

Week 3: July 7-13

MONDAY, JULY 7

READ:

1 Corinthians 13 (NLT) (1) If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. (2) If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. (3) If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I

would have gained nothing. (4) Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud (5) or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. (6) It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. (7) Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. (8) Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! (9) Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! (10) But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless. (11) When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. (12) Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. (13) Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

REFLECT:

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- 2. Is there anything you believe God would want you to do in response to today's scripture reading?
- 3. Is there any sin you need to confess to God and/or to others that God revealed to you through what you just read?

PRAY:

- Tell God at least one thing you love and appreciate about who He is.
- Thank God for something that happened in your life yesterday.
- Confess any sin(s) to Him and thank Him for His forgiveness.
- Pray for at least one other person.
- Pray for yourself and commit to God your cares and concerns.
- Ask God to help you become more like Jesus today and open the doors for you to encourage and help someone else in Jesus' name.

TUESDAY, JULY 8

READ:

1 Corinthians 14 (NLT) (1) Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives—especially the ability to prophesy. (2) For if you have the ability to speak in tongues, you will be talking only to God, since people won't be able to understand you. You will be speaking by the power of the Spirit, but it will all be mysterious. (3) But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them. (4) A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church. (5) I wish you could all speak in tongues, but even more I wish you could all prophesy. For prophecy is greater than speaking in tongues, unless someone interprets what you are saying so that the whole church will be strengthened. (6) Dear brothers and sisters, if I should come to you speaking in an unknown language, how would that help

you? But if I bring you a revelation or some special knowledge or prophecy or teaching, that will be helpful. (7) Even lifeless instruments like the flute or the harp must play the notes clearly, or no one will recognize the melody. (8) And if the bugler doesn't sound a clear call, how will the soldiers know they are being called to battle? (9) It's the same for you. If you speak to people in words they don't understand, how will they know what you are saying? You might as well be talking into empty space. (10) There are many different languages in the world, and every language has meaning. (11) But if I don't understand a language, I will be a foreigner to someone who speaks it, and the one who speaks it will be a foreigner to me. (12) And the same is true for you. Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church. (13) So anyone who speaks in tongues should pray also for the ability to interpret what has been said. (14) For if I pray in tongues, my spirit is praying, but I don't understand what I am saying. (15) Well then, what shall I do? I will pray in the spirit, and I will also pray in words I understand. I will sing in the spirit, and I will also sing in words I understand. (16) For if you praise God only in the spirit, how can those who don't understand you praise God along with you? How can they join you in giving thanks when they don't understand what you are saying? (17) You will be giving thanks very well, but it won't strengthen the people who hear you. (18) I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you. (19) But in a church meeting I would rather speak five understandable words to help others than ten thousand words in an unknown language. (20) Dear brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your understanding of these things. Be innocent as babies when it comes to evil, but be mature in understanding matters of this kind. (21) It is written in the Scriptures: "I will speak to my own people through strange languages and through the lips of foreigners. But even then, they will not listen to me," says the LORD. (22) So you see that speaking in tongues is a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers. Prophecy, however, is for the benefit of believers, not unbelievers. (23) Even so, if unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your church meeting and hear everyone speaking in an unknown language, they will think you are crazy. (24) But if all of you are prophesying, and unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your meeting, they will be convicted of sin and judged by what you say. (25) As they listen, their secret thoughts will be exposed, and they will fall to their knees and worship God, declaring, "God is truly here among you." (26) Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you. (27) No more than two or three should speak in tongues. They must speak one at a time, and someone must interpret what they say. (28) But if no one is present who can interpret, they must be silent in your church meeting and speak in tongues to God privately. (29) Let two or three people prophesy, and let the others evaluate what is said. (30) But if someone is prophesying and another person receives a revelation from the Lord, the one who is speaking must stop. (31) In this way, all who prophesy will have a turn to speak, one after the other, so that everyone will learn and be encouraged. (32) Remember that people who prophesy are in control of their spirit and can take turns. (33) For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the meetings of God's holy people. (34) Women should be silent during the church meetings. It is not proper for them to speak. They should be submissive, just as the law says. (35) If they have any questions, they should ask their husbands at home, for it is improper for women to speak in church meetings. (36) Or do you think God's word originated with you Corinthians? Are you the only ones to whom it was given? (37) If you claim to be a prophet or think you are spiritual, you should recognize that what I am saying is a command from the Lord himself. (38) But if you do not recognize this, you yourself will not be recognized. (39) So, my dear brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and don't forbid speaking in tongues. (40) But be sure that everything is done properly and in order.

