

# Cruciform Love: Love Works

Feb. 11, 2018

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,  
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,  
To GROW as followers of Jesus.  
- CG Mission Statement

## Worship: Lectio Divina

*(Here is a passage to help your group as you worship. You can go through it together or in groups in meditation and/or in prayer.)*

Read through 1 Cor. 13 slowly, out loud. Ask everyone to close their eyes and read through the passage again and replace “Jesus” every time it says “love”. Ask the group what hat comes to mind after reading it the second time with Jesus being added?

## Icebreaker

Share about a time when you have experienced God’s love through another person?

## Text for Discussion: I Cor. 13

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

## Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

Jesus shows us what the image of God looks like. He embodies how we were created to live: humble, gentle, serving, sacrificing and obedient even to the point of suffering and death. For Jesus, this is the path to human flourishing and the blessed life: the way of the cross. “Whoever loses his life will find it and whoever finds his life will lose it” (Matt 10:39).

This vision is an entirely new way of being in the world. And though we may feel giving up our control will weaken us, we are merely denying our false self – the belief we can complete ourselves by our own effort, control and accomplishment. We must therefore make a daily habit of choosing to trust, obey and follow Jesus rather than our urges, wants and self-will. In doing this we will find lives marked by the wonderful, undeserved love of our Father. 1 Corinthians 13:7 describes what this love looks like in action:

**Love bears all things.** Even while we were yet His enemies, God bore all things on the cross: our griefs, our sorrows, our sins – every part of us. Jesus is always with us, meaning none of us has to bear what we’re going through alone. Therefore to enter into God’s love, we should carry the personal burdens of others (Gal 6:2), coming alongside and under their weaknesses. The most profound form of this is forgiveness. Rather than giving up on relationships when they hurt or get too difficult or messy, this is precisely where we are to keep loving... because this is where love does its work in us. Here, we are confronted with the depths of our selfishness. Here, we begin to trust in the wondrous grace of God.

**Love believes all things.** It is not gullible or naïve, but love often risks giving that appearance. It is not blind, but love chooses to see something in the other that might not be all that visible: their true self as God made them to be, His beloved children. This is an invitation to exercise faith as we speak this identity over one another. Love keeps us believing the best about other people.

**Love hopes all things.** Hope is about our destiny and how it orients our present lives – being anchored by our Father’s unwavering commitment to our future (1 Peter 1:13). We must learn to set our hope in God’s word rather than our circumstances. This is how we receive hope. We give hope by seeing who others *will be* rather than where they are headed, because hope is joined with God’s vision for others. So though a situation or person may seem beyond hope, love does not lose hope.

**Love endures all things.** Endurance is the fruit of belief and hope – the very power of God, Christ in us (Ps 73:26). It is patience plus courage, and enables us to withstand our present circumstances with the belief that they won’t always feel this way. “Be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord! (Ps 27:14) Because love believes, hopes, and is anchored in God’s word, it endures.

## Guiding Question of the Week

*(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)*

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How does love work?

## Questions for Discussion

*(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)*

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### Opening questions...

- Read I Cor. 13:7. Note that there are four things mentioned in this one verse that describe love – we will be digging into them one at a time during this meeting.
  - Love bears all things.
    - What does it look like to bear one another's burdens?
    - Read Galatians 6:2.
      - Why is bearing one another's burdens fulfilling the law of Christ?
      - How have you done it in the past (share a specific example)?
      - How can we bear one another's burdens in this group?
  - Love believes all things.
    - What does it look like for love to believe all things?
    - Read Colossians 3:12-14.
      - What does Paul say about our identity in Christ?
      - How can we remind each other of our true identity even when going through trials?
  - Love hopes all things.
    - What does it look like for love to hope all things?
    - Read Romans 15:13.
      - How can we offer hope to one another even during challenging times?
  - Love endures all things.
    - What does it look like for love to endure all things?
    - Read Psalm 73:26
      - What has helped you in the past to endure all things (share a specific example)?
      - How can we encourage each other to endure through the various trials of life?

## Experiment of the Week

Of the 4 things mentioned in I Corinthians 13: 7, what do you need most right now? Think of one specific act that you can do this week that leans into that. Come next week prepared to share with the group what you did.

## Praying for One Another

*(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests.)*

- Thank God that He loves us completely and bears all of our burdens.
- Pray that we would be convinced that the way to the beautiful life is the way of the cross.
- Pray that we would be people who abide in faith, hope and love.