

Maximum Impact

by Wayne Mack

Living and loving for God's glory

Living Hope Baptist Church

Homegroup Discussion Questions

Preface To These Discussion Questions

The book used for this discussion guide is:

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What if I do not get the right answer?

These questions are not simply to be completed by finding the right answer. Instead they are written in a variety of ways to stimulate not only an increase in Biblical knowledge, but also in Biblical thinking, and thereby an increase in Biblical living.

What if I cannot get the book?

Although reading the relevant chapter in the book is highly encouraged, these questions are formulated in such a way that the reading of the book is not required to complete the questions and benefit from the discussions with the other saints.

Stop! Do Not Continue Just Yet

You are about to present a very familiar passage of Scripture to your soul. Don't let familiarity breed contempt in your preparation for this study. Before we get to the chapters in the book, let's do some soul preparation.

First, let's see where you are at regarding making *Maximum Impact* on others in your life. If you could have an unlimited supply of one thing, what would you ask for to make the biggest possible impact on this world?

Next, before you continue, what will your attitude be throughout this study?

And third, as you read this book, read it all. Most chapters have a little introduction reminding you of the big picture, then a detailed list of ways to think about the specific focus of that chapter. You must even read the questions at the end of every chapter, for they are part of the method of teaching used by a seasoned Biblical Counsellor like Wayne Mack. This workbook has different questions for the sake of group discussion, but please, learn from the questions in the book too.

Introduction

What is the emphasis in each of the following passages regarding bearing spiritual fruit?

Matthew 7:17-20

Matthew 13:18-23

John 15:8, 16

Romans 7:4

Colossians 1:6

From the following verses, how would you describe and summarise the fruit that we are to bear?

Galatians 5:22-23

Philippians 1:11

Romans 6:22

Ephesians 5:9

Luke 3:8

Hebrews 13:15

... the different kinds of fruit we offer up to Christ with our lives cannot be easily separated ... we will never be fruitful in making a spiritual impact on others or in bringing glory to God if we are not growing in personal holiness ... you can't have on kind of biblical fruit without the others. (p. xv)

Chapter 1 The “Over the Top” Way to Make an Impact: (1)

According to 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:3, what is the most important factor for maximum impact in your life and ministry to one another?

According to those same verses, what are not the maximum-impact factors? What else could you add to the list of commonly-believed but false ideas of how to make the most of your relationships?

To familiarise yourself with this passage that is the foundation of this study, write out your own copy of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. Place it somewhere where you will read it often.

According to 1 Corinthians 1:2-7, what kind of people was chapter 13 written to?

Scanning through 1 Corinthians, you quickly realise that having extraordinary spiritual gifts does not mean that one is godly. The ordinary Christian virtues must also be sought. How does Matthew 7:22-23 warn us against loving the extraordinary but neglecting the ordinary?

Ephesians 4:11-16 is also about spiritual gifts. According to verse 15, what is the method that will produce maximum impact?

Ah! How important is love to the cause of Christ! p.10

Chapter 2 The “Over the Top” Way to Make an Impact: (2)

1 Corinthians 12 and 14 are about extraordinary spiritual gifts. Chapter 13 nests the practise of love in the middle of it all. What should we pursue more, love or spiritual gifts? Why?

When it comes to this matter of bearing fruit, it is far more important for us to have lives permeated and motivated by real love than it is to have the fit of prophecy and understand all mysteries and possess al knowledge. p.15

According to Ephesians 4:15, how must we tell one another the great Truth of Scripture?

Make a list of all the gifts, sufferings, and generosity of the Apostle Paul.

What impact on Christians and church would the Apostle Paul have if all the above were used for ministry, but without love?

What are your spiritual gifts that you can easily practise, perhaps even have practised, without love (cf. 1 Cor 13:4-7 for a list of things that make a good act of service loveless)?

May the Lord helps us first to get our love for one another right before we work out the spiritual gifts the Spirit gives us!

Chapter 3 Love's First Characteristic

Love is patient

The Greek word for "patience" combines the word "long" with the concept of "suffering". How does this enrich your understanding of love?

