



The 'love season' has dawned. Everywhere stores and businesses are decked with hearts and various Valentine sentiments. In Christian spheres, 1 Corinthians 13 will be quoted to almost redundancy while the concept of Christian love will be discussed, often with the most basic interpretations... but I have a challenge! What if we looked a little deeper at 1 Corinthians 13? What if we sought to peel away the obvious and attempt to reveal something a bit more profound?

This month I have put together a Bible study which seeks to do just that. We are going to walk through 1 Corinthians 13 and as we do, we will follow the threads of each "love is" and "love isn't" statement to see where it leads and how we can grow closer to the heart of God in the process! I also hope to post some extension devotionals each Wednesday on the website ([www.faithandhomepublishing.com](http://www.faithandhomepublishing.com)), sharing some take-aways I found along the way!

### **How to use this study (and other intro info!)**

I call my Bible study method "S.W.A.P.". It was developed a few years ago for a Thanksgiving Bible Study I wrote on *How to be Thankful*. This method was inspired by other acronym-based study guides but mine differs in that I have a passion to inspire people to dig a bit deeper into the timeless text...

#### **S.W.A.P.**

I feel a *good* Bible study should open our eyes to what is *really there*. Not what we *want* to find there or as a result of our own opinion, bias or emotion. Rather, we *swap* what we have always assumed we know or take for granted in God's Word for what God's Word *actually says*. As a result, we are transformed by Truth. This Truth is at the very heart of how a *good* Bible study is critical to how we grow to become more like Christ.

The SWAP method works like this:

**Scripture** – what passage of scripture is being studied

**What exactly** is being said

After you have explored what exactly is being said and what you notice about God's character, you can also consider:

**What** stands out to you and **Why**

**Apply** – after we have considered the scripture in its context, we can begin to see how it applies to us now and internalize what has just been studied

Pray – to plant God’s message for you deep inside, pray about it and pray the scripture

Don’t be intimidated. It sounds much more complicated than it is. It is actually a summed-up simplified version of Inductive Bible study, seeking to draw out the core of each passage so we can better absorb what is actually said. I do strongly recommend trying hard to avoid bringing in what we *want* a passage to say or what we *think* it says (this is how mis-interpretation occurs). Instead we look at what is there (at times referring to surrounding text and the whole of scripture for clarity) and allow the Holy Spirit to speak truth to us as we explore.

If you feel like the basic outline for SWAP above isn’t challenging enough, then you can also consider the following under “W”:

**Who** is speaking and **Who** are they speaking to (this is so important to understanding context)  
Also, alongside **What** *exactly* is being said you can consider, **Why** is the author saying it and, last of the “W”s; **What** did it mean to the original hearer of this message.

That last **W** may require digging into the intro or in-text commentary of the book in the Bible you are studying (a good Study Bible or Student Bible can be helpful for this). You will be amazed to learn how much many of these people’s lives parallel our own today. Understanding **what** a passage meant to them can suddenly make it stick to what it can mean for you as you move onto “apply”.

Sometimes words and understanding just jump off the page.... Other times, we can find ourselves stumped trying to really SEE what God is trying to say through a given passage. If you would like even more help in that area, consider these ideas to assist in unlocking deeper comprehension:

Look for transition and condition words like:

but	if
however	so that
and	therefore

Consider quantities like “ALL” or “none” and others.


Watch for...


action words, commands, or absolutes, especially when they come with contingencies  
repetition (God must really want you to notice something if he is repeating it directly or indirectly through a theme or idea)

themes (overall in a paragraph or section)

lists (We will be breaking down the love list in 1 Corinthians 13 for which I have enclosed a graphic to help you with!)

If you are still unsure, here is some idea of what one Bible Study session might look like:

 **S** – I encourage you to write out the entire passage indicated (if time does not allow, then at least write out the parts which stand out to you most).

 **W** - Once you are done with writing out the passage in whole or in part, you can then answer the “W” questions. First look at what *exactly* it says, reading a few verses before and after if you

need more clarity. Consider the various other tips I have included above for the **W** section, looking for repetition, transition words and other statements.

