

Weekly Cell Guide

Leader's Copy

Theme: Growing Closer to God and to One Another

Series - Be Wise

Topic - Love Actually (1 Corinthians 13)

Date - 20-Oct-2019

Speaker - Elder Ee Yang

WELCOME [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)

WORSHIP [15 min]

You may select songs like

1. In Your Presence O God
2. Highest Praise
3. Jesus Shall Take The Highest Honour

WORD [45 min]

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand God's agape love for all His children and non-believers.
2. Intentionally cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in daily life.

Sermon Summary

The following are the key points of the sermon:

1. Our spiritual gifts should be exercised in the context of love.
2. While we should eagerly desire the gifts of the Spirit, it is also important we intentionally cultivate the fruit of the Spirit (which is characterised by love).
3. Our service and actions should come from a place of unconditional (agape) love and not based on people's conduct.

Sermon Recap (Full Summary)

Elder Ee Yang highlighted that the verses of love in 1 Corinthians 13 are sandwiched in the context of exercising our spiritual gifts. God gave these spiritual gifts to us so that we would be effective in building on the foundation which Christ has laid.

Why did Paul talk about love in the context of spiritual gifts? The Corinthian church was very gifted, but they acted out of their natural (carnal) instincts and it caused widespread immorality. They did not use their spiritual gifts with a heart of love, and the church was divided. Therefore, the most excellent way to exercise spiritual gifts is through love.

1. The Importance of Love



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In 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Paul says that if you have all the spiritual gifts but do not have love, you are just “a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal”; you are “nothing”; you “gain nothing”. Without love, all our spiritual gifts are useless and do not serve God.

We know someone is filled with the Holy Spirit by the gifts we see manifested in his life. But he may not be living by the Spirit. We will know if he is living his life by the Spirit only if he displays the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Elder Ee Yang shared a table to illustrate the differences between the Gifts of the Spirit and the Fruit of the Spirit.

Gifts of the Spirit	Fruit of the Spirit
Tongues, Interpretation of tongues, Prophecy, Healing, Miracles, Faith, Wisdom, Knowledge, Discerning of spirits (1 Corinthians 12)	Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)
Will cease when Jesus returns (1 Corinthians 13:9)	Will remain even after Jesus returns
Brings about immediate spiritual impact	Brings about long term transformation
A mark of God’s grace	A mark of spiritual maturity

Love sums up the fruit of the Spirit. While we eagerly desire spiritual gifts so that we can build up the Body of Christ, we should be even more concerned to walk in the love of God. Gifts are primarily tools given by God to minister to others but to live a life that is pleasing to Him, you must bear fruit, or everything else would be worthless. The fruit of the Spirit remain long after the gifts have ceased.

Discover and develop the spiritual gifts that God has given you but at the same time cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in your life. Psalm 78:72 states that David used his God-given gifts to shepherd His people, and he did it with “integrity of heart”. We need to bring the love and presence of God into the community; we should use our gifts to minister to the poor and needy, the minorities, and the foreign workers. In the context of discipleship, although our gifts can bring about immediate spiritual impact, to effect long-term transformation, we need to love and walk alongside the person for the long haul. Love is the most excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:31) and it is proven true by actions, not by feelings (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

So, how do we cultivate the fruit of the Spirit? We need to be connected to the Source of love (John 15:4).

2. The Source of Love

God’s high standard of perfect, unconditional love for us (1 John 4:16) is known as agape love. He does not merely love; He IS love. Everything he does flows from His love.

The essence of agape love is goodwill, benevolence, and wilful delight in the object of the love. It involves faithfulness, commitment and an act of the will. Agape love is shown in the parable of the lost son. Due to the father’s agape love, he dealt with his lost son based on his identity, not his conduct. He is simply happy that his lost son has returned. We too should love others based on their identity, not their conduct.

Jesus' disciple, John, was very sure of his identity as the beloved disciple of Jesus. He reciprocated that identity and love by loving others. Jesus poured His love onto John, and John showered it on others. It is a constant flow. On the other hand, Peter lived out of emotion instead of devotion. He declared his love for Jesus, but he also denied Him. If our service and actions are based on our finite love, it will deplete. We need to take God's agape love for us as a reference point, as that is the only love that will sustain us for the long run.

3. The Attributes of Love

a) Love is others-centered, not self-centered (1 Corinthians 13:4-5)

Going back to the parable of the lost son, the elder brother in the parable stands for conditional love and self-righteousness. He does not understand the heart of the father.