How does 1 Corinthians 6:7 complement this characteristic of love?

Having a love that is patient means that a person will receive injuries with a soul filled with meekness, quietness, and goodness. p. 34 from Jonathan Edwards

How did Paul demonstrate a patient love according to 2 Corinthians 6:3-6?

How did Paul demonstrate a patient love according to 1 Corinthians 4:11-13?

Consider the long suffering love of God to you. What are ways in which God endures very long with your sin against Him?

In what ways have you experienced this kind of love from another?

In what relationships should you be practising more patient, long-suffering, love?

Chapter 4 Real Love and Kindness are Inseparable

When I think of heave, I think of it as a world of love. p. 44 quoting Jonathan Edwards

What impact do you think we would have on the world if every Christian always showed kindness to everyone?

Love is kind

What practical ways of “love is kind” are mentioned in Luke 6:35?

What kinds of sins would we be less prone to commit if we were more kind (See Ephesians 4:31-32)?

Kindness may be defined as “love in working clothes”, p. 47

Ponder for a moment whether or not it is possible to be kind of heart without performing acts of kindness. What does a lack of kind acts say about our hearts?

What are some memorable acts of kindness you’ve received from someone you didn’t really deserve to receive kindness?

What ways can you think of to show more kindness at home, church, and work this week?

Chapter 5 Kindness Visualised

What area of a wife and mother's life can be characterised by kindness according to Proverbs 31:26?

What is the opposite of kindness that husbands in particular need to be aware of according to Colossians 3:19?

"While we live in this world, we must expect to meet with some men of very evil properties ... but any or all of these bad qualities should not hinder our kindness, nor prevent our doing good as we have opportunity. On this very account, we should be rather diligent to benefit them." pp. 57-58 quoting Jonathan Edwards

What words are used in Galatians 6:10 to describe the kindness of true love?

You can't love without being kind. Kindness is to love what heat is to fire. p. 60

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:15, what is the definition, opposite, and recipients of "love is kind"?

What should we expect from those to whom we show loving kindness (see Luke 6:35)?

Take a moment, and pray Philippians 1:9 for your church.

Chapter 6 Envy and Jealousy Are Not Friends

Love does not envy

*Envy is a disposition of dissatisfaction or dislike over the thought
that someone seems to be superior to us*

Read the following accounts of envy and jealousy, and write down who the unloving party is, what the reason for the envy is, and what the outcome of it was for all the parties involved.

Genesis 4:3-12

Genesis 16:1-6

Gen 37:3-5, 8, 11, 20, 26-27

1 Samuel 18:5-16

*It is very common that men cannot bear a rival. They love to be singular and alone in
their eminence and advancement. p.69 quoting Jonathan Edwards*

A number of times in Scripture one can find a list of sinful things. Identify the sin that is on all the following lists: Mark 7:21-23, Romans 1:29-31, Galatians 5:19-21. What does this tell us about that sin?

jealousy or envy is serious and destructive p. 73

Chapter 7 The Flip Side of Envy and Jealousy

A person who has God's kind of love will be a person who has an attitude of contentment or satisfaction with what he has. p. 78

What, according to Philippians 4:11-12 is the starting point to be less envying and more loving as you seek to have a maximum impact on those around you?

A loving person will have an attitude of rejoicing and thanksgiving when others succeed and prosper in any legitimate God-honouring venture. p. 82

How does 1 Corinthians 12:25-26 help us overcome the hatred of envy and jealousy?

What can we learn about Christian love from the example of Timothy in Philippians 2:20?

How does the example of Paul help us not to be envious and jealous when our circumstances are less than ideal (Philippians 1:14-18)?

If we really love someone as we love ourselves, we will respond the same way when others are blessed as we do when we are!

How often are you bothered by the well-being of others or are you secretly happy for the misfortune of others? *Never* *Occasionally* *Often* *Always*

How can you in those moments practise true Christian love for them?

Chapter 8 Lovers Don't Brag

Love does not show off.

When we are envious or jealous, we tend to put others down;

when we boast, we tend to build ourselves up. p. 90

Both are not love.

