



A PEOPLE IN A PLACE, WEEK 1
“LOVE + GRATITUDE”
SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS
DATE: JULY 18, 2021

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.

BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:
1 CORINTHIANS 13, ACTS 18

This message begins a series on Paul's letters to the Corinthians. Corinth was much like many contemporary cities: a mix of highly-educated movers-and-shakers sharing a place with solid blue-collar folks. Corinth was lively, prosperous, and an important imperial city known for its boastful public inscriptions. Paul founded this church (Acts 18). He loved this church and was deeply concerned that they were being transformed more by their culture than by the Gospel. So, he writes letters to this specific people in a specific place about issues not unlike those faced by the church today.

In the middle of these two letters, Paul writes about love in one of the Bible's most famous chapters. He says that love matters most of all, and he argues that it is the only meaningful motive for Christians. He values godly love above talent, generosity, and exemplary character. Without love, those things are nothing. Guided by the loving motives of a heart transformed by God's love, those qualities are world-changing. Without love, the advice, correction, and pastoral care Paul offers us via the Corinthians amounts to nothing. That's why we start there: in the middle with love.

LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. What do we mean by “heart” if not the organ that pumps blood?
2. Why do you think so many books, movies, and plays include “love” and “the heart” as central themes?
3. Share about some *thing* you “love” and why. For example, choose a sports team, an activity, or a food.
4. We say things like, “I love eggs” and “I love my friend.” How do these relate to one another since they both use the word “love?”
5. Describe a time when you felt deeply loved.

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:31. Why do you think Paul phrase the transition to chapter 13 this way?
2. In the message, Pastor Brad divided chapter 13 into sections. What do you think of those divisions? Do you see others, and if so, why?
3. From the list in 13:4-7, what qualities of love do you most value and why (patience, hope, etc.)?
4. Consider the section that starts in 13:8. What is Paul getting at when he writes about love as the only thing that never fails? Why do you think that's important?

CONTINUED:

5. What do you think it means to “know fully, even as I am fully known” (13:12) and how does that relate to love?
6. What do you think of the idea that love is greater than faith or hope? (13:13)

LOOK OUT: These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. How do you think most people in the world, Christian or not, relate to the idea of love?
1. Where do you see a desperate need for love in our world? What does that look like for you? How does it make you feel?
2. How do you see the role of the Church in meeting the world’s need for love?
3. What do you see as the biggest difference between how Paul frames love’s motivating qualities and the way most people in our culture understand love and its impulses?
4. Pastor Brad repeatedly emphasized the need for a transformed heart, one changed by God’s love through the truth and grace of the Gospel. What would it look like for our world, our region, or our cities to be impacted by a multitude of transformed and purely motivated hearts?

LOOK IN: These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. Base on this message, how has your understanding of Christian love been changed, if at all?
2. What implications does that have for you personally, namely, how you experience and share God’s love with others?
3. Where do you most need the transforming touch of God’s love in your life and why?
4. How do you relate personally to the idea that a transformed heart is essential for a Christian? How has your’s been transformed? How is it still being transformed?
5. How might your transformed heart impact those closest to you?

LIVE IT OUT: These action steps help apply this week’s message to day to day life. Choose one prompts and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Have an honest conversation with God about your heart. (Ps. 139:23-24)
2. Set aside some time to ask a good friend what they see in your heart, your motivations, and ask God to address anything sour.
3. If your “heart inventory” shows a lack of transformation, invite God to do whatever he wants, or needs to, in you so that his love can truly change your heart to be more like Jesus’.

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