

Love One Another Deeply

CGYG & LIFE Fellowships

January 16, 2009

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- Overview
 - Discussion questions
 - Jesus on love
 - The apostles on love
 - Peter
 - John
 - Paul
 - Summary and Application

Questions for Discussion

1. Charity and Sophia are members of your church and used to be friends, but they recently had a falling out because of some things Sophia said. After things have cooled down a little, you meet up with them individually to try to get them to reconcile. As you meet with Charity, she tells you, "I appreciate what you're trying to do, but you're wasting your time. Sophia really went too far this time. I'll never forgive her for what she said. It's over between us." What (if anything) would you say to Charity?
2. You notice that Ron (you think that's his name) has been away from church for several weeks, so you call him to see what's up. He tells you, "I've decided to leave the church because I don't think anyone really cares about me. I've been there for almost two years, and I don't think anyone even knows my name..." What would you say to Ron?
3. It's Thursday evening and a very busy week is about to draw to close. Sam, who's been coming to fellowship for a while now, has been looking forward to the weekend since Monday! He checks his e-mail and notices that the program at CGYG/LIFE this week is Bible study. Sam thinks to himself, "Man, not another Bible study... I've just spent a whole week studying and working long hours and I'd rather just treat myself to a nice, relaxing Friday evening at home watching the Raptors game or going out to my buddy's birthday party that night... there's nothing in it for me to go to fellowship this week anyways and besides, Bible study is boring..." Is there anything wrong with Sam's thinking? What words would you have for him?

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Jesus on Love

- Jesus commands us, as His disciples, to love one another as He loved us

John 13:34

"A new command I give you: *Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*"

John 15:9-17

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. *My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.* Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. *This is my command: Love each other.*

Jesus on Love

- The reality of our claim to be His disciples is demonstrated by our love for one another

John 13:35

"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

- Love for one another stems from God's love for us, as we continue in His love and live in obedience to Him

John 15:9-12

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

Jesus on Love

- Loving one another as Christ loved us means sacrificing ourselves for others

John 15:12-14

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. *Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.* You are my friends if you do what I command.”

- best exemplified in His laying down His life to pay the price for our sins

Jesus on Love

- Loving one another means humble service – the example of Jesus washing His disciples' feet

John 13:1-5, 12-17

¹It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. *Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.* ²The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Jesus on Love

- Our love should extend not just to followers of Christ, but to others as well, even to our enemies

Matthew 5:43-48

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: ***Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you***, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The Apostles on Love

- Jesus said after He left, the Holy Spirit would come to guide the disciples into all truth
 - though He had taught them for 3 years, there was much more to be said, and the Holy Spirit would come and build/expand on what He Himself had taught them
 - i.e. the Holy Spirit would continue Jesus' teaching to and through the Apostles

John 16:12-15

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ***But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth.*** He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

The Apostles on Love

- the Apostles, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, expand on what Jesus taught about love
 - Peter
 - John
 - Paul

Peter on Love

- Genuine love for one another flows from our new birth in Christ

1 Peter 1:22-23

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

- We grow in love as we feed on the Word of God

1 Peter 1:22-23, 2:1-3

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God... Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ***Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,*** now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Peter on Love

- Love is the highest of Christian virtues

1 Peter 4:8a

Above all, love each other deeply

2 Peter 1:5-8

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Progression/growth of qualities, with love at the apex

Peter on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions
 - Getting rid of negative attitudes & actions

1 Peter 2:1

Therefore, *rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.*

1 Peter 4:8a,9

Above all, love each other deeply.... Offer hospitality to one another *without grumbling.*

Peter on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions

- Developing loving attitudes

- Earnestness/fergency of love for one another

1 Peter 1:22-23

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, *love one another deeply [earnestly/fergently]*, from the heart.

