

# Corinth

Post

Modern

Faith

**The Habit of Love**

# Recap

What does **church** mean to you?

The human body has many **parts**, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been **baptized into one body by one Spirit**, and we all **share** the same Spirit. **12:12-13**

A community of broken and more broken people being gradually transformed into a relational organic (messy) entity that cares/ invests in the “other” in the presence of their transcendent Creator

# Recap

## Parasitic vs Symbiotic

A parasite is an organism that lives **on** or **in** a host organism and gets its food from or at the **expense** of its host. [CDC](#)

Symbiosis is a term describing any **relationship** or interaction between two **dissimilar** organisms. The specific kind of symbiosis depends on whether either or both organisms **benefit** from the relationship.

[National Geographic](#)

# Recap

Now you are the body of Christ, and **each one of you** is a part of it. *Vs 27*

Though the church has many **critics**, it has no **rivals**. *Anonymous*

Love is never enough to **sustain** a relationship. I didn't know that until my thirties. That might sound crazy, but as a child of the 80s, I fell under the influence of catchy **pop lyrics** and coming of age **movies** that suggested love always **overcame** disagreements, differences, and disruptions. A decade-plus of **romantic disappointments** taught me the absurdity of such a **simplistic** view. There's no **magic** in love, and that realization jaded me for a while.

I've learned it does matter, just not the way **culture** had implanted in me. To understand love in a way that's resourceful, look at it from a **different perspective**. [Barry Davret, Love is Overrated](#)

In our culture, many of us **idealize** love. We see it as some lofty **cure-all** for all of life's problems. Our **movies** and our **stories** and our history all celebrate it as life's **ultimate goal**, the final solution for all of our pain and struggle. And because we **idealize** love, we **overestimate** it. As a result, our relationships pay a price. When we believe that "all we need is love," then like Lennon, we're more likely to ignore **fundamental values** such as respect, humility, and commitment towards the people we care about. After all, if love solves everything, then why bother with all the other stuff—all of the **hard** stuff? Love is an emotional process. **Compatibility** is a logical process. And the two don't bleed into one another very well. **Mark Manson**



A common word **progressives** misuse frequently is **love**. Instead of love being defined like it is in 1 Corinthians 13, it is watered down to some namby-pamby concept of **comfort**. Making someone feel uncomfortable is unloving. Now, we're all for not creating unnecessarily awkward moments, but Christianity inherently makes people uncomfortable. Nobody likes having their sin pointed out, and living in **community** is often... well... uncomfortable. We can't use others' level of comfort as the barometer for how well we are loving. [Lindsey Medenwaldt](#)

Once we deny parts of God's **truth**, we're no longer under the authority of Scripture. We become our own authority. The Jesus we speak of will not be the Scripture-believing Jesus of the Bible who was full of both grace and truth. He will just be the "**loving Jesus**" remade in our **culture's image**—and in our image—in which we **redefine love** as absolute **tolerance** and moral **indifference**. [Randy Alcorn](#)

What's **love** got to do with it?





1 Corinthians 13 might be the most **famous** of all chapters in this letter. It is the chapter of **love**. Unfortunately this chapter seems to have been relegated to **weddings** and **sappy poetry** and thus **robbed** of its **counter cultural impact**. This chapter might be the most **misunderstood** and **misapplied** of all the other chapters in Corinthians!

Chapter 9-Freedom and self denial

Chapter 10-idolatry

Chapter 11-disunity

Chapter 12-The Holy Spirit functioning in the church

Chapter 13-Love, but in what context?

If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't **love others**, I would only be a **noisy gong** or a **clanging cymbal**. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be **nothing**. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have **gained nothing**. **13:1-3**

Paul has spent chapters highlighting spiritual gifts and community functioning. Now in one fell swoop he **dismantles** it. Why?

Love is **patient** and **kind**. Love is **not jealous** or **boastful** or **proud** or **rude**. It does not demand **its own way**. It is not **irritable**, and it **keeps no record of being wronged**. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the **truth wins out**. Love **never gives up, never loses faith,** is always **hopeful**, and **endures** through every circumstance. **Vs 4-7**



Paul will now show in the next several verses two reasons for the **lack** of love

Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! Now our **knowledge is partial and incomplete**, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless. **Vs 8-10**

When I was a **child**, I spoke and **thought and reasoned as a child**. But when I grew up, I put away **childish things**. Now we see things **imperfectly**, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know **now is partial and incomplete**, but then I will know everything completely, just as **God now knows me completely**. **Vs 11-12**

Paul points out **two** reasons for the loveless Christian. First, our lack of love can come from **ignorance**. Ignorance of the ‘others’ perspective (partial and incomplete). And the second is from a **lack of maturity** (reason as a child). Both causes loveless Christians to **demonstrate** (visibly and embarrassingly) how **deeply** we have forgotten this passage.