REFLECT:

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- Pray for at least one other person.

- Pray for yourself and commit to God your cares and concerns.
- Ask God to help you become more like Jesus today and open the doors for you to encourage and help someone else in Jesus' name.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9

READ:

1 Corinthians 15 (NLT) (1) Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. (2) It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. (3) I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. (4) He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. (5) He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. (6) After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. (7) Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. (8) Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. (9) For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church. (10) But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace. (11) So it makes no difference whether I preach or they preach, for we all preach the same message you have already believed. (12) But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? (13) For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. (14) And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. (15) And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. (16) And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. (17) And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. (18) In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! (19) And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. (20) But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. (21) So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. (22) Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. (23) But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back. (24) After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power. (25) For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. (26) And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. (27) For the Scriptures say, "God has put all things under his authority." (Of course, when it says "all things are under his authority," that does not include God himself, who gave Christ his authority.) (28) Then, when all things are under his authority, the Son will put himself under God's authority, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere. (29) If the dead will not be raised, what point is there in people being baptized for those who are dead? Why do it unless the dead will someday rise again? (30) And why should we ourselves risk our lives hour by hour? (31) For I swear, dear brothers and sisters, that I face death daily. This is as certain as my pride in what Christ Jesus our Lord has done in you. (32) And what value was there in fighting wild beasts—those people of Ephesus—if there will be no resurrection from the dead? And if there is no resurrection, "Let's feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!" (33) Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for "bad company corrupts good character." (34) Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don't know God at all. (35) But someone may ask, "How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?" (36) What a foolish question! When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn't grow into a plant unless it dies first. (37) And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting. (38) Then God gives it the new body he wants it to have. A different plant grows from each kind of seed. (39) Similarly there are different kinds of flesh—one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. (40) There are also bodies in the heavens and bodies on the earth. The glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the glory of the earthly bodies. (41) The sun has

one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their glory. (42) It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. (43) Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. (44) They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies. (45) The Scriptures tell us, "The first man, Adam, became a living person." But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. (46) What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. (47) Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. (48) Earthly people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the heavenly man. (49) Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like the heavenly man. (50) What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. (51) But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! (52) It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. (53) For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. (54) Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory. (55) O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (56) For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. (57) But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. (58) So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

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- Pray for at least one other person.
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THURSDAY, JULY 10

READ:

1 Corinthians 16 (NLT) (1) Now regarding your question about the money being collected for God's people in Jerusalem. You should follow the same procedure I gave to the churches in Galatia. (2) On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once. (3) When I come, I will write letters of recommendation for the messengers you choose to deliver your gift to Jerusalem. (4) And if it seems appropriate for me to go along, they can travel with me. (5) I am coming to visit you after I have been to Macedonia, for I am planning to travel through Macedonia. (6) Perhaps I will stay awhile with you, possibly all winter, and then you can send me on my way to my next destination. (7) This time I don't want to make just a short visit and then go right on. I want to come and stay awhile, if the Lord will let me. (8) In the meantime, I will be staying here at Ephesus until the Festival of Pentecost. (9) There is a wideopen door for a great work here, although many oppose me. (10) When Timothy comes, don't intimidate him. He is doing the Lord's work, just as I am. (11) Don't let anyone treat him with contempt. Send him on his way with your blessing when he returns to me. I expect him to come with the other believers. (12) Now about our brother Apollos—I urged him to visit you with the other believers, but he was not willing to go right now. He will see you later when he has the opportunity. (13) Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. (14) And do everything with love. (15) You know that Stephanas and his household were the first of the harvest of believers in Greece, and they are spending their lives in service to God's people. I urge you, dear brothers and sisters, (16) to submit to them and others like them who serve with such devotion. (17) I am very glad that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus have come here. They have been providing the help you weren't here to give me. (18) They have been a wonderful encouragement to me, as they have been to you. You must show your appreciation to all who serve so well. (19) The churches here in the province of Asia send greetings in the Lord, as do Aguila and Priscilla and all the others who gather in their home for church meetings. (20) All the brothers and sisters here send greetings to you. Greet each other with a sacred kiss. (21) HERE IS MY GREETING IN MY OWN HANDWRITING—PAUL. (22) If anyone does not love the Lord, that person is cursed. Our Lord, come! (23) May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. (24) My love to all of you in Christ Jesus.