- Respect/honor for one another

1 Peter 2:17

Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Peter on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions
 - Developing loving attitudes
 - Sympathy & compassion towards one another
 - A humble attitude

1 Peter 3:8

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

Peter on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions
 - Developing loving actions
 - Acting in ways that promote harmony (e.g. giving up your 'rights')
 - Treating others with compassion and humility

1 Peter 3:8

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

- Forgiving/overlooking others' sins against you

1 Peter 4:8

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

- *Not 'turning a blind eye' or 'winking' at sin, but burying it/bearing the cost yourself*

Peter on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions
 - Developing loving actions
 - Serving one another with the gifts God has given you

1 Peter 4:7-11

Above all, **love each other deeply**, because love covers over a multitude of sins. **Offer hospitality to one another** without grumbling. **Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others**, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

John on Love

- Loving one another is not a new message
 - Since the beginning of the gospel proclamation, love has been a central theme of Christianity

1 John 3:11

This is the message you heard *from the beginning: We should love one another.*

2 John 1:6

I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. *As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.*

John on Love

- Loving one another is not a new message
 - Love is not merely an optional duty for someone claiming to be a Christian, but positive proof that a person truly has been born again

1 John 4:7

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. *Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.*

1 Peter 1:22-23

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, *love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again*, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

John on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions
 - Getting rid of negative attitudes & actions: *envy* ⇒ *hate/murder*

1 John 3:12-15

Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.

Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

John on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions
 - Developing loving attitudes: *Love one another as God / Jesus Christ loved us.*

John 15:12-14

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command."

1 John 3:16

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

John on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions
 - Developing loving attitudes: *Love one another as God / Jesus Christ loved us.*

1 John 4:9-12

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

John on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions
 - Developing loving attitudes & actions
 - Sharing possessions and having pity

1 John 3:17-18

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue ***but with actions and in truth.***

John on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions
 - Getting rid of negative attitudes & actions (WARNING!)

1 John 2:9-11

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But ***whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.***

1 John 3:14b-15; 18-20

Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that ***no murderer has eternal life in him....*** Dear children, ***let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*** This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

John on Love

- Love for one another involves both attitudes and actions
 - Getting rid of negative attitudes & actions (WARNING!)

1 John 4:8, 20-21

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love... If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: ***Whoever loves God must also love his brother.***

Paul on Love

- Love is paramount

Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Colossians 3:12-14

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ***And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.***

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not 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 have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing... ¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

- without love, everything we do is meaningless

Paul on Love

- True love is grounded in truth
 - Truth/right doctrine promotes unity and love
 - Falsehood promotes controversy & dissension
 - inhibits love and disrupts loving relationships
 - tears down instead of building up

1 Timothy 1:3-5

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, ***stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer*** nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. ***The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.***

1 Corinthians 13:6

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

Paul on Love

- True love is grounded in truth
 - Teaching & speaking the truth in love builds up, even if that truth sometimes by necessity has a hard edge (i.e. rebuke)

Ephesians 4:14-16

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

2 Corinthians 2:2-4

For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? I wrote as I did so that when I came I should not be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. *For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.*

Paul on Love

- True love is grounded in truth
 - But beware – knowledge/truth without love only ‘puffs up’ (with pride)

1 Corinthians 8:1b-3

We know that we all possess knowledge. ***Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.***

The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God.

- “I just call ‘em as I see ‘em” – pride masquerading as love?
(If I’m ugly, do you really need to tell me I’m ugly? Does that help build me up?)

Paul on Love

- Love involves getting rid of negative attitudes & actions towards others

Galatians 5:13-15

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. ***The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.***

Romans 13:9

The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Paul on Love

- Love involves getting rid of negative attitudes & actions towards others

Romans 12:9-17

Love must be sincere. ***Hate what is evil***; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. ***Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil.*** Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

Ephesians 4:15, 29

¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ.... ***29Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths***, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Paul on Love

- Love involves getting rid of negative attitudes & actions towards others

Romans 14:13-15

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. ***If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.***

1 Corinthians 13:4-6

Love is patient, love is kind. It ***does not envy***, it ***does not boast***, it ***is not proud***. It ***is not rude***, 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.

Paul on Love

- Love means sharing our lives with one another -
→ caring for and encouraging one another

Romans 12:9a, 15

Love must be sincere.... ***Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.***

1 Thessalonians 2:6-12

We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. ***We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.*** Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that ***we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God,*** who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Paul on Love

- Love means being patient and gentle with one another, forgiving one another's sins

Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Colossians 3:12-14

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Paul on Love

- Love means serving one another

(without grumbling, as Peter says in 1 Peter 4:9 !!!)

