

Week Sixteen: “What Matters Most”

Day One: “What Matters Most”

Read: 1 Corinthians 13 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 1320)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, pp. 123-124

Reflect: Within the last day, week, or month what ‘irritating, imperfect, and frustrating’ people have tested your love? Have you responded in what 1 Corinthians 13:1 says is the ‘most excellent way’?

Dig: Is love a natural, innate quality we possess? Note what Galatians 5:22 (p. 1352) says.

According to John 15:4-12 (p. 1222) how do we grow this fruit, this love?

How connected are you to the vine?

Apply: Pick one or two key people in your life and use 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 as a sort of checklist to help you gauge how well you are expressing your love for them. Do you feel like you fall short? Remember that apart from God you can do nothing.

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Day Two: “The Best Use of Life is Love”

Read: Matthew 22:34-40 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 1109)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, pp. 124-126

Reflect: Do relationships (with God and with people) have priority in your life above all else? What factors in your life tend to keep relationships from having priority?

Dig: If the best use of our life is love and if relationships take priority over all else, do you think Rick Warren (the author of *Purpose-Driven Life*) would advocate giving up our work and our ‘to-do’ lists to spend the entire day investing in relationships?

Would you advocate this?

What does scripture say on this matter? Check out the following passages:

1 Thessalonians 3:6-15 (p. 1384)

Deuteronomy 6:4-8 (p. 199). Note how the command to love the Lord was to be implemented throughout the entire day—it was an integral part of their lives.

How can we apply the Shema (Deut. 6:4) to our lives? That is, how do we love the Lord our God with all our heart, our soul, and our strength **in all we do**?

Apply: Make a list of all the things you are going to do today or tomorrow. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you how each of these tasks can be done in love and to reveal how relationships can be a part of each task. Close your time by praying the prayer written on the bottom of p. 126 in *Purpose-Driven Life*.

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Day Three: “The Best Expression of Love is Time”

Read: 1 John 3:16-18; James 2:14-26 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, pp.1468, 1443)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, p. 127 to top of 128

Reflect: “The greatest gift you can give someone is your time.” (*Purpose-Driven Life*, p. 127) Who are you depriving of your time?

Dig: What does the 1 John 3 passage say about the **cost** of loving?

What do these passages say regarding how true love and faith are **expressed**?

1 Corinthians 13 says that we can do and say lots of good things but without love they are worthless. James 2:14-26 says that if our faith doesn't express itself in action it's worthless.

How do Galatians 5:6b (p. 1350) and 1 John 3:18 (p. 1468) connect these truths?

Apply: Make a list of the people closest to you. Is your faith being expressed to them in deeds? Is your love being expressed to them in action?

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you how you can **demonstrate** your love to these people this week.

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Day Four: “The Best Time to Love is Now”

Read: Proverbs 3:27-28 (*Freedom in Christ Bible*, p. 696)

Read: *Purpose-Driven Life*, p. 128

Reflect: Is there a way in which you have been withholding good from someone (either an individual or a group of people) who deserves it?

Dig: What is the qualifier that comes along with the command in Proverbs 3:27?

Do you ever feel powerless? Do you sympathize with people and then conclude “Well, there’s nothing I can do about it.”?

Perhaps we jump to that conclusion too quickly: According to John 14:12-14 (p. 1221) what power has been given to us? Read these verses in both the Message version (shown below) and the NIV.

”¹²The person who trusts me will not only do what I’m doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I’ve been doing. You can count on it. ¹³From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I’ll do it. That’s how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son. I mean it. ¹⁴Whatever you request in this way, I’ll do.” (MSG)

Apply: Spend some time in prayer asking God to reveal who you can express love and care for today. Ask him to give you eyes to see people on whom you can lavish his love. Now put it into action—don’t withhold it!

Week Sixteen: **“What Matters Most”**
Day Five: **“Life Is All About Love”**

Using the **“Lectio Divina”** method of Bible study (see page 3 of this booklet), **meditate on this scripture:**

The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Galatians 5:14 (NIV)

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

- reading: you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness; after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.
- meditation: you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life; write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.
- prayer: you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer – thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.