



Leader's Guide

September 11 & 12: Undeserved Love

Series Overview

We are in this world to make an impact and love others. If we are going to truly impact our world, we must display the life of Christ in our own lives. *Galatians 5:22-23* says ²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* This kind of life will make a difference in our world and in the lives of the people around us.



Take a second look ... visit cpcweb.org to watch sermon or get the highlights here!

Sermon Highlights

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, ¹If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If 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 have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

1. Remove the obstacles!

Notice what love is *not* in *1 Corinthians 13:4-6, ⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*

Jesus removes obstacles from our lives but then He wants to use our love to impact others by being His hands and His feet ... by loving others the way Jesus would, if He were in our place.

2. Offer unconditional love!

1 Corinthians 13:7-8, ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸Love never fails.

The word "always" reminds us that this is a love with no strings attached. We exist to impact others with the love of Jesus Christ. Inside these walls, outside these walls—we do not deserve to wear the name of Christ and be called Christians unless we love the undeserving like He loves us!

3. Make the first move!

Romans 5:8, But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Corinthians 13:13, And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

How will you impact others with Jesus' love?

On laziness...

- I want you to be concerned about your next door neighbor. Do you know your next door neighbor? –Mother Teresa
- Your neighbor is the man who needs you. –Elbert Hubbard
- *The entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself.* –Galatians 5:14
- Love means loving the unlovable—or it is no virtue at all. –G. K. Chesterton



Take it home ... Practical Applications

Consider the people you encounter in your life and ask yourself how you can show the love of Christ to them. Make a decision to actively display God's love to someone who is hurting or undeserving.



Take it to the source ... Bible Study

Introductory question: What is your favorite movie with a redemptive love theme? What strikes you about that story?

Opening Thought

Romantic movies often center around the idea of unconditional love. One person in the relationship just will not give up on the other person, and the result is some sort of redemption in a life, a situation or a tragedy. Use this time to talk about your favorite movie and begin thinking about how love can affect even the most difficult situation.

Read *1 Corinthians 13:1-3*.

1. What are your thoughts about the three spiritual gifts or actions that Paul lists here? Would you consider them as valuable? Why?
2. Why does love play such an important role in each of these actions?
3. Have you ever met a "spiritual" person who practiced their Christianity without love? What effect did that person have on you?
4. Why is it necessary to have God's Spirit if we are going to truly show the love of Christ to others?

Key Point

Love must be the foundation of our spiritual life and activity. There are many people who put a big emphasis on the outer actions or spiritual gifts, but their love for others is not the driving force in all that they do. Paul says that without love it's all just a bunch of noise and empty action. We can only love others as God loves us and gives us the ability to love as He loves.

Read *1 Corinthians 13:4-6*.

1. Are there any obstacles in your life that keep you from loving others? Which of the characteristics in this list do you need to work on?
2. What practical things can you do to remove those things that hinder your spiritual growth and your effect on others?
3. How can these characteristics reflect God's love to our society that finds it harder and harder to find true love?
4. How can your small group work together to help each other develop characteristics that display God's love to each other and to the world around them?

Key Point

Love isn't something that just happens. We have to make a conscious decision to work at it. That may mean changing habits. It may mean getting the focus off of ourselves. It may mean changing our attitude toward God and toward others. We have to make a decision to display the love of God to the world around us. It isn't easy, but it will have eternal effects.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:7-8a, 1 Peter 4:8 and John 13:34-35.

1. What does the word “always” say to you? Does this describe your love for other people? Why or why not?
2. What keeps you from being a person that loves “always”? What can you do to make your love for others more consistent?
3. Consider the four words—*protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres*—in 1 Corinthians 13:7. What does each word mean to you in the context of a loving relationship? How can you live out those action words to those around you?
4. Why is *now* such an important time to actively show the love of God instead of just talking about it? How can that love make a difference to our community and to our world?

Key Point

Something that our world is missing is consistency. Many people have no one they can count on or trust to be there in every situation. The four words used in 1 Corinthians 13:7 all have long-term implications. Really loving somebody means we are in this for the long haul. This long-term commitment will speak loudly to a world that feels like people are always looking for something or someone new to follow. In many cases, the action and commitment will be more powerful than just a lot of words.



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All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.

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