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FRIDAY, JULY 11

READ:

2 Corinthians 1 (NLT) (1) This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy. I am writing to God's church in Corinth and to all of his holy people throughout Greece. (2) May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. (3) All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. (4) He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. (5) For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. (6) Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. (7) We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us. (8) We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. (9) In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead. (10) And he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and he will continue to rescue us. (11) And you are helping us by praying for us. Then many people will give thanks because God has graciously answered so many prayers for our safety. (12) We can say with confidence and a clear conscience that we have lived with a God-given holiness and sincerity in all our dealings. We have depended on God's grace, not on our own human wisdom. That is how we have conducted ourselves before the world, and especially toward you. (13) Our letters have been straightforward, and there is nothing written between the lines and nothing you can't understand. I hope someday you will fully understand us, (14) even if you don't understand us now. Then on the day when the Lord Jesus returns, you will be proud of us in the same way we are proud of you. (15) Since I was so sure of your understanding and trust, I wanted to give you a double blessing by visiting you twice—(16) first on my way to Macedonia and again when I returned from Macedonia. Then you could send me on my way to Judea. (17) You may be asking why I changed my plan. Do you think I make my plans carelessly? Do you think I am like people of the world who say "Yes" when they really mean "No"? (18) As surely as God is faithful, our word to you does not waver between "Yes" and "No." (19) For Jesus Christ, the Son of God, does not waver between "Yes" and "No." He is the one whom Silas, Timothy, and I preached to you, and as God's ultimate "Yes," he always does what he says. (20) For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means "Yes") ascends to God for his glory. (21) It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, (22) and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us. (23) Now I call upon God as my witness that I am telling the truth. The reason I didn't return to Corinth was to spare you from a severe rebuke. (24) But that does not mean we want to dominate you by telling you how to put your faith into practice. We want to work together with you so you will be full of joy, for it is by your own faith that you stand firm.

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SATURDAY, JULY 12

READ:

2 Corinthians 2 (NLT) (1) So I decided that I would not bring you grief with another painful visit. (2) For if I cause you grief, who will make me glad? Certainly not someone I have grieved. (3) That is why I wrote to you as I did, so that when I do come, I won't be grieved by the very ones who ought to give me the greatest joy. Surely you all know that my joy comes from your being joyful. (4) I wrote that letter in great anguish, with a troubled heart and many tears. I didn't want to grieve you, but I wanted to let you know how much love I have for you. (5) I am not overstating it when I say that the man who caused all the trouble hurt all of you more than he hurt me. (6) Most of you opposed him, and that was punishment enough. (7) Now, however, it is time to forgive and comfort him. Otherwise he may be overcome by discouragement. (8) So I urge you now to reaffirm your love for him. (9) I wrote to you as I did to test you and see if you would fully comply with my instructions. (10) When you forgive this man, I forgive him, too. And when I forgive whatever needs to be forgiven, I do so with Christ's authority for your benefit, (11) so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes. (12) When I came to the city of Troas to preach the Good News of Christ, the Lord opened a door of opportunity for me. (13) But I had no peace of mind because my dear brother Titus hadn't yet arrived with a report from you. So I said good-bye and went on to Macedonia to find him. (14) But thank God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume. (15) Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those who are being saved and by those who are perishing. (16) To those who are perishing, we are a dreadful smell of death and doom. But to those who are being saved, we are a life-giving perfume. And who is adequate for such a task as this? (17) You see, we are not like the many hucksters who preach for personal profit. We preach the word of God with sincerity and with Christ's authority, knowing that God is watching us.

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SUNDAY, JULY 13

READ:

2 Corinthians 3 (NLT) (1) Are we beginning to praise ourselves again? Are we like others, who need to bring you letters of recommendation, or who ask you to write such letters on their behalf? Surely not! (2) The only letter of recommendation we need is you yourselves. Your lives are a letter written in our hearts; everyone can read it and recognize our good work among you. (3) Clearly, you are a letter from Christ showing the result of our ministry among you. This "letter" is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on tablets of stone, but on human hearts. (4) We are confident of all this because of our great trust in God through Christ. (5) It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. (6) He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life. (7) The old way, with laws etched in stone, led to death, though it began with such glory that the people of Israel could not bear to look at Moses' face. For his face shone with the glory of God, even though the brightness was already fading away. (8) Shouldn't we expect far greater glory under the new way, now that the Holy Spirit is giving life? (9) If the old way, which brings condemnation, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new way, which makes us right with God! (10) In fact, that first glory was not glorious at all compared with the overwhelming glory of the new way. (11) So if the old way, which has been replaced, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new, which remains forever! (12) Since this new way gives us such confidence, we can be very bold. (13) We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory, even though it was destined to fade away. (14) But the people's minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. (15) Yes, even today when they read Moses' writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do not understand. (16) But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. (17) For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (18) So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

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