



Day 7

Love

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

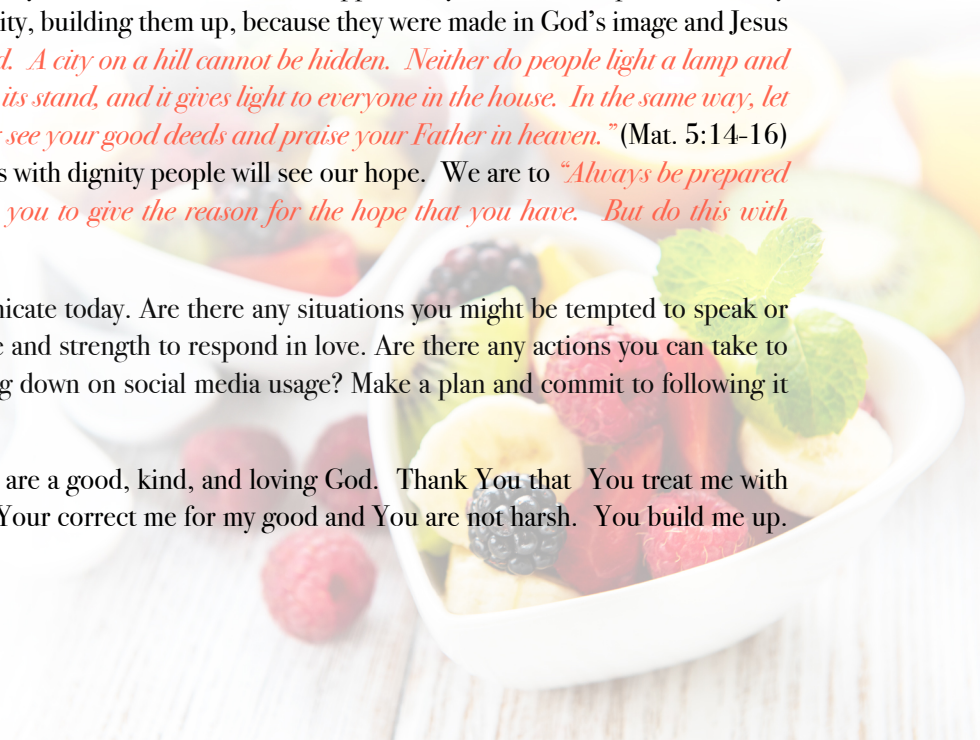
Scripture *"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."*


1 Corinthians 13

Discussion After Paul writes about spiritual gifts and the unity of the Body of Christ, he writes this chapter on love. The descriptions of love can be divided into two groups: what love is and what it isn't. The list of what love is names behaviors which build people up, treats them with dignity. Another way to state it is love treats others in a respectful way which acknowledges they are created in the image of God and that Jesus loves them. The list of what love is not names behaviors that puts ourselves at the center of life, instead of God, and behaviors that tear people down. Some movies, TV, news commentators, government leaders, and communication on social media such as Facebook and Twitter have moved more in the direction of dishonoring others, stirring up bitterness, even celebrating how to interrupt, win an argument, get in the last word, publicly humiliate, and degrade. At times, our culture's communication guidelines seem to be: I won't listen to you and you will listen to me. As followers of Jesus we need to carefully examine how we think, our motives in communication, and how we speak. In a culture characterized by unloving communication styles, we have an incredible opportunity to think and speak differently than our culture; to treat people with dignity, building them up, because they were made in God's image and Jesus loves them. *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."* (Mat. 5:14-16) As we let our light shine by treating others with dignity people will see our hope. We are to *"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..."* (1 Pet. 3:15)

Application Consider how you communicate today. Are there any situations you might be tempted to speak or react without love? Ask God for the grace and strength to respond in love. Are there any actions you can take to help avoid this temptation, such as cutting down on social media usage? Make a plan and commit to following it today.

Prayer Lord God, I praise You that You are a good, kind, and loving God. Thank You that You treat me with dignity and patience. You listen to me. You correct me for my good and You are not harsh. You build me up.





Father, please show me how I communicate with others. Please show me any of my communication that regards me as most important or tears other people down. Please show me when I join in that sort of communication with others. Please help me mature in treating others with dignity. You created them in Your image and You love them, just as You love me. May I speak in such a way that people see Your light, Your love, and my hope. Thank You Father. I love You. Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."* Mark 12:29-31

