

## “A More Excellent Way”

### Lesson 1: Love Is Profitable (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

#### Intro:

1. God is love. (1 John 4:16)
2. We are created in the image of a God who is “love”. (Genesis 1:27)
3. Love improves every circumstance by giving meaning to function. (John 14:15-23)
4. Love is our ultimate obligation in all settings. (Romans 13:8)
5. Seeing that God is synonymous with love we must allow him to define what love is. (1 Corinthians 13 – Our continuing text throughout the study)
6. Our series will devote itself to understanding the love of God as it applies to both our physical family and our spiritual family.

#### I. Profit comes with love (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

1. Action becomes beneficial when love is the motivation.
  - a. Motivation reaches to the core of who we really are as a person. (Proverb 23:7)
  - b. All family responsibilities should be shaped by the love we have for one another.
    - (1) Parents and Children (Ephesians 6:1-4; Titus 2:4)
    - (2) Husbands and Wives (Titus 2:4; Ephesians 5:25)
    - (3) Within the family of God (1 Peter 1:22)

#### II. Avoiding the dangers of becoming unprofitable.

1. Without love my voice is a clanging cymbal or sounding trumpet. (vs. 1)
  - a. Words motivated without love are often harsh and fail to reach the desired result. (Proverb 14:17)
  - b. One Father was humbled by his daughter with this question, “Daddy, why do you yell so much?”
  - c. Brethren must also take caution to have their speech “seasoned with grace and salt.” (Colossians 4:6) {How we speak is as important as what we speak.}
2. Without love my wisdom and faith are tarnished. (vs. 2)
  - a. It is easier to embrace instruction from those you know love you and have your best interest at heart. (Proverb 13:1)

b. Being a spiritual rock and being filled with faith and knowledge does not excuse us from being loving. (Matthew 23:23)

c. Our children, wives, husbands, siblings, parents, etc... all need to know that we serve God out of love for him and that he desires that we love one another. (John 13:34-35)

d. We encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ to greater discipleship through love.

(1) Some brethren have a wealth of knowledge and wisdom but no compassion or mercy in the manner in which they convey that knowledge.

(2) Many difficulties within the family of God could be avoided if love would be employed in the midst of adversity.

(3) Churches often become consumed with fighting error that they forget what brought them to Christ to begin with. (Revelation 2:1-7)

3. Without love sacrifices are empty.

a. The principle of discipleship must permeate the home. (Matthew 16:24)

b. Learning to make sacrifices out of love will help us avoid regrets.

(1) On behalf of our parents. (John 19:26)

(2) On behalf of our children. (Luke 11:11)

(3) On behalf of our spouse. (Ephesians 5:22-25)

c. Making sacrifices for our brethren because we love them. (Acts 4:36-37)

Conclusion:

1. With love our work and actions are profitable. Without love we are empty.

2. Homes and churches filled with love will be places where joy and peace reign.

3. What am I doing to bring the profit of love into my physical and spiritual family?

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### Lesson 2: Love Promotes Patience and Kindness within Families (1 Corinthians 13:4)

#### Intro:

1. Patience is something that often eludes us.
2. Paul offered prayers on behalf of those in Colosse to maintain patience. (Colossians 1:9-11)
3. We live in a time that does not promote patience.
4. The proper love for our physical and spiritual family members will require patience.
5. Kindness and patience often go hand in hand. Without patience people are rarely kind and when we are kind we typically will be patient.
6. It is a quality exemplified by our Creator. (Joel 2:13)

#### I. Parenting requires patience and kindness.

1. “Provoke not your children to wrath” (Ephesians 6:4)
2. Children obey your parents “for this is right.” (Ephesians 6:1)
  - a. Parents will not be perfect. (Hebrews 12:9-10)
  - b. Respect the serious obligation they have to raise and nurture their children.
3. Patience when disciplining our children.
  - a. Did I clearly define the rules? (Exodus 30:17-20)
  - b. Is this a gnat or a camel? (Matthew 23:24)
  - c. Do I recognize mercy and kindness as an educational tool? (Matthew 5:7)

#### II. Extended families (in-laws) require patience and kindness.

1. The history of Jacob and Laban. (Genesis 29 -31)
  - a. Relationship can quickly become adversarial.
  - b. Must be patient and kind as all involved grow into what God requires. (Genesis 2:24)
2. With the right amount of kindness and patience it can be a wonderful relationship.

a. Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1:15-17)

b. Their relationship built upon love, patience, and kindness allowed for wisdom to be shared.  
(Ruth 2:20-23)

III. The family of God will benefit from a love that promotes patience and kindness.

1. When we are leaving our past sins. (Acts 9:22-27)

2. When some are weak in faith. (Romans 14:1-4)

3. Many members, various talents, different levels of growth...one body. (Romans 12:4-10)

Conclusion:

1. We all would benefit from a greater level of patience and kindness.

2. Our earthly relationships are more rewarding and profitable.

3. We are able to avoid many hardships and difficulties within our spiritual family when we will express patience and kindness toward one another.

