



Quick Backdrop

As we grow up, we experience things that tell us we are doing just that—growing up. Harder school classes, more homework, driver’s license, weekend freedom and more responsibility. We have one more to add: taking ownership of our faith. Growing up in our faith involves taking the responsibility off of our parents and putting it onto ourselves—seeking and following after God on our own motivation. This might sound challenging but Scripture gives us a very practical step we can take to get us well on our way to owning our own faith.

1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

You’ve probably heard 1 Corinthians 13 read at a wedding. Known as the “love chapter” of the Bible, it’s a popular go-to passage for marriage ceremonies, and for good reason. It points out all the great characteristics of love. But, a section of the chapter, which is seldom included in wedding readings, gives us a great application for the definition of love.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and 13:11-13 below and look for these things (you may want to print the passage out or paste it into an e-doc):

1. Highlight or draw a heart over anything that describes love.
2. Highlight or underline anything that refers to growing up and spiritual perspective.



1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT)

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.

1 Corinthians 13:11-13 (NLT)

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.

2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

Look at the hearts you drew or phrases you highlighted. Write down, either on a separate sheet of paper or in an e-doc, three traits of love that most resonate with you (traits you find most challenging, most convicting, or ones that just makes you say “wow!”)

These two passages seem unrelated, but they are tied together by the last phrase in the chapter: *and the greatest of these is love*. What connections can you make between the definitions of love that are given in verses 4-7 and the application of love described in verses 11-13?

What insight does the verse below shed on the matter?

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (NLT)

3 Seal the Deal (God, Change Me!)

Romans 5:8 describes the very epicenter of the Christian faith: loving the unlovable. Christ died for *us while we were still sinners*. This is the picture of God’s love. But loving the unlovable does not come naturally to us. We have to, as 1 Corinthians suggests, grow into it. If you think about it, our default settings are to love like children, which is the opposite of love as described in 1 Corinthians 13: we’re impatient, boastful, irritable and often demand our own way. As we grow in our faith, our perspective expands and we find we have a greater capacity to *choose* to love. Try these three baby steps:

- Who in your life are you having a hard time loving? Someone in your family, a friend, someone who is mean to you at school? Call a name to mind and write it down. Write in code if you need to. Then write a word or two that describes what makes it hard for you to love this person.
- Now, think about this person in light of the three Bible passages you just explored: the definition of love (1 Cor. 13:4-7), the application of that love (1 Cor. 13:11-13), and the picture of that love (Rom. 5:8). Write a Statement of Resolve, incorporating the truth of these verses, on how you can change your interaction with this person.
- God saw past our current states—our poor choices and our inability to recognize how unlovable we were. And yet He loved us and He showed us that love through Jesus. How can you do the same this week? Write down one act of love you can do this week—toward the person you noted above or someone else—that demonstrates how you choose to love.

These three small steps will give you one giant leap in owning your own faith.

Fold or Cut