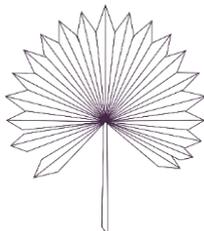


# LOVE<sup>IN</sup> ACTION

## Five-Day Study



For Coordinators, Mentors, Discussion Leaders, and all  
MOPS Team Leaders

The **All For Love** theme begins by understanding that love isn't something fluffy or ethereal. Love is a verb and requires action.

Our Five-Day Study is designed just for leaders. Study it on your own and then discuss it with your team. Do this first, even before you pick out your favourite graphic, reserve your room for next year, or look through our meeting plans. At the end of your study, you will have a better understanding of what it looks like for you to embrace the transformative power of love, and you will be ready to help others discover what it looks like for them.

=====

In these small moments is where your legacy is born.

# DAY 1: LOVE IS A VERB

Many people know 1 Corinthians 13 as the “love chapter”, but to fully understand 1 Corinthians 13, we must start in 1 Corinthians 12.

**Read 1 Corinthians 12 and 13.** (Read it aloud. It's beautiful.)

Around 54AD, the Apostle Paul wrote an eye-opening letter to the church in Corinth. He sent it to address problems in the church and answer questions the church leaders had about hot topics that are still being asked in the church today. Questions like: How do we deal with a sex-obsessed culture? When is divorce justified? How do we address people spreading rumours?

In chapter 12, the Corinthians were busy comparing their contributions to the church and judging each other's value based on each other's gifts. Paul admonished the Corinthians that every part of the body is important and emphasised the need for unity in the church. Paul lists the gifts and encourages believers to give their best. He ends chapter 12 with this: *And I will show you a still more excellent way.*

**Based on what you've read in these two chapters, what is the more excellent way?**

Paul introduces his own hot topic for the church: As excellent as the gifts are, love is better. I may develop and use my gift to the full and God may still bless others with my service, but if I don't love people, the value of my gift is diminished.

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 again.** The Hebrew word for *gong* describes metal made of brass or copper mixed with tin – normally shaped as a drum that yields a hollow, echoing noise. The non-believers in Corinth were steeped in pagan religions and rituals. The people danced wildly under the influence of drugs and alcohol while pagan priests beat their metal drums louder and faster to increase the frenzy. When Paul compared the unloving spirit to a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal, the Corinthians could relate. They knew exactly what this empty worship sounded like because they heard the clamouring of it all day long.

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 again.** Paul tells the people of Corinth, and us, that it is possible to be doing all the right things, but if our actions are void of love, those things lose their power. One interesting thing to note is that in the original Greek, most of Paul's descriptions of love in practice are verbs. The noun *love* is a great word. It feels ethereal and conjures up all the good emotions. But Paul isn't writing about lofty concepts or how love feels. The kind of love he is describing is not just talk, it is action. This kind of love is hard to imagine – because it is perfect, and we are not.

## Jesus' Love in Action

The best way to understand each of these attributes is to see how they were lived out in the life of Jesus. Take each attribute and give an example of how Jesus lived it out.

**Love is patient.** It is slow to anger. It navigates others' imperfections and faults by giving them time to change. It provides space for others to remedy their mistakes without condemnation.

**Jesus is patient:**

**Love is kind.** Having a Greek root meaning *useful*, kindness strives to show love through being helpful in practical ways. Kindness motivates others toward positive change.

**Jesus is kind:**

**Love does not envy or boast.** Love does not desire what others have. It does not try to impress others by bragging or exaggerating. Love genuinely celebrates the success of others.

**Jesus does not envy or boast:**

**Love is not arrogant or rude.** It does not needlessly offend. It is tactful, sensitive to others' feelings, and is careful to communicate in ways others can hear. Love has good EQ (Emotional Quotient).

**Jesus is not arrogant or rude:**

**Love does not insist on its own way.** Love does not demand that it is always right. It is not selfish. It considers others' ideas and has a teachable spirit.

**Jesus does not insist on his own way:**

**Love is not irritable or resentful.**

It does not have a temper and never makes others feel like they are walking on eggshells. It isn't easily offended. It does not tally others' mistakes or hold grudges. Love forgives.

**Jesus is not irritable or resentful:**

**Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.** If someone you don't like messes up, love doesn't gloat. Love sensitively confronts sin and follows a biblical path of correction. It celebrates honesty, even if it's difficult to hear.

**Jesus does not rejoice in wrongdoings but rejoices with the truth:**

Love bears all things. The word for *bears* is sometimes translated to covers. Love protects. It doesn't gossip or spread information about others. It never uses sarcasm or jokes to put others down. Love defends the character of others.