Galatians 5:13

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, ***serve one another in love.***

Ephesians 4:15-16

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, ***grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.***

Paul on Love

- Love means putting others' interests before your own...
 - to the point of giving up your rights and sacrificing yourself for the benefit of others – just as Christ did for us

Philippians 2:1-4

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, ***if any comfort from his love***, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, ***having the same love***, being one in spirit and purpose. ***Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.***

Ephesians 5:25-30

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body.

Paul on Love

- Love means putting others' interests before your own...
 - to the point of giving up your rights and sacrificing yourself for the benefit of others – just as Christ did for us

Romans 14:13-15, 21

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, ***make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.*** As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. ***Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died... It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything that will cause your brother to fall.***

1 Corinthians 8:13

Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

Paul on Love

- Love means putting others' interests before your own...
 - to the point of giving up your rights and sacrificing yourself for the benefit of others – just as Christ did for us

1 Thessalonians 2:6-12

We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. ***As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.*** You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

Paul on Love

- We should always be growing in love

Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. *Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.*

Summary

- Jesus commands us to love one another as He loved us
- Love comes from God and is an important evidence that God lives in us
 - love is also our primary witness to the watching world that we are Christ's disciples
 - absence of love calls into question the reality of our confession
- Love is rooted in truth
 - right doctrine promotes love; false doctrine destroys it
 - we need to speak the truth in love in order to build one another up

Summary

- Love involves both attitudes and actions
 - getting rid of negative attitudes and actions
 - malice, hatred, envy, slander, hypocrisy, deceit, pride, rudeness, vengeance, anger, etc.
 - developing loving attitudes and actions
 - humility, compassion, self-sacrifice, forgiveness
 - providing for one another's needs
 - serving one another
- We should always be growing in love

Application

- 9+ ways I'd love to see the fellowships growing in love for one another in 2009:
 1. Growing love for God and passion for living in obedience to Him
 - true love for one another flows from our love for God
 2. Deeper understanding and experience of how "wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (Eph. 3:18)
 - through deeper knowledge and application of God's Word in our lives

Application

- 9+ ways I'd love to see the fellowships growing in love for one another in 2009:
 3. Greater appreciation of the reality that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, and a corresponding willingness to share lives together accordingly
 - e.g. sharing good news, bad news; spending time together; taking care of one another's material needs
 4. "Enough about me, what about you?"
 - A lot less thinking about how others should be loving you and/or caring for you, and a lot more thinking about how you can be loving and caring for others

Application

- 9+ ways I'd love to see the fellowships growing in love for one another in 2009:
 5. More willingness to "cover over" sins (real or perceived) others may have committed against you
 - not being petty / quick to take offense / easily angered
 - forgiving one another
 - keeping no record of wrongs
 6. Ridding ourselves of
 - malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander
 - pride, conceit, arrogance, boasting, rudeness
 - passing judgment on one another
 - hatred towards one another
 - grumbling against one another
 - speech and action that cause others to stumble

Application

- 9+ ways I'd love to see the fellowships growing in love for one another in 2009:
 7. Greater passion to see one another growing in Christ, resulting in more...
 - encouraging one another
 - praying for one another
 - helping one another
 - protecting one another
 - serving one another
 - speaking the truth to one another in love
 - spurring one another on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)

Application

- 9+ ways I'd love to see the fellowships growing in love for one another in 2009:
 8. Greater willingness to make personal sacrifices and give up our 'rights' for the benefit of others
 - time & energy
 - resources (financial, emotional, etc.)
 - privacy (?) – opening our lives to others

 - Husbands for wives (and children)
 - Wives for husbands (and children)
 - Married people/couples for singles
 - Singles for married people/couples

Application

- 9+ ways I'd love to see the fellowships growing in love for one another in 2009:

9. Perseverance in love

- Continuing growth in the depth of our love

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. *Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.*

- Continuing growth in the breadth of our love

Galatians 6:9-10

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of God.

Application

- What if I'm not loving as I ought to?
 - Repent
 - Confess and seek God's forgiveness
 - Seek others' forgiveness, if necessary
 - Immerse yourself in Scripture and what God says about loving others
 - Put into practice what you learn, asking the Holy Spirit to empower you to obey

Application

- Personal reflection
 - What are some ways you think you need to grow in terms of your love for your brothers & sisters in Christ?