Paul writes 1 Corinthians in response to the **opposite situation**. Paul declares love as the greatest power in a **community** that seems to be **lacking** a lot of it. The members of the Corinthian church, to whom chapter 13 is directed, are nowhere near a love fest. In fact, the very **placement** of 1 Corinthians 13 suggests that Paul may be up to something. **Shively T. J. Smith, Ph.D**



# What kind of Love?

One reason people stop loving is because of past **hurts** or **harm**. Emotional **scar tissue** will make us **unfeeling, cold** and **stagnant** (love is transformation).

## What kind of Love?

There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be **vulnerable**. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be **wrung** and **possibly be broken**. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with **hobbies** and **little luxuries**; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your **selfishness**. But in that casket — safe, dark, motionless, airless — it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is **damnation**. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is **Hell**. *CS Lewis, The Four Loves*

What is **hell**? I maintain that it is the suffering of being **unable to love**. *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*

# What kind of Love?

Who is the **focus** for this love?

love **others** Vs 1

love **others** Vs 2

love **others** Vs 3

Fun fact, Paul never defines who the '**other**' is

# What kind of Love?

The church was attractive to non-believers because it made the ancient world a lot more **bearable**... what Christians did was take care of each **other**. Christians **loved one another**, and when they got sick they took care of each other. Someone brought you soup. You can do an enormous amount to relieve those **miseries** if you look after each other. If you look at the Roman world, you have to question whether half the people had any **humanity**. Going to the Arena to enjoy watching people tortured and killed doesn't strike me as healthy. Christianity told the Greco-Roman world that the **definition** of 'brother/sister' has got to be a lot broader.

# What kind of Love?

There are some things you owe to any living human being. To cities filled with homeless and the impoverished, Christianity offered **charity** as well as **hope**. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for **attachments**. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a **new and expanded sense of family**. To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for **social solidarity**. And to cities faced with epidemics, fires and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective **nursing services**. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*



# What kind of Love?

But the word agape existed long before the New Testament. The earliest accounts show it being used by epic poets like Homer to describe relationships on the **battlefield**. Generals would love their soldiers with agape love. **Soldiers** would fight and die for each other because of agape. Agape love was **the love of the battlefield**. All these expressions of agape love had one thing in common. They all expressed a love based on **identity**. A soldier loved a comrade because he identified with that person. By loving him, that soldier was also loving himself. Agape love did not always mean the Cross. But that doesn't diminish its importance of the Gospel. It helps us understand the Gospel better. **Stephen D.**

Love forged from **sacrifice** and **conflict**

# What kind of Love?

Agape **transforms** relationships, because even if it's not **reciprocated**, it doesn't destroy us. We can still love even when we're **hurt or wronged**. It's a love that is not merely theoretical but is **expressed in action**. Ken Boa

# What kind of Love?

The reason is that the apostle has employed a very unusual Greek word here that is translated "ends" in the version I am using. It really means, "to fall."

It says love never "falls." Now that sounds strange to our ears, but it is meant in the sense that **love never falls away and disappears**; it never quits; it is never used up; love keeps on coming; **the more you use it the more there is**. That is the point Paul is making here. [Ray Stedman](#)

# What kind of Love?

“The New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old becomes clear in the New.” *Augustine (354 AD-430 AD)*

“anyone who thinks he has understood the divine scriptures or any part of them, but cannot by his understanding build up this **double love of God and neighbour**, has not succeeded in understanding them.” *De doctrina christiana, 1.35.40*

# What kind of Love?

Biblical agape love is the love of **choice**, the love of serving with **humility**, the highest kind of love, the noblest kind of devotion, the **love of the will** (intentional, a conscious choice) and not motivated by **superficial appearance**, **emotional attraction**, or **sentimental relationship**. Agape in the Greek classics spoke of a love called out of one's heart by the **preciousness of the object** loved. Agape may involve emotion, but it must always involve **action**



# What kind of Love?

The power and gifts of the Spirit can seem unattainable or abstract. This is why Paul follows up chapter 12 with 13. Love at its most basic component is **intentionality made visible**. It is not abstract or ethereal, it is applied **daily** and with **sacrifice**

## What kind of Love?

Wherever there is true love, there must be **giving**, and giving to the point of **sacrifice**. Love is not satisfied with giving trinkets; it must give at the cost of sacrifice: it must give **blood, life, all**. **F B Meyer**

Agape is a love that impels one to **sacrifice one's self** for the benefit of the **object loved**...(it) speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of **value in the object loved**, an apprehension of its **preciousness**. **Kenneth Wuest**

It is our **care** for the **helpless**, our **practice** of lovingkindness, that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. 'Look!' they say, 'How they love one another!' Look how they are prepared **to die for one another**. **Tertullian**

After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you **love** (agape) me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I **love** (philio) you.” **John 21:15a**

Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you **love** (agape) me?” “Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I **love** (philio) you.” **Vs 16a**

A **third time** he asked him, “Simon son of John, do you **love** (philio) me?” **Vs 17a**

Peter was **hurt** that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I **love** (philio) you.” **Vs 17b**

## Loveless

noisy gong or a clanging cymbal

be nothing

gained nothing

become useless

partial and incomplete

become useless

reasoned as a child

imperfectly

## Loving

patient

kind

not jealous or boastful or proud or rude

does not demand

not irritable

no record of being wronged

does not rejoice about injustice

rejoices whenever the truth wins out.

