

LESSON 54

Love

1 CORINTHIANS 12:30 – 14:1



BIBLE TRUTH

LOVE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT GIFT OF ALL

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Corinthians 12:30—14:1 from the Scriptures or read story 132, “Love,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Love List

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pens or pencils
- ✓ prize for the winner

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Memorize the Characteristics of Love

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Bibles for the class
- ✓ paper and pens or pencils

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

What Is Love?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- ✓ Bibles for the class

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Write a Definition of Love

SUPPLIES

- ✓ paper and pens or pencils

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Love is required—The Corinthians were using the spiritual gifts to proudly show off. At the same time they were sinning by being immoral and by suing one another in court (1 Corinthians 5—6). Although Paul encouraged the Corinthians to pursue spiritual gifts, he interrupted his discussion of the gifts to teach the greatest gift of all—love. He emphasized that love should guide how we use all our gifts. Even if you were the most gifted person in the world, without love you would be only a “noisy gong” (1 Corinthians 13:1). Love is the most important gift of all and the one gift that is required no matter what other gifts God has given you.

Love is more than words—Love is cheapened today by the way we use it to describe how we feel about things we enjoy. We say we love pizza, candy, the beach, and a million other things. But Paul’s description of love here in 1 Corinthians is not about feelings; it is about sacrifice and service and originates in Christ’s sacrifice on the cross (1 John 4:10). While love is a God glorifying emotion, Paul doesn’t say love is wonderful, delightful, or intense. Love demonstrates a godly action toward another that requires sacrifice on our part. God is the one who defined love as sacrifice by giving up his one and only Son.

Love never ends—Paul tells us that all the other gifts are going to end, but the one gift that will never end is love. Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge will pass away, but love, he says, “never ends” (1 Corinthians 13:8). In heaven, sin will be destroyed, and we will all live in perfect love toward one another and toward God. The theme of heaven is love. Perhaps there is no greater earthly expression of the love of Christ than when someone sacrifices for another. When we do, whether we realize it or not, we are honoring the sacrifice of Jesus, the author of love.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

The Perfect

Some point to 1 Corinthians 13:10 and suggest that the “perfect” is the Bible as we know it today. But this passage seems to make the most sense when we see the perfect as Christ. This is because we do not yet see God face to face, nor do we know fully (1 Corinthians 13:12). When Jesus, the perfect, returns, we will see God face to face. The gifts will no longer be needed for we will have the person all the gifts are meant to point to—our Savior. Who will need a prophetic word when the incarnate Word stands before us? When we understand Jesus to be the perfect then our hope for his return is ignited within us.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today’s Bible story fit into God’s greater plan of redemption?

Quotations from 1 Corinthians 13 might sound wonderful at a wedding ceremony, but without an understanding of the gospel and its connection to Paul’s words, the chapter cannot be fully appreciated. The gospel defines and gives meaning to love. The Bible tells us, “God is love.” And the apostle John in 1 John 4:8–11 describes God’s demonstration of love as the death of his Son on the cross. John goes on to explain that the cross should be our reason for loving one another.

When we demonstrate the kind of sacrificial love Paul describes, we point to the ultimate sacrifice and demonstration of love: “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation [atoning sacrifice] for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Corinthians 12:30—14:1 from the Scriptures or read story 132, “Love,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Love List

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pens or pencils
- ✓ prize for the winner

Pass out the paper and pencils and ask the students to make a list of all the things they can think of that they love. Give them one minute and tell them the person with the most items on their list is the winner. After the minute have the students count up their items. Then award the prize.

Next, give them three minutes to rate the items on their list, assigning the number one to the item they love the most. Then draw them out about what they listed in their top three and why. The goal is to help them see just how many things we say we love. Some might put their favorite food first, while others may have put their mom or dad first. Come to a classroom consensus as to what should be first on their list and why.

Then move on to teach the lesson on love. After the lesson come back to their lists and ask the class if anyone would change their number one item and, if so, why.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESON 2 15 MIN

Memorize the Characteristics of Love

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Bibles for the class
- ✓ paper and pens or pencils

Give the students one minute to memorize the list of characteristics of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4–8. Then hand out a piece of paper to each person and ask them to list as many as they can remember. Have the children trade papers and grade each other, placing a score at the top of the paper, one point for each correct characteristic named. Then total the scores.

Announce the winner. Then use this exercise as an introduction to talk about the different characteristics of love and what they have in common. Help the class understand how each involves sacrifice and not feelings. Then explain to them how each characteristic points to the cross.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

What Is Love?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- ✓ Bibles for the class

Draw a picture that depicts one of the characteristics of love or make a design in the shape of a heart using the different words and phrases that describe love in 1 Corinthians 13.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Write a Definition of Love

SUPPLIES

- ✓ paper and pens or pencils

Distribute paper and pens or pencils and have the class write their own definitions for love. When they finish, have them turn their papers over. Then have them look up the following three passages, read them, and come up with a new definition for love: 1 Corinthians 13:4–8; 1 John 4:10; 2 John 1:6.

Ask the class how their definition of love changed after reading the Scriptures. Ask them to explain how the gospel defines true love. Invite volunteers to share both their first and second definitions of love.

Discuss how this exercise might change the way they look at 1 Corinthians 13 and even how they might use the word “love” in the future.