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### Lesson 3: Love Depleting Challenges To Families “Jealousy and Pride” (1 Corinthians 13:4)

Intro:

1. Families must be careful to avoid things that rob them of joy and happiness.
2. Our text warns us that proper love does not allow for jealousy and pride. (Proverb 27:4)
3. Jealousy left unchecked can escalate into greater challenges.

#### I. The destruction jealousy and pride have caused to families.

##### 1. In the life of Joseph (Genesis 37:4-11)

- a. Parental favorites may be more subtle than a coat of many colors but can be just as harmful.
- b. We must be cautious to not negatively react to real or perceived favoritism. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

##### 2. Jealousy was part of one of the first family disputes and eventually ended in tragedy. (Genesis 4:5-8)

- a. We must be careful not to let personal disappointment present itself in jealousies towards others. Who was Cain really angry with???
- b. Personal failures should lead us to repentance not jealousy. (Luke 22:32)

##### 3. Jealousy in unusual circumstances. (Genesis 16:1-5)

- a. Not every family environment is ideal.
- b. We must avoid letting those frustrations lead to further problems.

#### II. Pride hinders one of the greatest healing agents within families. “Asking for forgiveness.”

##### 1. My personal obligation. (Matthew 5:23-24)

- a. Pride has kept many families from the love that God would want them to have.
- b. Jesus said, “blessed are the peacemakers.” (Matthew 5:9)
- c. Saying you’re sorry and asking for forgiveness can restore love to a home.

2. Love encourages us to confess our faults. (James 5:16)

III. Members of the Lord's church must also be careful concerning pride and arrogance.

1. We will all find ourselves at various levels of knowledge.

2. My "superior" knowledge whether true or perceived does not give me the right to act arrogantly toward my brother in Christ. (1 Corinthians 8:7-13)

3. My love for my brethren will encourage me to edify rather than destroy. (Romans 15:1-3)

4. Love encourages me to give preference to my brother. (Romans 12:10)

Conclusion:

1. Jealousy and pride are destructive forces.

2. Love helps us overcome the temptation of these challenges.

3. Expressions of love should be used to diffuse those who express jealousy toward us. (Matthew 5:44)

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### Lesson 4: Love Depleting Challenges To Families “Selfishness and Anger” (1 Corinthians 13:5)

#### Intro:

1. Selfish conduct is often at the core of many family difficulties. Adultery, divorce, financial woes, etc... are often a direct result of selfish behavior.
2. Anger presents itself in a variety of ways. All of which effectively remove love from a home.
3. Grudges and resentment are often a result.
4. These attitudes are in direct contrast to what Jesus demands of his disciples. (Luke 9:23)

#### I. Challenge of selfishness within our families.

1. Children come first. (Philippians 2:3-4)
  - a. Parents want to make sacrifices that benefit their children but some restraint must be used as to not promote selfishness in our children.
  - b. It benefits children to accept some responsibility for the things they have. (Lamentations 3:27)
  - c. Selfishness can be avoided when God is first. (Matthew 10:37)
  - d. Teach our children to be giving. (Matthew 19:20-22)
  - e. Genuine love for our children will compel us to avoid the things that cause selfishness.
2. Selfishness can destroy harmony within a local body of Christians. (3 John 1:5-10)

#### II. Anger harms the love within our families.

1. Slow to anger. (James 1:19-20)
2. Watch our words. (Proverb 15:1)
  - a. Words are more harmful than we realize.

b. Anger is often expressed in words that linger for a long time. (Proverb 18:19)

3. Love overcomes anger.

a. When angry, serve. (John 13:14-17)

b. When angry, provoke others to good works. (Hebrews 10:24)

c. When angry, be accountable. (Romans 12:18)

III. Thoughts for the unmarried who are looking for a godly mate.

1. Be cautious concerning a potential spouse who expresses selfishness or anger before marriage.

2. A potential spouse should demonstrate themselves godly before I enter into a marriage.  
(Matthew 21:19)

3. Challenges come when we ignore problems until after we enter the marriage. (1 Corinth. 7:10-15)

4. No amount of cards, flowers, gifts, or expressions of "I love you" grants permission for anyone to be abusive. (Emotionally, physically, or spiritually.)

