

Close Encounters

1 Corinthians 13

Love

If I speak in the tongue of men and of angels, but have not 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 have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, 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.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

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

Getting Started:

1. When was the first time you thought you might be in love? How did you know?
2. What does it feel like when you are around people that love you? What does it feel like when you are around those that may say they do, but their actions say otherwise?
3. What does a loving church look like?

Going Deeper:

I Corinthians 13 is the most quoted piece of writing on the subject of love. It was written to a group of people that wanted to be loving, but lived in a society that sent the wrong message about what love looks like. Consequently they had to be consistently re-reminded about what biblical love looks like.

1. Read I Corinthians 13. What does love do? What does love not do? What attributes of love are the most difficult for you? Why?
2. Read I John 3:10. What does our lack of love for one another put us in jeopardy of? Does this seem extreme?
3. Read Leviticus 19:18. Do you find it hard not to keep score, stay upset, seek revenge? How can you change your heart in these situations? Is there someone in particular you have a hard time loving?
4. How are you doing loving your family? What does that look like? How are you doing loving your neighbors? What does that look like? How are you doing loving at The Oaks? What does that look like?

Acting Out:

1. Make a list of 3 people you are going to focus on loving more intentionally this week.
2. Make a list of 3 ways you are going to love people in general better this week (i.e. smiling, introducing yourself, driving nicer).
3. Discuss one way your group can love better at The Oaks this week.

Further Reading This Week:

I John 1
I John 2
I John 3
I John 4
I John 5