

Summit Woods Baptist Church  
First Corinthians Sermon Study Equipping Class

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Remember to begin your study early in the week so that you have time to really think (and keep thinking) about the passage without being rushed.

❖ Day 1

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

For these lessons, the sermon text is provided in a format that visually helps display the structure of the paragraph or section of text. The main verbs are underlined. Generally, the main indicative clauses remain to the left, and the supporting clauses are either directly underneath when they have equal priority to what comes before, or are tabbed to the right when the clause supports, develops, or draws a conclusion from a neighboring clause.

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient  
and kind;  
love does not envy  
or boast;  
it is not arrogant  
<sup>5</sup>or rude.  
It does not insist on its own way;  
it is not irritable  
or resentful;  
<sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice at wrongdoing,  
but rejoices with the truth.  
<sup>7</sup>Love bears all things,  
believes all things,  
hopes all things,  
endures all things.

\*Note that in the Greek, Paul writes all of these descriptors in verb form rather than an adjective form.

1. In what context do we most often hear these verses quoted?
2. Is that the context Paul had in mind when he wrote this?
3. What is the immediate context of this week's passage?

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4. Given the specific context Paul wrote for, is it wrong to apply his teachings on the nature of love to other and broader contexts? Explain.

5. List what Paul positively says love is or does. List what he negatively says love is not or does not.

Positive

Negative

6. Look again at verse 4a and the note under the paragraph flow on page 1. Greek scholar Anthony Thiselton in his commentary (NIGTC) points out the active verbal nature of love and suggests the following translation: “Love waits patiently; love shows kindness.” What difference does it make in your understanding to read this *activity* of love rather than just a *characteristic* of love?

## ❖ Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 again.

For the next several questions, we will be looking back throughout the letter at how the Corinthians had been exhibiting the negative descriptions of what love “is not/does not” and how the positive descriptions of love should correct their actions and attitudes.

7. Read the following verses where this same word for ‘patient’ is used elsewhere in the New Testament: 1 Thessalonians 5:14; James 5:7-8; Matthew 18:26 & 29; Hebrews 6:15; 2 Peter 3:9. What insight do these verses give you about what it means to be patient or to wait patiently?

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8. Thinking back through the letter, describe ways in which the Corinthians lacked patience. (For example, see 4:5&8.)
  - a. How would loving each other with patience have caused them to behave differently in those situations?
9. The word 'envy' in verse 4b is the same word as 'earnestly desire' in 12:31 and 'jealousy' in 3:3. How do we keep a strong desire that is good from becoming an envy that is destructive? (Hint: What/who was the driving force or motivation behind the wrong 'envy' in 3:3 as opposed to the right 'desire' in 12:31?)
10. 'Arrogant' at the end of verse 4 is also used in 4:6 & 18-19; 5:2; and 8:1. Throughout the letter, what is "puffing up" the Corinthians, and how do we avoid the same fate? (Don't just say pride – go on and describe it further.)
11. The word translated 'rude' at the beginning of verse 5 is the same word translated 'not behaving properly' in 7:36. It is also used in adjective form as 'unpresentable' in 12:23. It can also be translated 'to act unbecomingly, dishonorably, disgracefully, or indecently'. Its opposite word 'decently' is found in the closing sentence of this larger section on worship and spiritual gifts in 14:40. What events in the letter so far come to mind where some of the Corinthians have behaved indecently or in ways unbecoming of a Christian?

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12. Verse 6 says that love “does not rejoice at wrongdoing.” Where has this happened in the letter so far?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. Verse 5 closes with the word ‘resentful’, which can also be translated as ‘keep a record of wrongs’. How have the Corinthians wronged the Apostle Paul throughout the letter? (Hint: Look especially at chapters 1-4 & 9.)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. In the context of church members relating to each other, what does it look like to “bear all things”? “To believe all things”? “To hope all things”? “To endure all things”?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. How has Paul demonstrated loving the Corinthians well by displaying these many active descriptions of love throughout the letter?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
16. In what other ways have the Corinthians’ sinful heart issues reflected what love is not or does not do? (For example, where have the Corinthians insisted on their own way/been self-seeking or been irritable/easily angered, etc.?)
  - a. How would the various things that Paul says love is or does correct those issues?

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17. Given that Paul has placed this description of love in the middle of the section on spiritual gifts, what would it practically look like for them to use their spiritual gifts according to the positive things that love is/does and not according to the negative things that love is not/does not?

❖ Day 3

Reflecting on this past year ...

18. Think back over all that we have studied in 1 Corinthians this past year (chapters 8-13).

- a. What have you learned about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. What have you learned about the church?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. What have you learned about mankind and about yourself?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- d. What has encouraged you?

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e. What has convicted you?

f. How have you specifically applied something from what we have studied to your life?

g. For what have you specifically praised God as a result of what we have studied?

In preparation for Sunday, pray that we would actively live out God-honoring love for each other in the church, in our families, and in the world.