- 📖 Once you feel you have exhausted all of the **W** options you can begin transitioning to **Application** by considering what stands out to you about this message and why.
- 📖 **A** - After reading/writing/considering... you can write out an application. This could be a conviction you have of something God's Word has revealed to you or it may be something lovely, inspiring or hope-filled you feel you could apply to your daily life. Whatever the Text prompts you to react on is good to log under "Application". **CAUTION:** at times it may be tempting to throw these lessons to someone else in your life you think it applies to... but **FIRST YOU** have to *internalize it for yourself*, lest you become a hypocrite or log-in-eye type! God *will* open the door for you to share truth with others *as long as* you are walking His truths out yourself. Interestingly; internalizing first can grow you in grace for others needing the message as well!
- 📖 **P** - Finally, there is a line for you to write a prayer out if you would like. Writing out prayers can be encouraging to reflect on when you look back later. You will be readily able to see how God has worked in your heart and life. It is good to pray the scripture as well. For example, Psalm 119:2 says...

*Blessed are those who keep his testimonies who seek him with their whole heart.*

A prayer which could be written with this passage might go something like this:

*Lord, I thank you for your Word today. Please help me to keep your testimonies,  
to seek you with my whole heart, not just part of it,  
that I might feel the blessing of your presence as a result.  
In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

**Whatever you do, don't complicate the process!** It is meant to be simple. The outline for each day is merely a guideline to help you in a direction. Some days you may not be able to finish... that is OK. Simply pick up where you left off when you get to it next. Nobody is timing you or grading your progress. This study is meant to prompt you into *valuable* and deeper study and prayer time so that each day can feel fuller of the Hope and Peace God offers us. It IS attainable, no matter how slow or busy we are! Just do what you can, taking each next step!

Ready to get started?

If you have ANY questions, please do not hesitate to email me, [amanda@faithandhome.com](mailto:amanda@faithandhome.com).

I pray your time with the Lord is deeply satisfying and wonderfully rewarding!

Blessings,

*Amanda*

## First Things First – and a note on 1 Corinthians 13

When diving into a Bible Study on a specific book or section of God’s Word, it can help to have a bit of background context. You can find this in more detailed Bibles that have intros to each book or a quick search online. You might type, “Overview of 1 Corinthians” in your search engine to see what you find (this applies to any book of the Bible). It is not a “requirement” for this study but a recommendation for other studies you may do on your own. I have done some of the grunt work for this month’s adventures...

While the crux of our study is 1 Corinthians 13, we will be jumping around to other books of the Bible to see how the whole of God’s Word supports the theme in 1C13. However, since 1C13 is our baseline, I wanted to do a quick break-down of this core passage so we might better understand the drive and heart of the matter...

Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul to the believers in Corinth, a bustling cosmopolitan Greek city. Think ALL that symbolizes Vegas, L.A. and New York all rolled into one... and then some! Many historians use the word “Licentious” to describe Corinth, perhaps because it is the strongest word they could come up with.

A delegation from Corinth had been sent to Paul, who was in Ephesus at the time. The church had many questions running the spectrum in a church which had grown a bit out of control. The believers in Corinth were also divided due to a general spirit of competitive individualism which was resulting in rivalries. Imagine, “My Bible study group is better than yours.”, being taunted across the isle in your church each Sunday!

To make matters worse, this style of individualism caused believers to become overzealous concerning spiritual gifts, forgetting how Christ called for unity in the Body. If you have time, I encourage you to read 1 Corinthians 12 as a preface with this background information in mind. Nonetheless, we can move forward with chapter 13 as-is.

Knowing this history and context we can begin to piece apart chapter 13, but one more thing: *love*.

In our modern English vernacular, we often take that word for granted. “I love my sister” or “I love my friend” or “I love my spouse” or “I love this ice-cream”... all speak of different types of love which we often blanket with those 4 simple letters. However, in Biblical times, love wasn’t quite so static. Consider these Greek roots:

### **Phileō**

This love is called out of one’s heart by qualities in another. It is a companionable love and speaks of affection, fondness, or liking. It responds to kindness, appreciation, or love and involves giving as well as receiving; *but* when it is greatly strained, it can collapse in a crisis.

### **Storgē**

This love has its basis in one’s own nature as a natural affection or obligation between kinfolk. It is a natural movement of the soul for husband, wife, child or dog. It is a quiet, abiding feeling within a man that rests on something close to him and that he feels good about. It can have the prefix of “a” which then translates to unloving or it can be paired with Philos to indicate devotion.

### **Eros**

This love is erotic or sexual love, it is a love of passion, an overmastering passion that seizes and absorbs itself into the mind. It is a love that is an emotional involvement based on body chemistry. The basic

idea of this love is self-satisfaction. Though Eros is directed towards another, it actually has self in mind. For example: "I love you because you make me happy." The foundation of this type of love is some characteristic in the other person which pleases you. If the characteristic would cease to exist, the reason for the love would be gone, the result being, "I don't love you anymore." Eros looks for what it can receive. If it does give, it gives in order to receive. If it fails to get what it wants or expects, bitterness or resentment could develop.

