gifts of the Spirit is to practice love that is 'all in' on being patient, kind and shaped by the cross.

Discussion Question

What was one of your highlights from our All In Day together?

'CHAPTER 13 OF 1 CORINTHIANS is a beautiful passage. [...] This passage is often read at weddings, even nonreligious weddings. Why? Because the idea that "love never ends," that there's something that never fails, that there's something that can endure anything—that's one of the most beautiful ideas that a human heart can hear. And at that moment, when husband and wife "may now kiss" one another during the wedding ceremony, it's this kind of love that is coursing through their newly married minds. Love is resonant. It sounds true, even if it's often elusive.

But unfortunately for many who have been going to church for a while, this might be the 26th time they've heard 1 Corinthians 13 referenced, and they're thinking, "Yep. Love never ends. Got that one. Yawn." If that's you, come back, please! The Apostle Paul, who wrote this letter to the church in the city of Corinth, is concerned to get this message through to the very people who have heard it a million times.

The Corinthian Christians had the religious thing down. They did what Christians do every week (they went to church, they prayed, sang, listened to a sermon, and even shared a meal together). But in all the coming and going, all their churchly activity, in spite of all the sermons they had ever heard on 1 Corinthians 13, they struggled to keep love at the center of their lives.

In this particular instance, the Corinthians had gotten themselves caught up in arguments about who was most eloquent, who was the smartest, who had the most spiritual sensitivity, who made the most money, who did the most community service, etc. They were interested in excellence, in what set them apart.

Paul steps into this setting—and into our setting today—and says, "I know you love your excellence, but let me show you an even more excellent way" (12:31)—the way of love.'

Uhm, S.T. *1 Corinthians – The Word of the Cross*
(Crossway, 2015), 230. (Accordance)

Brief Context

1. Why do you think Paul includes this chapter on love between his focus on spiritual gifts and the body of Christ (in ch.12) and on prophecy, tongues and orderly worship (in ch.14)?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

2. What seems to be the key point that Paul is making in verses 1 to 3?

3. Our mission statement at Christ Church Gladesville is to “glorify God by making fruitful disciples of Christ in ever increasing number.” In light of what Paul says, why should it matter to us that love motivates our mission? Discuss.

4. What stands out to you about the way Paul describes love in verses 4-7?

5. Divide up the following passages to look up a few different places in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians where chapter 13 serves as a corrective. Then share-back briefly.

Love is...	Look up:	What are some ways the church in Corinth are getting things wrong?
Love is ‘patient’	1 Cor 11:20-22, 33	
Love does not ‘envy’	1 Cor 3:1-4	
Love is not ‘boastful’	1 Cor 4:7; 1:28-31	
Love is not ‘proud’	1 Cor 4:6, 8:1-3	
Love does not dishonour others	1 Cor 12:14-25	
Love does not insist on its own way	1 Cor 8:9-13; 10:23-24, 31-33	
Love is not easily angered	1 Cor 1:10-13, 6:1-8	
Love keeps no record of wrongs	1 Cor 1:10-13, 6:1-11	
Love does not delight in evil	1 Cor 5:1-2, 6:7-8	

6. What makes love so superior to spiritual gifts according to Paul in verses 8-12? Why is it even greater than faith and hope?

7. Pick one or two areas below to discuss together. How can we be 'all in' as Church family in keeping the most excellent way of love as our main priority when we:
 - Gather on a Sunday in our congregations together?
 - Meet together mid-week in our Growth Groups?
 - Serve alongside one another in our ministry teams?
 - Relate and behave toward one another in community?
 - Have an outward eye for people who don't yet follow or trust Jesus in mission?

8. Look up: John 13:1-17, 34-35. How has Christ himself set the example of modelling self-giving love toward us? (see also, 1 John 4:7-12)

9. Where have you felt encouraged or challenged to keep love as the main priority in your relationships with others at church and / or the ministries you serve in at Christ Church?

Pray in Response