

# STAND FIRM & ACT LIKE MEN

## Week 6: Love Is

Men's Group Reading Summary | Church For The ONE

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

### Overview

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Week 6 tackles the final imperative of the series — and the one that brings everything else into focus: let all that you do be done in love. Every week has been building toward this. Be watchful. Stand firm. Be strong. Be a godly husband. Now the question is: what energy powers all of it? The answer is love — and not love as a feeling, but love as a defined, deliberate, costly way of living.

The message opens with a disarming confession: this is the imperative the pastor struggles with most. Love is easy to affirm and hard to do. Most men feel loving because they do not feel hateful — but Paul is not talking about emotion. He is talking about action. 1 Corinthians 13 holds up a mirror and asks a harder question: are you actually being these things?

The teaching moves through three sections of 1 Corinthians 13: the necessity and primacy of love (verses 1-3), the definition of love (verses 4-7), and the permanence of love (verses 8-13). Each section lands with direct application — not to an abstract ideal, but to the real relationships in every man's life.

### Part 1: Without Love, Everything Else Is Noise

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Paul opens 1 Corinthians 13 with a series of escalating hypotheticals designed to make one point as forcefully as possible: love is not one quality among many. It is the quality that gives every other quality its value.

You could speak with the eloquence of angels — but without love, you are just making noise. You could have prophetic power, understanding of all mysteries, faith enough to move mountains — but without love, you are nothing. You could give everything you own to the poor, even sacrifice your body — but without love, it profits you nothing.

**Without love, you are an absolute failure — according to the Bible.**

This is not the world's metric. The world measures men by what they produce, what they earn, what they build, what they achieve. God measures men by whether they love. The question is not just whether you feel love — it is whether love defines you.

The application is personal and pointed: love is the oil to the engine of the family called the church. Remove it and everything that looked like it was running — the activity, the ministry, the leadership — seizes up. Love is not optional maintenance. It is what makes everything else work.

## **Part 2: Love Is — Holding Up the Mirror**

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In verse 4, Paul does something unusual. He does not describe love with feelings or tell a story about love. He defines it with a list of concrete behaviors — things love is and things love is not. The instruction for the room: hold up the mirror. Not to someone else. To yourself. In all of your relationships — not just your wife and kids, but every relationship you carry.

### **Love is patient.**

Patience is the passive reaction of love in tough circumstances with tough people. The Greek word literally means to take a punch — and not retaliate. It is the ability to absorb difficulty, disappointment, and provocation without escalating. The question is not whether you are patient when things are easy. It is whether you can take the hit and stay steady.

### **Love is kind.**

If patience is the passive reaction of love, kindness is the active expression of it. Patience absorbs. Kindness reaches toward. Kindness is the willful decision to move toward someone with goodness — not because they earned it, not because the mood is right, but because love chooses it. It is not a feeling that happens to you. It is a decision you make.

### **Love does not envy or boast.**

Envy is one of the most corrosive forces in a man's life — and social media has turned it into a 24-hour feed. The direct question from the message: are you jealous of the people you say you love? Because you cannot simultaneously compare yourself to and be jealous of people you genuinely love. Envy and love cannot occupy the same space. And boasting — positioning yourself above others — is the same coin, opposite side.

### **Love is not arrogant or rude.**

Arrogance believes I am better than you. Rudeness treats people that way. And here is the impossibility: you cannot fix your eyes on Jesus — the author and perfecter of faith — and simultaneously look down your nose at another person. The gaze that sees Jesus clearly cannot look down on anyone He died for.

## Love does not insist on its own way.

Does everything have to be your way? This question hits men at the level of control — in the home, in the workplace, in friendships. Insisting on your own way is not leadership. It is self-preservation dressed up as conviction. Love creates space for others to be heard, honored, and considered.

## Love is not irritable or resentful.

The NIV renders this as love is not easily angered. The question for every man in the room: when you walk in the door, does peace walk in with you — or does everyone tense up a little because they have to read the room to figure out what they are getting today? Irritability is a leak in the hull. Over time, it sinks everything around it.

## Love keeps no record of wrongs.

Do you keep score? Most men do — whether they admit it or not. A running tally of offenses, disappointments, and unmet expectations. Love does not operate with a scorecard. It is not selective amnesia. It is a deliberate choice to lay down the ledger and refuse to let old wounds set the terms for today's relationship.