No matter who we deal with in our lives, all are equally worthy of love because everyone has been purchased by the blood of Jesus. The world is increasingly transactional and our interactions have a self-serving element. Jesus is different in that He gave every good thing and did not withhold His life to save us.

b) Love rejoices with the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6)

Hollywood has corrupted the meaning of love. It tells us that romantic love has no boundaries and is free to be exercised in our own desires. It tells us that love is a feeling that you experience when you like someone. But the truth is love has boundaries and love is a choice, not a feeling.

A lot of us are living on a cognitive understanding of God's love but not experiencing it. The truth of God's love must get into the heart, not just the mind. We must be honest with God. The Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well had an honest conversation with Him. She was transformed when she realised and believed that only Jesus can offer her what her past relationships could not: unfailing love.

c) Love endures (1 Corinthians 13:7-8)

God's love always protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres. God will never forsake us. God's love never fails (Jeremiah 31:3). God is with us for the long haul.

Conclusion

God wants His children to be image bearers of himself, but sin distorts the image of God in us. Sin limits our potential and destiny. Therefore, God sent Jesus to die for our sins on the cross to redeem our identity and destiny as image bearers of God. We are to bring God's love into the world through our spiritual gifts used in the context of love.

Discussion Questions

- 1. The essence of agape love is goodwill, benevolence, faithfulness, commitment and an act of the will. What is a service or action that you have experienced or seen someone else do that speaks of agape love? Can we love like that? [15 min]**

Leader's Notes:

This is a recap question for members to think of a service or act you have witnessed done with agape love and whether members are able to do the same. Not everyone may be

able to. Why is that? What stops us from loving someone unconditionally? Dig deeper. It could be upbringing, or an expectation that love must be reciprocated, or societal norms that says we should look out for ourselves, or we believe that some people do not deserve to be loved. Acknowledge that it is difficult to love unconditionally, but we should start somewhere. It requires a huge change in mindset and an act of the will.

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving to The Next Question)

Certainly no one can match God's high standard of love and love like He does. However, we should be wary of being like the older brother in the parable of the lost son and view love based on conduct and performance.

- 2. Elder Ee Yang exhorted us to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23), while desiring the gifts of the Spirit. How do we begin?** [15 min]

Leader's Notes:

A reflect and relate question. To begin cultivating the fruit of the Spirit is to be connected to the Source of love first. This is a good time to ask your members to reflect on their relationship with God. Is it strong? Is it thriving, merely surviving or non-existent? In order for members to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit, the connection to the source must be strong.

Next, you can ask your members to reflect on which among the nine characteristics of the fruit do you most struggle with and what steps can be taken to re-connect to the Source to cultivate those we lack. This can include – being sensitive to God's voice in moments of lack, practicing the characteristics even if you lack it, etc.

Here is an article to refer to on the fruit of the Spirit:

<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/what-are-the-fruit-of-the-spirit.html>.

Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving to The Next Question)

Like John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, we love because He first loved us. As His beloved children, we bear His image and love. To be His image-bearers we should be spiritually matured and display the fruit of the Spirit.

- 3. In 1 Corinthians 13, love is mentioned in relation to spiritual gifts. Without love, all our spiritual gifts are for naught. How can we practise agape love in our daily life?** [15 min]

Leader's Notes:

Leaders, this is a call to action to encourage members to practise agape love in our day-to-day living. Some suggestions would be to start by serving in church, which not only helps us to discover and develop our spiritual gifts, but it's a good platform to practise agape love as well. You can also volunteer with NGOs and Social Service Agencies (such as RCS). A more immediate way would be to practise it in your own family by serving them and doing things for them unconditionally without expecting recognition or a return of favour. Members can also practise it in their workplace and show agape love by going the extra mile for colleagues or clients with no expectation of reward.

Transition (Wrapping Up, Vision Casting to Cell & Closing The Discussion)

We can start small with incremental changes, but the important thing is to start. Once

we start the journey to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit and practise agape love, and persevere with it, it eventually becomes second nature. Remember to seek God and rely on Him. Our own strength is not enough.

WORKS [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. RiverLifers to be intentional in cultivating the fruit of the Spirit and maturing spiritually.
 2. RiverLifers to practise agape love through serving and loving others based on their identity and not by their conduct.
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

1) 2019 Equipping Weekends (season 2)

i. We are sent @ Christmas

Sun, 3 Nov | 2-5pm | Victory Chapel

We highly encourage you to participate in this equipping as a cell group so that groups can be equipped together for this Christmas outreach season.

ii. Introduction to biblical interpretation

Sun, 10 Nov | 2-5pm | Victory Chapel

Registration can be done online at bit.ly/rlcequipping2019

2) Joining The Family

Sat, 16 Nov | 10am-1pm | Faith Chapel

Becoming a church member means making RiverLife your spiritual home and committing to what God is doing here. This is an invitation to a solid commitment and influence as we follow Christ together and share in God's movements in Singapore.