**Jesus bears all things:**

**Love believes all things.** It is not suspicious. If there is an issue, love doesn't immediately blame the other person. Love believes the other person is innocent until proven guilty.

**Jesus believes all things:**

**Love hopes for all things.** It believes in hope. It isn't pessimistic. Love refuses to take failure as final. It does not ignore reality but trusts that anything is possible with God.

**Jesus hopes for all things:**

**Love endures all things.** It holds up under trial. The Greek word for endures is a military term meaning to sustain the assault of an enemy. Love perseveres.

**Jesus endures all things:**



# DAY 2: UNDERSTANDING WHAT GOD GAVE US

**Read 2 Timothy 1:1-11.** Paul is talking to his disciple, Timothy.

Our focus verse today is 2 Timothy 1:7: *For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

Verse 8 begins with the word *therefore*. *Therefore* is our signal that the author is about to clarify something important, so we should pause and consider what came before in the light of what is coming next.

Because of everything Paul said in the previous verses – because of Timothy's sincere faith (v5), because of the gifts God has given and the task Timothy has been called to (v6), because we don't have a spirit of fear, because we have power, love and self-control (v7) – do not be ashamed of the gospel (v8).

Throughout this letter, we see Paul's sense of urgency about the gospel, the Good News of Jesus. Paul wanted to be sure that Timothy didn't let anything get in the way of sharing the Good News.

Do you feel that same sense of urgency to share the gospel with those around you? If not, what is slowing you down? For many of us, what gets in our way is fear. Paul addresses the notion of fear with Timothy in our focus verse. Let's look at it word by word.

***For God gave*** ... Paul is not talking about things that Timothy was born with or that he earned. What Paul is mentioning are things given by God.

***For God gave us*** ... Paul wasn't talking just to Timothy. He was also talking to himself and to future believers. We have all felt fear and anxiety – things that slow us down and get in our way.

***For God gave us a spirit not of fear*** ... Timothy had a lot to fear. The political and spiritual climate was fraught with danger and hostility, but Paul reminds Timothy, and us, that we shouldn't let that stop us. How often do we hesitate, or avoid saying or doing the right thing, because we are paralysed by fear? We avoid the right thing because of what someone else may think or because we think we might fail. Fear is a normal human emotion, but this kind of fear isn't from God. Keep reading, because God gave us something bigger than fear.

***For God gave us a spirit not of fear but*** ... The word *but* is a contrast word. Here, Paul contrasts what God did *not* give us with what He *did* give us.

*For God gave us a spirit not of fear but **of power** ...* In Greek, the word for power is *dunamis* –which gives us the English word *dynamite*. That is a lot of power! God grants us the power to carry out whatever He calls us to.

*For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power **and love** ...* Without love, we are nothing but a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. In 1 John 4, John says, *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear... We love because he first loved us.* In Greek, this type of love is called *agape*. *Agape* is not emotional or conditional. It is bold, sacrificial and constant. This type of love is illustrated in the life of Jesus, and we are called to give this type of love to others.

*For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love **and self-control** ...* This does not mean that we, as Christians, will never struggle with anything like anxiety, nervousness, or failure. However, it does mean that we should not be slaves to our emotions. John MacArthur said, "God-given discipline allows believers to control every element of their lives, whether positive or negative. It allows them to experience success without becoming proud and to suffer failure without becoming bitter or hopeless. The disciplined life is the divinely ordered life, in which godly wisdom is applied to every situation."

Remember, none of this is innate. It's not born within us; it is given to us by God. We are given **power** to be effective, **love** to have the right attitude toward others, and **self-control** to focus and live every part of our lives in a way that pleases God.

#### **CONSIDER THIS:**

***Do I have a sense of urgency to share the gospel with those around me? If not, what is slowing me down?***

***How has God shown me his power? What has he called me to?***

***When was the last time I showed bold, sacrificial love to someone else?***

***Would I describe myself as self-controlled? If not, how can I adjust my priorities to move closer to that?***

# DAY 3: LEARNING TO LOVE

**Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-13.** What is something that you thought you understood when you were younger but you understand better now?

I was a perfect parent, until I had children. I would watch mothers out in the world and think, "I'll never do THAT. My child will never behave like THAT. My children will never dress like THAT." I vividly remember the day I plodded through the snow to the supermarket with a tantruming three-year-old dressed in cowboy boots, swimming togs, and a batman cape. Boy, did I have a lot to learn.