Conclusion:

1. Love does not "behave itself unseemly." (1 Corinthians 13:5)

2. Love avoids anger and selfishness.

3. Love wants to promote caring and giving in every environment.



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### Lesson 5: The Joy Of Truth In Our Family Relationships (1 Corinthians 13:6)

#### Intro:

1. Love finds joy in truth. Honesty promotes love while deceit will destroy it.
2. Love motivates us to honor commitments and responsibilities to our families.
3. Love and joy should permeate our homes. (Proverb 15:17)

#### I. Love and Truth in our marriages.

1. “Let not man put asunder.” (Matthew 19:4-6)
  - a. Love honors the blessing of marriage. (Genesis 2:18; Proverb 18:22)
  - b. Fill a marriage with love and optimism. (1 John 4:7-11)
2. Respect for one another promotes joy. (1 Peter 3:1-7)
3. Nourish and cherish. (Ephesians 5:28-33)
  - a. “As unto myself” (Apply principle: Luke 6:31)
  - b. Express our love through appreciation. (Apply principle: Ephesians 1:15-16)
4. Giving honor to the way God has created us. (1 Peter 3:7)
  - a. Love as Christ loved. (John 11:33-35)
  - b. Be thankful for the creative genius that created them male and female.
5. “Marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled.” (Hebrews 13:4)
  - a. Fornication and adultery wreck marriages, lives, and homes.
  - b. It is more than just a physical act. It is the breaking of a bond and a trust. True love will not do that. When the temptation presents itself address it from the true source. Why has the love for my spouse lowered so much that I would consider breaking our marriage bond? Once you

start being honest about those truths you can strive to improve the relationship and avoid the temptations.

c. Rekindle the love and joy with the “wife of your youth.” (Malachi 2:15)

II. Love promotes truth within the family of God.

1. “Whatsoever things are honorable” (Philippians 4:8)
2. “Especially those of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10)

Conclusion:

1. Love promotes truth and honest in every relationship. It is especially necessary in marriage.
2. Lies and deceit destroy relationships.
3. Our love for one another is the bond that keeps us from falling into the temptations that can sever and injure those relationships.

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### Lesson 6: Loving Families Support One Another (1 Corinthians 13:7)

#### Intro:

1. The home should be a place of sanctuary for the family. It is the place where every family member can have confidence that they will be cared for and supported.
2. It is the place where spirituality and godliness rule. An escape from all of the vileness that the world has to offer. (Joshua 24:15)
3. Homes that fear the Lord are blessed. (Psalm 128)

#### I. Biblical examples of supportive families.

1. Supporting our families includes guidance in the commands of God. (Genesis 18:19)
2. Job was continually concerned about his children’s spiritual wellbeing. (Job 1:5)
3. Families are supportive when difficult days arrive. (John 11:1-5)
4. Loving families share the news of a loving Savior.
  - a. Cornelius (Acts 10:24-27)
  - b. Lydia (Acts 16:14-15)
  - c. Lois and Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5)
    - (1) Grandparents can have a tremendous impact on the spiritual wellbeing of their families.
    - (2) We cannot give our family members our faith, but we can support them as they grow their own personal faith.

#### II. God is a supportive Father. (Luke 15:11-32)

1. Free will allows us to make choices even if they are destructive.
2. Supporting our family members does not mean we approve of their choices. (vs. 13)

3. Love for our families includes allowing them to learn from the consequences of their poor choices. (vss. 14-16)

4. Supportive families are waiting and ready when the erring member “comes to himself.” (vs. 17)

a. We run to greet them as they are returning. (vs. 20)

b. We embrace them and welcome their return. (vs. 20)

c. We restore them to full relationship with the family. (vss. 21-24)

d. Being supportive requires us to forgive and let go. (vss. 28-31)

(1) It is right to celebrate the return of the erring.

(2) We should be thankful that we have had the continual support of the Father and did not require prodigal living to appreciate what we have.