Sign up online at bit.ly/rlcjoiningthefamily by Sun, 10 Nov. For more information, please contact Karen Koh at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg.

3) RiverLife Serves

Sign up to serve at bit.ly/riverlifeserves (for details pls refer below)

Church Vision

"A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations."

Mission

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.

RiverLife Serves

“A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.”
1 Corinthians 12:7

Discover your God-given gifts by serving in a ministry team! Each of our teams play their unique role to build and support the church in living out our mission and values.

SIGN UP TO SERVE AT bit.ly/riverlifeserves

RiverLifers who serve should:

- Be part of a cell group for at least six months
- Commit to serve at least once a month



1. CARE MINISTRIES

Our Care ministries provide pastoral care in various aspects for our church family. These ministries are channels through which God’s love and healing can flow.

• 9M MINISTERS

9M Ministry is a community of women committed to journey and support expectant mothers and their spouses through prayer, encouragement and practical advice throughout the pregnancy, birth of her child and during confinement.

• AMBASSADORS FOR ALPHA

Develop friendship with pre-believers or new believers who are attending the Alpha course by engaging them in meaningful and inspiring conversations about our faith.

• AMBASSADORS FOR RIVERLIFE KINDERGARTEN

RiverLife Kindergarten is an extension of RiverLife Church to nurture children and inculcate Christian moral values in them. Many pre-believing families send their children to the Kindergarten and this provides an opportunity for the church to connect with them. Partner us to reach out and build relationships with these families through the Kindergarten’s special events and activities.

2. CELL GROUP MINISTRY

- **CELL GROUP HOSTS**

Hosts open their home (or another space) for a cell group and provide a safe, clean and welcoming environment for the weekly gatherings. We are in need of venues in the eastern and north-eastern regions particularly in Serangoon and Punggol.

3. CHILDREN MINISTRY

Do you love interacting with children and desire to play a part in moulding their hearts and minds? Serving in the Children Ministry provides the opportunity for you to sow seeds of faith and invest in the lives of our next generation.

- **SMALL GROUP TEACHERS**

Like the role of a Cell Leader, our Small Group Teachers speak into the lives of our young ones and teach the Word of God by facilitating discussion during small group time. SuperLife worship gatherings run every Sunday concurrently with English Adults gatherings at 9am & 11.30am.

Levels: Cradle Roll (0-36 months old), Nursery (3-4 years old) and Primary

Teachers are required to be above 18 years old and serve twice a month for at least a year.

4. HOSPITALITY

Is serving others your second nature? If you enjoy people and find joy in lending a helping hand, serve in the Hospitality ministry to provide a warm church family experience for RiverLifers and our guests.

- **CHEFS / CHEF'S ASSISTANT @ VOLUNTEERS' CORNER**

Our Volunteers' Corner at the Roof Terrace dishes out hearty breakfast for those who serve on Sundays. If you're passionate about serving others and love cooking, join our team! We are also in need of assistants to help pack and clean up the volunteers' corner after it closes at 11.45am.

- **FIRST AIDER**

Provide medical assistance during services or special services when required.

- **INFORMATION COUNTER ASSISTANTS**

Handle enquiries from the church family and our visitors on Sundays at the Information Counter. Facilitate registration of courses, events and seminars.

- **SECURITY PERSONNEL**

Security personnel play a part in making our church premises a safe place by keeping watch over the compound and helping in situations when security assistance is required.

- **TRAFFIC MARSHALS**

Take this opportunity to work in the frontline! Facilitate the flow of vehicles in and out of the church carpark and building. Look out for those in need and ensure a seamless church experience for them.

- **USHERS**

The first point of contact our congregants and visitors have is with our friendly ushers. They make our church family feel welcomed and at home through warm greetings, friendly handshakes and contagious smiles!

5. TECHNICAL & PRODUCTION

The Technical & Production ministry is an integral part of our weekly worship gatherings. Serving in partnership with the Holy Spirit, the team supports an atmosphere of worship in which our congregants can encounter God.

- **LIVE VIDEO CREW**

You will join the team that is responsible for weekly multi-camera production in our English Adult and Youth services as well as special events/projects. The work requires an interesting mix of creative and technical skills. For any live production, there will always be a director, a team of cameramen and a vision mixer.

- **PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Our photographers capture what God is doing in our worship gatherings and special events.

- **STAGE MANAGERS**

Swift and resourceful Stage Managers are needed to run our weekly worship gatherings and church events. They coordinate with various groups of people involved in the service or event, ensuring a seamless flow of the overall programme. Strong people skills, attention to details and a creative inclination would be an advantage.