



SERMON NOTES

LIVE WELL

Live Well Relationally

1 Corinthians 13

Two questions:

- Have I developed bad habits that I need to lose?
- Are there good habits that I need to develop?

1 Corinthians:

Chapters 12, 14 – spiritual gifts

Chapter 13 – love

“If I speak with tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 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. 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.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

(1 Corinthians 13:1-7)

Questions:

- Am I harsh? (love is patient, kind)
- Do I have to win? (love does not envy, boast; is not proud)
- Am I self-centered? (love is not self-seeking)
- Do I have a “short fuse”? (love is not easily angered)
- Am I cynical? (love does not delight in evil, rejoices in truth, it protects, trusts)

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.” (Galatians 5:25-6:5)

LIVE WELL

WEEK ONE: 1 CORINTHIANS 13

Description for Series

As we come out of COVID, it's encouraging to get beyond social distancing, mask wearing, and a variety of other changes that have made this season challenging and stressful. In so many ways, we want life to "get back to normal." However, if we are to move forward well, it won't happen accidentally—it requires intentionality on our part. What does that intentionality involve? Among other things, it involves asking two questions:

1. Have I picked up any unhealthy habits during this season?
2. What good habits will help me going forward?

In this series, we are going to ask those questions as we examine what it looks like to live well relationally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

The devotional guide will continue the same rhythm that we used for the last devotional guides where we practiced the 3 x 20 pattern. Spend at least 20 minutes, 3 times a week, in God's word. Each of the three days you will be asked to implement the **Read. Reflect. Respond.** pattern to help get more deeply into God's word.

This week the devotional guide will focus on the concept of living well as a theme that permeates the Bible; God's desire for us is to live well in a holistic way. In focusing on relationships, 1 Corinthians 13 invites us to see that relationships are central to God's plan of restoration and renewal. Not surprisingly, part of the stress of COVID resulted from the isolation and the lack of human interaction that it fostered. By contrast, if we are to "live well," we need to be in relationship with others.

Praying Scripture

These past several months have focused on praying scripture. We want to continue that practice during the "Live Well" sermon series. As a church family, let's continue to pray scripture for ourselves, our families, and the local and global Hershey Free family.

The prayer focus for this week is 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."*

Below is an example of how to pray the Bible for yourself.

"Most Gracious Father, thank you for your patient and kind love. Thank you, Jesus, for modeling love perfectly for us. Help us follow your example, and love with patience, kindness, humility and graciousness. Keep us from being self-centered in our love and help us desire what is best for others. May we persevere with a love that protects, trusts and hopes. Amen."

DAY ONE

Read 1 Corinthians 13. Answer the following questions focusing on verses 1-3. The Corinthian church was young in its understanding of following Christ and, at times, struggled to live their faith well. They were tempted to pursue gifts as a measure of their maturity. Paul wants them to see that there is something more lasting - love.

- How does 1 Corinthians 12:31 provide insight about the next verses in chapter 13?
- Make a list of the things mentioned in verses 1-3. How do they compare to love?
- What do verses 1-3 say about the value of spiritual gifts? Paraphrase what Paul might have said to communicate the same truth regarding your own spiritual gift(s).

Reflect on the way you love. What keeps you from loving in an excellent way?

Respond by paraphrasing verses 1-3 in your own words, substituting things you are tempted to do for the things that Paul mentions. How do you use those things to substitute for giving authentic love?

DAY TWO

Read 1 Corinthians 13 focusing on verses 4-8a.

- Why does Paul say that love never fails? What is the deeper meaning of that phrase?
- In verses 4 and 5, Paul describes what love is and what it is not. When, and with whom, do you find it difficult to practice what love is? What causes you to live out the qualities that are the opposite of love?

Love is
Patient
Kind
Forgets being wronged

Love is not
Jealous, Boastful
Proud, Rude
Irritable, Self-seeking

- Paul continues in verses 6 and 7 to describe what love is and what it is not. How do these qualities reveal your perspective on loving others?

Love
Rejoices in the truth
Never gives up, Endures
Never loses faith
Always hopeful

Not Love
Rejoices in injustice
Gives up, Does not endure
Loses faith
Loses hope, Selfish

Reflect on the motives you have in loving others. How do selfish desires impact the way you love? Be honest with yourself and be open to how the Holy Spirit is revealing truth to you about the way you love.

Respond this week by intentionally practicing the qualities mentioned by Paul in your relationships. Pray for the Spirit's strength to love this way, not because you are trying harder.

DAY THREE

Read 1 Corinthians 13, focusing on verses 8b-13.

- Why does Paul write that the spiritual gifts of tongues and prophecies will cease? What does he mean by the phrase, *“when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.”*? How do these phrases connect to the way we love?
- Why does Paul compare the way a child functions with the way an adult function? How does this comparison correlate to the way we love others?
- Paul summarizes this passage by saying three things remain: faith, hope, and love. Why do you think he states that the greatest of the three is love?

Reflect on what it means to *“know fully, even as I am fully known.”* What does it mean to you to realize that God knows you fully?

Respond by applying the phrase of to *“know fully, even as I am fully known”* to your earthly relationships. With whom do you share openly and vulnerably? Who shares their lives with you in a similar way? Practice openness in your relationships (with people you trust) and invite others to respond to you in the same way.

SMALL GROUP & FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the habits, both positive and negative, that you developed during COVID.
2. How does isolation lead to separation from one another?
3. What is the easiest part of loving people in the way described in 1 Corinthians 13? What is the hardest part for you?
4. How have people helped carry your “backpack” during difficult times? How have you helped carry someone else’s “backpack” when they were going through a struggle?
5. George mentioned that “isolation heightens our limitations.” Discuss this idea.
6. Why is it important to share life with one another? How does spending time in community help you grow as a disciple of Jesus?