## Love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things.

This is the closing crescendo of Paul's definition, and the message draws a straight line to marriage: love never quits. Never. Husbands — never stop fighting for the heart of your wife. Never stop pursuing her. Never stop fighting for your kids. The Bible says Christ is the groom and the church is the bride. Think about who the difficult one is in that relationship. And yet He pursues relentlessly. That is the standard — not quitting when it gets hard, but enduring because love does not have a finish line.

## Part 3: The Three Postures — Passivity, Aggression, and Love

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The message draws a sharp and clarifying distinction between the two broken ways men typically express — or withhold — their strength, and the one way God intends:

**Passivity is holding back your strength and manhood for self-preservation.**

Aggression is expressing your strength and manhood for self-gratification.

Love is leveraging what God has given you — your strength — for others, through self-sacrifice.

Boys go and take. Men lay down their lives and serve. Both passivity and aggression are immature — they are both ultimately about self. Love is the only posture that is genuinely other-centered. And 1 Corinthians 13 is not just a description of what we are supposed to do. It is a description of how God has already acted toward us.

## Part 4: The Source — God Is Love

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Here is the move that unlocks everything: 1 Corinthians 13 is not a checklist to perform. It is a portrait of God. God is patient and kind. He has never been in a hurry with you. He does not envy or boast. He is not arrogant or rude. He does not insist on His own way — the God of the universe stepped off His throne and humbled Himself all the way to the cross. He is not irritable or resentful. He does not keep a record of your wrongs. He bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things for you.

*"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." — 1 John 4:7-8*

And then the most important clarification of the entire series: you do not have the capacity to love the people in your life out of your own reserves. Passion, feelings, attraction — those are real, but they are not love. Love originates from God. The only reason any man can love another person well is because God loved him first.

### **Propitiation: a payment that fully satisfies.**

When Jesus said "It is finished" on the cross, He made a payment that completely satisfied the debt we owed God. Which means this: if you are in Christ Jesus, God cannot be dissatisfied with you. You are beloved — not because you earned it, but because He placed His love on you. And because He loves you, you can love the people He has placed in your life.

This is the engine of the whole series. A watchful man, a man who stands firm, a strong man, a godly husband, a man who loves well — none of it is manufactured from willpower or discipline alone. It flows from a man who knows he is loved by God and is learning, day by day, to love from that place outward.

## Discussion Questions

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### Opening Up

1. The message opens with a confession: love is the imperative the pastor struggles with most. Which of the attributes in 1 Corinthians 13 — patient, kind, not easily angered, keeps no record — is the one where you feel the biggest gap between what you know and how you actually live?
2. The passage says without love, even great gifts and sacrifices amount to nothing. When you evaluate yourself on how loving you are, what is your honest grade — and what is that evaluation based on?

## Going Deeper

3. Patience in Greek literally means "to take a punch." Think about the person in your life who is hardest to be patient with. What does it look like in practice to absorb difficulty from that person without retaliating or withdrawing?
4. The message asks: when you walk in the door, does peace walk in with you — or does everyone tense up a little to read the room? Be honest. What does the atmosphere of your home or your workspace feel like when you show up?
5. Keeping score is described as one of love's biggest enemies. Is there a relationship in your life where you are carrying an unofficial scorecard — a running tally of wrongs, disappointments, or unmet expectations? What would it cost you to put that scorecard down?

## Getting Honest

6. The three postures — passivity (holding back strength for self-preservation), aggression (using strength for self-gratification), and love (leveraging strength for others through self-sacrifice) — which posture do you default to most? What does that default reveal about where your security is rooted?
7. The message ends with this: you cannot love people well out of your own reserves. You love because He first loved you. How does knowing you are fully loved by God — not because you earned it, but because He placed His love on you — change the way you approach the people in your life? Where does that feel real to you, and where does it still feel theoretical?

### **This Week's Challenge**

Pick the one attribute of love from 1 Corinthians 13 where you know you fall shortest. Name it out loud — to God, and to at least one man in this room. Then spend this week making one deliberate, specific choice to practice that attribute. Not a feeling. A decision. Love is not what you feel — it is what you do.