Love never gives up

never loses faith

always hopeful

endures through every circumstance

Three things will last forever—**faith**, **hope**, and **love**—and the greatest of these is love. **Vs 13**

**Force multiplication** or a **force multiplier** refers to a factor or a combination of factors that **dramatically increases** the **effectiveness** of an item or group,

Faith

+

Hope

=

Love

Faith shows the **reality**

of what **we** hope for

it is the **evidence** of things we cannot see.

# City Groups

Launching after thanksgiving

Mondays

Wednesdays

Thursdays





## Journey Young Adults

Mondays, Huether Hotel (the board room), 7pm





Combined **Thanksgiving** service at WCC  
Sunday October 9th, 10:30am,  
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
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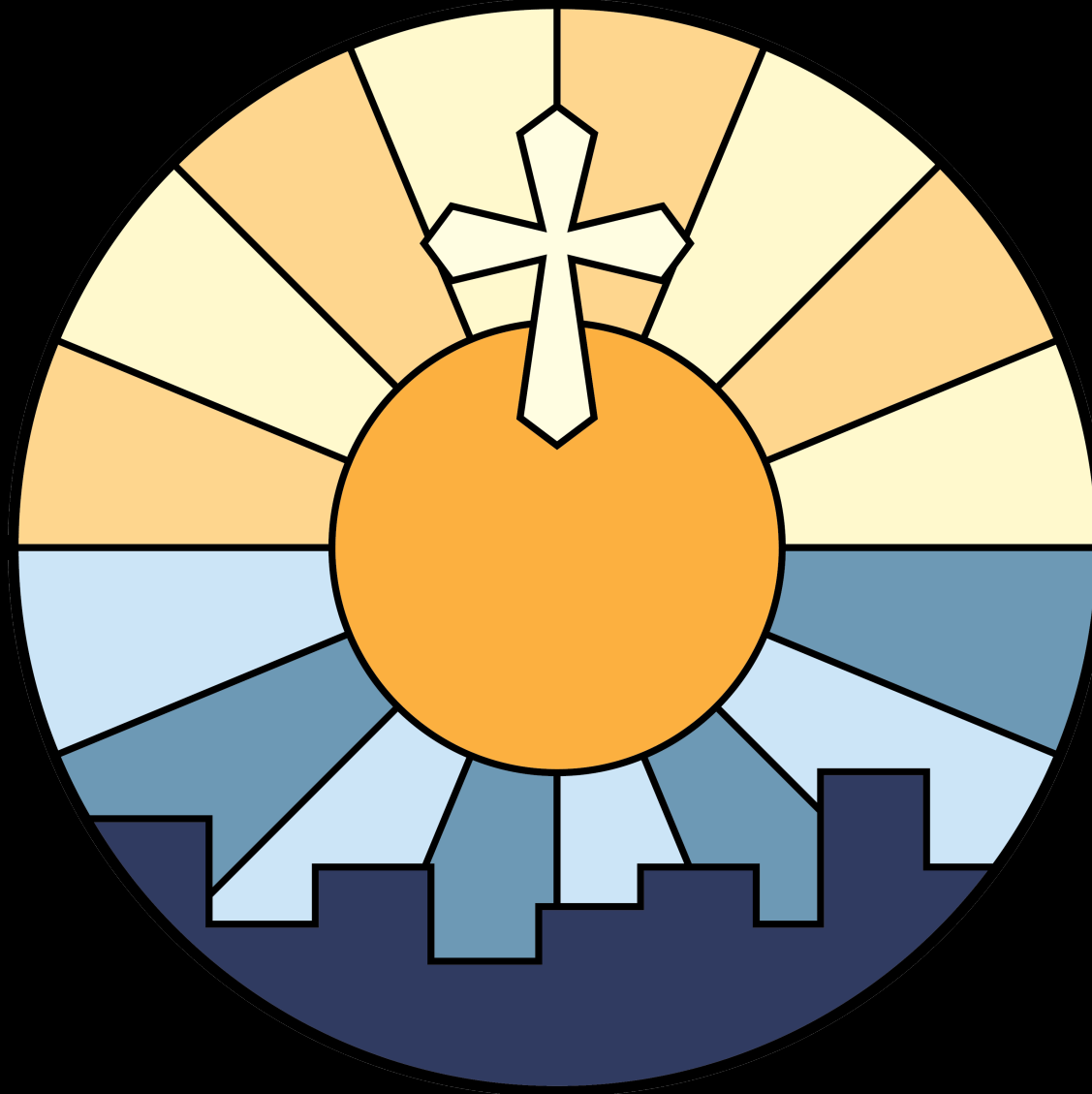
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