What was the sin that brought about the single biggest split among people in the history of the world (Genesis 11:4)?

From the following examples, what is the implied attitude to others when boasting?

Luke 18:11-12

Matthew 6:1, 16

Matthew 23:5-7

What does the example of Paul teach us regarding our rightful place in this life (2 Corinthians 4:5)?

Instead of sharing a personal story for the purpose of making self appear in a good light (boasting), what should be the purpose of the stories we tell (Ephesians 4:29 and 2 Corinthians 10:13)?

When in a conversation, identify what your thoughts are about yourself and the other person. How can you make the conversation a more loving experience for the other and a less boastful experience for yourself?

Chapter 9 Talk Is Cheap ... or Is It?

love is not arrogant or proud

1 Corinthians 4 is a chapter about arrogant individuals. What are the evidences of arrogance mentioned?

Verse 3

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verses 9-13

Verse 14

Verse 15-17

Verse 18

According to the three questions in 1 Corinthians 4:7, how can we replace our arrogance with love?

In what areas of life are we most prone to display arrogance instead of love (1 Corinthians 8:1, 11-12)?

How does Ephesians 4:15 and 2 Timothy 2:24-25 help us balance knowledge with love?

Chapter 10 Rudeness Is Out; Courtesy Is In

Love does not behave rudely, shamefully, or inconsiderately.

What are some expressions of the shameful actions in Romans 1:28-32 that love will never practise?

The principle here has to do with poor manners, with acting rudely. It does not care enough for those around it to act becomingly or politely. It cares nothing for their feelings or sensitivities. The loveless person is careless, overbearing and often crude.

p. 127 quoting John MacArthur

What is the loving replacement for rudeness according to 1 Corinthians 12:32-33 and Romans 15:1-2?

According to Romans 12:17, how can you respond in love to those who are rude to you?

According to Colossians 4:5-6, what two areas of our life should we investigate for rudeness so we can be more loving?

What is the general principle in Romans 12:10 that will help us be more courteous to others?

Chapter 11 The “Seeking Not Its Own” Lifestyle

Love does not seek its own..

How can you from the principle in Philippians 2:3-4 write your own definition for “not seeking its own” kind of love?

What is the very real “Diotrephes Disaster” of being strongly self-willed according to 3 John 9-10?

What should we who have strong convictions about being right focus on when others don’t share our strength of conviction (Romans 15:1-2)?

Whose will should you seek even at great cost to your own will (Matthew 26:39)? Who is the standard in this regard?

What truth should we learn to meditate on as we are on our way to be with other people (Matthew 20:26-28)?

Think of things you can change to be less “seeking your own” and more loving (use the list on p. 154 to spark some introspection and suggestions).

When our lives drip with this kind of love, we will be fruitful in impacting others.

Adapted from p.161

Chapter 12 Being Irritable Is More than a Trait – It’s a Sin!

Love is not easily angered and irritable.

Or, love doesn't fly off the handle; love doesn't have a fit. p. 167

Look up Proverbs 12:16 in the ESV and NIV to get the nuance of what this verse is about. How do the two lines of this Proverb help you fix the sin of being easily irritated?

How are you sometimes the fool in Proverbs 29:9 and 11?

Put in your own words the four descriptions in Titus 3:2 that would be true of a “love is not provoked” kind of person?

Consider the reputation of the people Titus was written to in Titus 1:12. Compare the instruction of Titus 1:13 and Titus 3:2 to see God’s way of making a maximum *impact* on people like that. How does this help you deal with difficult people?

Being irritable or easily annoyed is not just a harmless weakness. It is a Sin! p. 175

Chapter 13 Lovers Don't Keep Records

Love is not resentful or bitter, and does not maintain an account of wrongs suffered.

What are the different kinds of “wrong” or “evil” things that loving people don't keep record of?

What are all the wrong ways to respond to a wrong done to you?

Romans 12:17

Romans 12:19

Ephesians 4:26

Ephesians 4:31

Psalm 37:1

How does Hebrews 12:15 warn you about the loveless act of being resentful or bitter?