### **Agapē or Agapaō**

It is the noblest word for love in the Greek language and it **keeps on loving even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable, and unworthy**. It continues even despite disappointment and rejection and desires only the good of the one loved. This love is called out of one's heart by the preciousness of the object loved. It has the idea of prizing and it is not kindled by the merit or worth of its object, but it originates in its own God-given nature. *God is love*. It delights in giving. *It is unconditional*.

*(Adapted from Precept Ministries International, you can read more by visiting:*

<https://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/different-types-of-love-from-the-bible-a-christian-study/#ixzz5dUidRzKt>)

So, of all these types of love, do you want to guess which one is at the heart of 1 Corinthians 13? Yup, Agape. As a matter of fact, Agape love is the love used most often in the New Testament. It isn't a flighty, emotional kind of love... it is a dedicated, no-matter-what kind of love!

One final note to understand as we jump in: as per chapter 12, the crux of the issue in this 'my Bible Study is better than your Bible Study' church is, "Which spiritual gift is the best?" The answer? None are, only LOVE, agape, matters. The rest ought to proceed from there. This article from the NLT Study Bible (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 2008, p.1947) sums up 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 well:

*Jesus speaks of loving one's neighbor as the second most important of the OT commandments (Mark 12:31). Love summarizes the entire OT law (Matt 7:12; 22:40 cp. Matt 9:9-13; 12:1-13; see Rom 13:8-10). Jesus criticized the Pharisees for their failure to show love (Matt 9:13; 12:7; 23:4, 13-14, 23). Love is the Mark of a true follower of Jesus (John 13:34-35) and of an authentic experience of God (1 Jn 2:9-11; 3:11-18; 4:7-21).*

*For [God through] Paul, love is more important than any of the spiritual gifts and the most important virtue. Love "binds us all together in perfect harmony" (Col 3:14). Without love, ministry has limited value (13:1-3). Paul summed up the whole of the Christian ethics as "faith expressing itself in love" (Gal 5:6). Love is the central ethical expression of Christian faith, the primary fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:6), and one of the most important motivations for ministry. The most important thing for believers to value and seek is to become a faithfully loving person.*

As you go forth in this topical take on *love* 1 Corinthians 13 style, I encourage you to consider each passage through this scope. To contemplate not just the meaning of all that love is (and isn't) but also the connection you can make to better walk out *agape* in your day-to-day life!

Ready?



Scripture passage **1 Corinthians 13:1-3**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **1 Corinthians 13:6-8a**

---

---

---

---

---

**What exactly** is being said? (start by breaking down this list into the chart below)

Love is/does (v. 4-6,8)		Love is not/does not (v.4-6)	
Love performs 4 specific actions in v.7, what are they?			

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

**Apply...** how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

**Pray:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **1 Thessalonians 5:12-15**

*Love is patient*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*





Scripture passage **Colossians 3:12-15**

*Love is kind*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Galatians 5:16-26**

*Love does not envy*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Jeremiah 9:23-24**

*Love does not boast*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Philippians 2:1-8**

*Love is not arrogant*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Ephesians 4:25-32**

*Love is not rude*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Matthew 20:25-28**

*Love does not insist  
on its own way*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **James 1:18-21**

*Love is not irritable*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Hebrews 12:12-15**

*Love is not resentful*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*





Scripture passage **Ephesians 5:6-14**

*Love does not rejoice  
in wrongdoing*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **James 3:13-18**

*Love rejoices with the truth*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Galatians 6:1-10**

*Love bears all things  
[endures]*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Psalm 27:1-3**

*Love believes all things  
[never loses faith]*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Romans 5:1-5**

*Love hopes all things*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Hebrews 12:1-3**

*Love endures all things*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **Romans 8:35-39**

*Love never ends*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**W**hat *exactly* is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**A**pply... how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**P**ray: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*



Scripture passage **John 15:8-14**

*Faith, hope and love abide...  
the greatest is love*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What exactly** is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Apply...** how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**Pray:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*





Scripture passage **1 Peter 4:7-10**

*Pursue Love*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What exactly** is being said?

---

---

---

---

What stands out to you and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Apply...** how can this message encourage (or transform) your walk with Christ?

---

---

---

---

---

**Pray:**

---

---

---

---

---

*Share what you have learned with others, not only is this another way to make the message stick with you...*