As we grow up and learn adult lessons, we give up childish things (most of them, anyway). And as we grow, we learn new things about love. We learn that love can be risky, difficult and frustrating. But we also learn what real love is – that it is more than just sharing your fairy floss or letting the new girl in town play Barbies with you (although that's a start, and we would do well to remember that sharing is indeed caring).

1 Corinthians 13:12 says, *Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

Right now, we don't see the whole of life clearly; our knowledge is partial. And because of that, the way we love is partial and imperfect. But this verse is comforting to us, as people who follow Jesus, because it reminds us that even though our knowledge is partial, we are fully known and therefore fully loved.

We are loved by the only one who can love perfectly. He is the only one whose love never fails. While we can't love perfectly, we can still love boldly, in fact, we are commanded to – in what Jesus called the "second most important commandment".

The Jewish religion has hundreds of laws and devout Jews work hard to follow them all. In the book of Matthew, the Jewish leaders were arguing over which commandment, which law, was the most important. In Matthew 22:36-40, a Jewish leader – a lawyer – asked: *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"*

*Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

This was a challenging concept for the Jewish leaders to grasp, primarily because love is harder to measure than their laws about being circumcised or keeping the Sabbath holy. The question became, "How do we fulfil the commandments?" We won't do it perfectly, but if we follow the greatest commandment of loving God with all our heart, soul and mind, we will be a lot closer than if we don't.

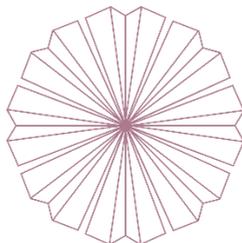
**CONSIDER THIS:**

***What does it mean to love God with all my heart?***

***What does it mean to love God with all my soul?***

***What does it mean to love God with all my mind?***

***What can I do today to love my neighbour?***



# DAY 4: WHERE LEGACY IS BORN

Your legacy is the thing people remember when you leave a place. Whether that is your child's room at bedtime, your home each morning, or this earth. It is the story that your great-great-grandkids will hear about you.

*Let all that you do be done in love. 1 Corinthians 16:14*

In 1 Corinthians, Paul is giving the Corinthian church instructions on how they should act. In 1 Corinthians 16:14 Paul reminds the Corinthians of what the motivation behind their actions should be. Who we are on a consistent basis is how we will be remembered, and who we are on a consistent basis is driven by what is in our heart.

The first time I was asked what I wanted my legacy to be, I had no idea. A legacy felt like something I could think about much later on in life. It felt huge, overwhelming and not entirely necessary to consider. But we all leave a legacy – whether we think about it or not – so we might as well think about it now. Being intentional about what we want to do during our life could change our family for the better. It could help others find a better way to live. It could change the world, or at least our corner of it.

Thinking through your legacy doesn't have to be a grandiose concept, start with what matters to you.

***Make a legacy list. What are some words you'd like others to use to describe you?***

***As a mum:***

***As a woman:***

***As a friend:***

***As a leader:***

Now, put those words into a statement. There are a lot of things we should do, and those are an important part of our legacy, but don't stop there. Think about the things you really want to do.

***What impact do you want to have?***

***What would you need to do in order for that to happen?***

***Think about others that have inspired similar change. What did they do?***

Our legacy is made up of all the moments of our story and it might seem daunting to consider that we are constantly working on our legacy. There are some chapters of our story that we would rather no one know about, but we have to remember that the only one with a perfect story is Jesus. Even though our stories are not perfect, they can still add up to a powerful legacy. Here is the good news – Jesus is our advocate (Hebrews 4:14-16) and God sent the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). The Holy Spirit enables us to live a story and leave a legacy that points to God.

**CONSIDER THIS:**

***What small steps can I take toward leaving the kind of legacy I want – motivated by love and spurred on by the Holy Spirit?***



# DAY 5: POWER, LOVE, AND LEGACY

As we wrap up our study, let's spend some time looking at what else scripture has to say about power, love, and legacy. Look up these verses and write a word or phrase that spurs you to put love into action.

## POWER

Acts 1:8

Philippians 4:13

1 Corinthians 4:20

Ephesians 3:20

1 Corinthians 6:14

2 Peter 1:3

## LOVE

Colossians 3:12-14

Romans 5:8

1 Peter 4:8

1 John 4:16

1 John 4:19

1 John 4:7

## LEGACY

Psalms 78:4

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

2 Timothy 2:2

Matthew 6:20-21

2 Timothy 1:5-6

Joshua 24:15

**LOVE is Our Logo.**

*As I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:34-35*

Love is how other people know we follow Jesus.

Write a prayer, committing yourself to wear LOVE as your logo this year, no matter what.

