



Love in the Gaps 1 Corinthians 13:7 | January 10th- 16th, 2016

Warm Up: Last week we closed our time sharing how we plan to *show* love to the person God has called us to in tangible and practical ways in 2016. Remember: Every successful relationship is built upon giving *and* receiving love which is not just an emotion, but also an action! Share some of the plans you have to love more intentionally this year (even if only loose at this point). What success stories can you share thus far?

- ❖ Read **1 Corinthians 13:1-3,11** aloud. This week we saw how the Corinthian church was failing to embody “real” love. They were high on experiences and feelings but low actions and follow through. We can be similar. It’s our human default to be *self-focused* in our love relationships. God’s love, however, compels us to abandon immature emotional patterns and follow Jesus in humble, sacrificial love.
 - We can all be self-focused and demonstrate immature emotional patterns in our relationships. What have you found to be effective in combating these destructive tendencies?
 - What self-centered patterns do you personally tend to cling to in relationships? (i.e. stubbornness, need to “win,” anger, overreaction, etc.) How have these things been shaped or informed through your upbringing?
- ❖ In every relationship we are going to encounter a gap between what we **EXPECT** and how people **BEHAVE*** or between what is **PROMISED** and what is actually **EXPERIENCED**. The question is: What do we do with these gaps?
 - Read aloud **1 Corinthians 13:7** in several translations. This verse is foundational in informing *how* we will approach this gap. It all begins in the mind...Will we Assume the Best? Or will we Believe the Worst?
 - Take each phrase in **verse 7** - Love ... *never gives up, loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance*. What does each phrase teach us about *Assuming the Best* in our relationships? Discuss.
- ❖ Silently read **1 Corinthians 13:4-6**, inserting your name each time you read the word, “love.” How does this change the way you read it? Scripture would not command us to walk in this kind of love if it were impossible! We can be encouraged in at least three ways as we trust God to love others well in 2016:
 - We are **EMPOWERED**: Jesus empowers us to “Do to others as you would like them to do to you.” - Luke 6:31.
 - We can **EMBRACE** the Gospel: God made love a verb by sending his Son to die for us. We must live in this truth each day.
 - We are setting an **EXAMPLE**: Our goal should be to lead by example. We will be a witness to the non-believing world around us if we choose to fill the gap faith and trust.

Wrap Up: Close your time in prayer asking God to help you establish a plan to love someone well and that you may love in the ways these verses describe.

*Adapted from Andy Stanley’s, *Staying in Love*. Watch this fantastic series here: <http://northpoint.org/messages/staying-in-love/>