Write out a prayer for yourself, or that you can pass along to a brother or sister in Christ who is frequently tempted by bitterness.

Chapter 14 The Kind of Love That Rejoices in Truth—Not Wrongdoing

Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

According to Proverbs 2:6-15, what is God's will for us regarding those who enjoy doing evil things?

Wrongdoing, or unrighteousness, is any action, any speech, any thought, any desire, or any event that is not right in the sight of God. p. 199

How does Romans 12:9 restate the truth about what true Christian love will rejoice in?

Love will never make wrong appear to be right. p. 201 quoting John MacArthur

How does 2 John 4 and 3 John 3-6 help us broaden our understand of "truth" as used in 1 Corinthians 13:6?

How does 2 Corinthians 9:8 and 1 Thessalonians 3:11-2 encourage us with becoming more loving in our dealings with others?

Chapter 15 Love Provides a Strong Roof

Love bears all things by covering what doesn't need to be exposed.

Love bears all things can mean patient endurance, but since that is explicitly mentioned later in 1 Corinthians 13:7, there is another option for what “love bears all things” can mean. How does 1 Peter 4:8 help you understand “love bears all things”?

What are the opposites of “love bears all things” according to Proverbs 17:9 and 10:12?

How can we show such love even in times of necessary rebuke and correction (See Matt 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1-2)?

How does 2 Timothy 2:24-26 help perfect a loving way of dealing with the sins of others?

*There is a perverse pleasure in exposing someone's faults and failures ...
Love has no part in that. It does not expose or exploit, gloat or condemn.
pp. 225-226 quoting John MacArthur.*

How will Proverbs 18:13 and 19:11 help us be slower in pointing out the wrongs of others?

*On issues that are merely a matter of preference rather than biblical principle,
we will not insist that the person conforms to our preferences. p. 229*

Chapter 16 Biblical Lovers Are not Gullible

Love believes all things and is easily persuaded.

What does “love believes all things” NOT mean according to the rest of Scripture?

Proverbs 14:15

Proverbs 22:13

Proverbs 28:26

1 John 4:1

Love will put the best possible interpretation on what another person has done or said until we have the facts that prove to the contrary. p. 241

How does Proverbs 17:20 describe the opposite of “love believes the best option”?

How did Jesus correct the criticism of the disciples in Luke 9:49-50?

What does Psalm 15:2-3 say about speaking and listening to slander?

Consider the list in Philippians 4:8 as a starting point for your thoughts about others. Which one on the list is most helpful to you in being more loving in your thoughts about others?

Chapter 17 Real Love Is Hopeful and Tenacious

Love hopes all things.

Love endures all things.

Christian hope is the confident expectation that our faith in Christ and our righteous lives are all worth it and will be rewarded with eternity in Heaven. True love will keep that hope very much alive. True love for others will be a display of our hope in Christ. We can therefore endure with confidence knowing that every loving gesture will receive a guaranteed reward.

How sure is our hope of heaven (Hebrews 6:17-18)?

What does Proverbs 10:28 say will be the general attitude of the hopeful righteous individuals?

What will characterise the relationships of those who through Scripture have hope?

How does 1 Peter 3:13-15 connect the love, hope, and endurance?

What are some of the things in Romans 12 that love will endure in?

Chapter 18 Biblically Based Guidelines for Becoming a Biblical Lover of People

What are the two sides of the coin of love in 1 John 4:7-8?

What does the opening command in 1 Corinthians 14:1 require of us regarding a 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love?

What does it mean to “abide in Christ” and how will that make us a better impact on others (John 15:7-17)?

According to Ephesians 3:16-17, what kind of strength do we need to excel in this kind of love?

Where is the best place to practise love (Hebrews 10:24)?

What is the last thing we must give up to have a maximum impact on this world (John 12:24)?

Bringing It All Together

Before this study, how did you think the best ways to impact others for good were?

Of all the character traits of true Christian love, which two did you find most enlightening to learn more about?

Of all the character traits of true Christian love, which two do you think about most missing among Christians? Among society?

How will you “pursue love” (1 Corinthians 14:1) in a more consistent manner?