### III. Come home to the supportive Father

1. Come home to confess and receive forgiveness. (1 John 1:9)

2. Come home and know the comforts of a loving God. You need not live with the swine any longer. (2 Corinthians 1:3)

3. Come home and know the salvation found in Jesus Christ. (John 3:16-17)

### Conclusion:

1. Our homes and families need to be places of refuge and support.

2. The family of God is designed to be supportive and encouraging.

3. Being part of the family of God gives us access to our “Father in Heaven” and allows us to experience the greatest blessings known to man.

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### Lesson 7: Love Never Fails (1 Corinthians 13:8)

#### Intro:

1. It is one thing to claim that we are loving, it is yet another to trust in love during every circumstance.
2. At times we have decided that love is only beneficial and useful in certain circumstances. (Luke 6:27-33)
3. Part of strengthening our family relationships in love is trusting that love to lead us to what is right and good in every moment.
4. God has declared that “love never fails.” The question is, “do I believe it?”

#### I. Love never fails in building friendships.

1. A friend “loveth at all times.” (Proverb 17:17)
  - a. The Bible declares that friendship can be stronger than family. There are many things that may make it difficult to express the kind of love toward our physical families that we would like. Even simple geographical problems can make it difficult.
  - b. Our friends may be the strongest form of family we have.
  - c. If that be true, we must be cautious as to whom we choose as our friends. (Galatians 6:10)
2. Within friendships, love never fails when...
  - a. Resolving challenges (Proverb 17:9)
  - b. Knowing when to give space (Proverb 25:17)
  - c. Avoiding the temptation to meddle (Proverb 26:17)
  - d. Acting with sincerity (Proverb 27:14)

#### II. “For we know in part” (1 Corinthians 13:9)

1. Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge only gives a partial view of what is needful.
2. Love will not fail to guide us into the fullness of what we need in every relationship.
3. We may not always like what we know and hear concerning our family but love must not cease.
4. Love is reliable when...
  - a. Leading an erring brother away from sin. (Galatians 6:1)
    - (1) Even when the sins are deplorable. (Acts 9:10-17)
    - (2) Even when we believe they are unworthy of repentance. (Jonah 4:1-2)
  - b. When sharing the message of the Gospel. (1 John 5:3)
    - (1) "Fully preach the gospel" (Romans 15:19)
    - (2) "Gladly receive" (Acts 2:41)
    - (3) Trusting in the purity, simplicity, and effectiveness of the message. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

Conclusion:

1. Do you and I trust love?
2. Love is the great equalizer in difficult times.
3. We cannot say it any better than the apostle Paul, "love never fails!"

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### Lesson 8: Three Abiding Things (1 Corinthians 13:13)

#### Intro:

1. In a world that is temporary, it is comforting to know that there are some things that are abiding.
2. With the various challenges families and churches face, we must learn to rely on faith, hope, and love.
3. All three are beneficial with the “greatest of these” being love.

#### I. Faith and our families.

1. No greater obligation to my family than to guide them in faith toward the Creator.
  - a. Trusting our God as a provider. (Deuteronomy 8:1-11)
  - b. We look forward together to the home of God. (Hebrews 11:9-10)
2. Encourage our brethren to be people of substance. (Hebrews 11:1, 6)

#### II. Hope and our families.

1. Hope is a principle God shares in the early history of man. (Genesis 3:15)
2. Hope is not a wish. With hope there is a legitimate expectancy to receive.
3. We should strengthen our families in the hope that God provides. (Romans 8:28)
4. Christians share in “one hope.” (Ephesians 4:4)
  - a. We wear the same helmet (reminder). (1 Thessalonians 5:8)
  - b. We are assured of this hope through an authoritative source. (Colossians 1:23)
  - c. That message carries with it the hope that we will live eternally. (1 Corinthians 15:50-58)
  - d. Benefit comes to our spiritual family when we will encourage one another in this great hope.

### III. "But the greatest of these is love."

1. Faith and hope are vital. Yet nothing is greater or more powerful than love.
2. Love for God motivates our faith in him. Love for his promises anchors us as we longingly hope for the fulfillment of those promises.
3. Love is victorious...
  - a. When challenges mount. (Psalm 113)
  - b. When I am in need of spiritual cleansing. (Psalm 103:10-12)
  - c. When patience is needed. (2 Peter 3:9)
  - d. When I need encouraged. (1 Thessalonians 2:5-8)
    - (1) In the depths of despair it is good to see ourselves through the eyes of those that love us.
    - (2) You are not unlovable!

#### Conclusion:

1. Love is the "more excellent way" in all things.
2. It is "more excellent" because GOD IS LOVE!!