

# Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of May 5, 2019

## A Most Excellent Way

Pastor Temple 8:15, 9:30, 10:55 am

### Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15-20 min)

- Anything to share about personal events in the past week? About follow-ups from last Sunday's meeting on "Do You Love Me?"
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

Opener Question: What was one of your favorite love songs when you were a teenager? (question from Lyman Coleman)

### Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture below, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

**And now I will show you the most excellent way. 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. <sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.**

**<sup>8</sup> Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. <sup>12</sup> For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. <sup>13</sup> And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.**

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

- To what other things in the Christian life is the place of love compared in verses 1-3 and where does love stand in the rankings? How do you explain this ordering of priorities?
- Verses 4-8a, describe the qualities of love. How is this description of love different than love as a “feeling?”
- Verses 8b can also be translated “love (agape) never ends.” In contrast, the ending of other spiritual activities are listed in verse 8. How is this significant in the judgement of which is the greatest?
- In verse 13 other things that “remain,” that is, do not end, are listed. How do you understand these other qualities to be unending as well? Why do you believe love is listed as still greater than these as well?
- What do verses 9-12 describe as in a process of becoming mature or complete and how is it related to “love?”
- How do you respond to the quote by John Wesley “Without love, all learning is but splendid ignorance?”

### **Other Related Scriptures (10 min)**

- Would a volunteer please read out loud 1 John 3:11-18. In verse 14, what is love a sign of in the life of a believer? What does this mean to you?
- How has love been defined for us in verse 16?
- How do verses 17-18 direct us as believers to actions more so than feelings?
- How does the answer to the previous question relate to Pastor Temple’s statement that “Love is not determined by the one receiving love but the one giving love?”

### **Personalizing and Applying The Message (15 min)**

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional reading above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- In the description of love in 1 Cor. 13:4-7, in which of them are you the strongest and which are you the weakest?
- Have you been in situations in which your loving actions toward others were not received or appreciated? How did you respond or feel about it?
- How is this reminder about Christian love challenging you to temper your responses to people who get under your skin?
- Whether they deserve it or not, is there someone you would be willing to offer a second chance to this week in Christian love?
- Or to assist someone in need?

### **Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)**

- The “Red Sox” team on the Dream League is one of the avenues of Christ Church’s witness in the community. See <https://chappelltemple.com/> for a recent blog article on this by Pastor Temple. In what other ways may we as individuals, as a group or as a church demonstrate the love of God for people this week?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer.