



Uncommon Sense 1 Corinthians Wk. 47
Marks of a Loving Fellowship
By Pastor Jody May 04/26/2026

1 Corinthians 1:25 – For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Uncommon Sense – *“God’s Wisdom over man’s pride through a Flawed Church.”*

[CALL TO HEAR]

1 Corinthians 16:15-24 ESV

¹⁵ Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints—¹⁶ be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer. ¹⁷ I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence, ¹⁸ for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such people.

Greetings

¹⁹ The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. ²⁰ All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

²¹ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. ²² If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! ²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. ²⁴ My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Pastor – “People of God, this is the Word of God.”

People – “Thanks be to God.”

Pray

Illustration

After college is when I learned/demonstrated how much my mom and dad meant to me. It came from when I entered the work force and before I met Heather. When my friends were used to going out every weekend night, I could be found rather frequently leaving them for the weekend and going home to see my parents. I went home not out of guilt, but because I enjoyed them, I cherished them, I longed to hug them, I couldn’t wait to see them. I wanted to do things for my dad, I wanted to serve them, I wanted to talk about life. In return my parents would hug me, feed me my favorite foods,



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encourage me about life, and of course rebuke me for not settling down with a nice girl.

It was during these few years that our respect turned mutual, when they looked at me still as their son but also as an accomplished adult, and I looked at them still as my parents but also as some special people who had a lot of life lessons to offer. Those were very sweet years, and family that is what makes the church so special now, it is the place where all can experience, that type of familiarity, feelings of acceptance, and challenges to be better. God has provided for us a Grace, and its' called the church, and when she is healthy it is the best place to be on earth. This is what Paul wants for the Corinthians, therefore it is what God wants for us.

Introduction

Last week as Paul was preparing the church he loved to step into this role, being the glorious physical representation of the Kingdom of God on Earth, Paul was challenging them to make sure to stand strong in the faith he taught them. There was a secret though to how they were going to make it, what would cause them to endure the hard times ahead.

1 Cor 16:13-14 ESV

¹³Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. ¹⁴Let all that you do be **done in love.**

Then v.14 becomes the hinge verse for this chapter, and it becomes the reminder of what is the greatest of all Christian attributes, and now in his farewell it becomes the thing that Paul wants to make sure the Corinthians practice. He gives that command let all you do be done in "**LOVE**". In looking at this final sermon we will see this main point emphasized, that is what all our points contribute to today.

MP

The Marks of a Healthy Church is to Practice "ALL" things in Love.



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There are three different areas to practice Love, that Paul leaves us today. First is Practice with **Loving Subjection**; there are those in the church that Paul calls attention to and essential says imitate and follow their lead. Secondly, there is the Practice of **Loving Expressions**; essential practice letting others know that they are cared for, they are loved, and there are a couple of suggestions he gives there. Then lastly there is the Practice of **Loving Discipline**; it is an expression of love when the church practices disciplining those who love not like Christ.

1. Practice with Loving Subjection.

¹⁵ Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints— ¹⁶ **be subject**¹ to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer. ¹⁷ I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence, ¹⁸ for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give **recognition** to such people.

I love how Paul starts this out. He's bringing back to mind that story he told about Stephanas?

1 Cor 1:16-17 ESV

¹⁶(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Ok those folks, the household of Stephanas, I baptized them, when I got the church going. They were most likely the first converts in Corinth. I wasn't looking to figure out a formula for public converts, I wasn't looking to show big numbers in my church planting, I wasn't looking to compete with all the other cults of personality in Corinth, I came to **Preach the Gospel**. I didn't even do it worrying about how I came across in a town that was saturated with people who liked to judge how other people sounded in public discourse

¹ **5718** ὑποτάσσομαι (*hypotassomai*), ὑποτάσσω (*hypotassō*): vb.; ≡ Str 5293; TDNT 8.39–1. LN 36.18 (dep.) **obey, be obedient** (Lk 2:51; Eph 5:22 v.r.); **2**. LN 37.31 **bring under control**, put in subjection (1Co 15:27; Eph 1:22; Php 3:21; Heb 2:5, 8). James Swanson, [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).



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(6:1-8); no words of eloquent wisdom from me. No, he came and he preached the cross, reality of sin, the need for repentance and the need for a Savior, then the glorious reward of the resurrection and of Christ who is the firstfruits (15:20-23) of that reward. The Spirit used that message to save them! This household was built on the Grace of God alone, *"lest the cross be emptied of its power"*(1:17)!

This true conversion is what led them to **"service to the saints"** (16:15) /the work of the church. Stephanas and his household met a living Jesus through the preaching of the Apostle Paul.

Two things now Paul wants from the Church in Corinth in practicing love: 1st - **"Be subject"** that is be in obedience to them. 2nd - **"Give Recognition"** to them: in the Greek it means to know them fully. Two things at this point we can say honestly that the wayward Corinthians did not want to do for anyone. They wanted to praise people not changed by the Gospel, they wanted to praise people who looked out for themselves, they wanted to praise people who sought out public recognition. Some theologians suspect that Fortunatus and Achaicus were originally servants of Stephanas because of the way they were added after the mentioning Stephanas first as the only house referred to; there is only one master of a house and yet these folks were seen as equals in Paul's commendation and deserving of recognition. Imagine the social elite being told to be subjected to give recognition/praise slaves when they returned back to Corinth!

That's just it, to be a Church worth the name of Christ, worth the testimony of He who suffered for His God's glory, that suffered for His family's Salvation, we must actively love and seek out those who have been affected by that Gospel in a powerful way. Those that sacrifice for the church, that give away their resources, time, talents, energy, years off their lives, the better paying jobs, the lucrative retirement accounts, sometimes health and length of life, those that endure taunts, threats, public disdain, and slander. Paul says 1st - **subject yourself to them/obey them**. Whatever it is that they are saying to you and however they are saying it, don't just take it as a suggestion go and do it! **Who's that start with?**



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1 Timothy 5:17 ESV

17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

This must start with the elders in the local church, but it has to go beyond that too doesn't it church? I mean, if you have elders you don't trust, you don't respect, that have disordered homes, that have bad reps in the community, that lack hospitality, then you need to find a church that has better elders. Subjection starts there! But you should have more than that.

You need a church where there are other people who model the same thing! You will need deacons that tirelessly serve the body without complaint, doesn't mean never offering admonition or kind rebuke or that push into sinful tendencies in the body, it just means it's always given for the right reasons. We need church members that know what it is like to live through hard times and display it hasn't destroyed them all for the joy of the Lord. We need to put ourselves under the subjection of such people and listen to them!

Loved ones, I will be the first to admit, I don't always like to listen to suggestions of sacrificial people because it often it calls me to give up something as well, but as Christ taught us **"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."** (Luke 9:23). Do you know who the people are in your body that are actively surrendering their lives/will to the cause of Christ? Have you put yourself into subjection, under their advice, humbled yourself to their corrections? (Don Eddy)

Ok those folks Paul says the 2nd step in **Practicing Love** is to give them **recognition**. It may be that Paul is building a Positive System Loop. Look for those who are changed by the Gospel, subject yourself to them, those who lead others give recognition for changes, and then others model those being recognized. It is not a sin family to recognize brothers and sisters for working hard at loving Christ and the body sacrificially, we see this all through the scriptures.

As Jesus said – **"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in**



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heaven.” **Mat 5:16** – Good works are put on display by God to be seen, to be encouraging, to bring God glory.

As Paul taught Timothy – “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” – **1 Timothy 4:12**

As is the call for all of us – “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” – **Ephesians 2:10**

Family, it doesn’t mean we spend a lot of time cheering on every little thing someone may do, of course we understand the call to modesty and to fight pride, but scripture alludes to the recognition of those following Christ well so that they become examples to all. We need the elders to point out when someone has sacrificed or has gone above and beyond for the body, or those that have endured persecution and have lived to tell about it. Because we all need those people to help us do the same! That comes not just from the immediate body but from our stories of faith as well like biographies of the martyrs, missionaries, and founding fathers.

So, to convey the mark of a Loving Fellowship we Practice a Loving Subjection to one another, and in this way we ALL look a little more like Christ.

2. Practice with Loving Expressions.

¹⁹The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. ²⁰All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

This second section is Practicing with Loving Expressions toward other Christians. This first part is on reaching out with **Sincere Greetings**.

It was commonplace in the ancient world to extend official greetings in a letter. In the age of TikTok and YouTube we have developed our own



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greeting, “Hey guys it’s your boy here, _____, was up!?... Smash that like button and subscribe.” Here’s the problem, that greeting has nothing to do with the person you are talking to, it is all about you - Many times, modern introductions are about who the initiating party is and what you can do for them.

In the ancient world there was always this process in official and especially loving letters to extend official greetings. Dropping names was a necessity because they couldn’t see who was there, that was a must, but the name dropping was for the purpose of letting others know you were thinking of them! Especially in Christian circles, it was important for people in that day to let you know you thought about them, as you too faced persecution while waiting for the Day of the Lord.

Paul is like, the gang is all here, Ephesus greets you, all the churches on this side of the world (Asia) greet you (representatives) and of course Aquila and Prisca say Hi! That is personal now! Those two were tent makers that got thrown out of Rome, came to Corinth, and worked with Paul to get the church started in Corinth ([Acts 18:1-3](#)), these are loved ones, they send hearty/passionate/ greetings! Greetings was the way the ancient world said, “wish you were here!” and mean it! It is as if to extend an embrace from miles away.

Now this gets really important because Paul says **all the brothers** greet you! You see this is something that was important to Jesus. Jesus had rules of Greeting. “For the Jews greeting is an important ceremony. This may be seen from Jesus’ accusation that the scribes love τοὺς ἀσπασμοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς ([Mk. 12:38; Mt. 23:6f.; Lk. 20:46; 11:43](#)).”² Jesus taught His disciples don’t play the game where you demand or wait to be noticed like the Pharisees/Scribes, you treat people as if they matter to you because they **matter to me!** I came and taught you that the first shall be last and serve the lesser just as I **came not to be served but to serve**, and to be the **ransom for many**. ([Matthew 20:26-28, Mark 10:45, John 13:1-17](#)). Paul is letting the Corinthians know, it doesn’t matter what you have done, your works don’t earn you a favorable

² Hans Windisch, “[Ἀσπάζομαι, Ἀπασπάζομαι, Ἀσπασμός](#),” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 498.



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greeting from us, you get that. Heartfelt greeting because of the **Grace of Christ!**

Family, I need you all to help me with something. I need you all to care for each other like these first century saints. When someone is not here, drop them a line, shoot them a text, write them a note, give them a call, and let them know that they were missed. Put on the love of Christ and give honor to the one who died for all the church, let all of God's people know they were thought about and cared for. Let a good part of our week and our ministry be in support of other believers in this room by letting people know you care about them and miss them, and they are in your prayers, when they are not around.

Ok so that is part one of Practicing a Loving Expression, **reaching out with a sincere loving greeting**, especially when you can't see them in person.

Now we get to talk about something that is a little bit harder to define **Practicing a Loving Expression** in the form of **Affection**. Now that gets a little harder for a specific reason. Many of you are not affectionate at all! You bristle at the idea of a hug, you shrink back from a pat on the shoulder, you even sometimes wince at a handshake! BUT in scripture there is a special place for affection and what it means between people.

Greeting each other in NT with a kiss is a very natural and culturally accepted thing. You find this as a command or as the thing you do in the NT especially by the church.

Romans 16:16 – "Greet one another with a Holy Kiss"

1 Cor 16:20 – "All brothers send you greetings, Greet them with a Holy Kiss"

2 Cor 13:12 – "Greet one another with a holy kiss"

1 Thess. 5:26 – "Greet all the brothers with a Holy Kiss"

1 Peter 5:14 – "Greet one another with a kiss of love"

You see in the ancient world this was a traditional greeting between Christian people. The word "Holy" you see is also emphasized in the greetings, that means it is not an opportunity for perversion. BTW let me just say I would



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love it if you all kept away from the opposite sex when practicing. ;) So, what is intended for this moment then? Well let's put it this way. The giving of the kiss, being it was personable, in someone's space, it would portray to everyone looking, that the two sharing the kiss really liked each other and were exchanging - **osculum sanctum** (holy kiss) or **osculum pacis** (kiss of peace).

Romans 12:10 (ESV): "Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor". – This kiss is one of the highest honors one can achieve, it means I extend to you, no matter what has transpired before between us, for peace has been extended to me.

This is in stark contrast to the "***il bacio della morte***", which was made famous by Michael Corelone to his brother Fredo Corelone for his betrayal. This was an actual practice picked up and used by the mafia in the early 19th century and was said to also model something from the scriptures. You see our Lord Jesus who should have been honored above all was not extended the *osculum pacis*, no Judas gave him the "***il bacio della morte***", kiss of death. Jesus took this dishonoring for us, the kiss held for betrayers was instead given by the one who betrayed our Lord. Family is it too much to ask that we honor one another in honor of the one that took the kiss of death for us. That when those who seek to show us peace with an affectionate gesture, perhaps a peace offering, if they are God's, turn them not away for the sake of the one that endured the turning away from His own Father.

First let's start with this, don't force yourself to kiss someone (Caesar Sedano), but how about a hug, a shoulder squeeze, a firm handshake, because that still means something. Let us show others that we are willing to be close to them, for we are at peace with them, because Christ is our buffer, and He has taken all the vehemence we deserve. Let us outdo family honor towards each other by practicing loving expressions of acknowledging those when they are absent and offering the hand of peace to those around here and let the world witness a people that actually like one another. Let all we do be done in love and let us practice that with sincere greetings and sincere affection.



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3. Practice with Loving Discipline.

²¹I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. ²²If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! ³

Last but not least, we have the official signing off, of Paul. This is not a third-party recording this in the Apostle's authority. Paul gives us the final signal that he approves of everything in the letter. But there is yet one more last sign of an ever-growing affectionate church and that is it will **practice loving discipline** or rather discipline will be applied by God against those who chose not to love. Here in these last verses is the established covenant which the church has inherited through its' father Abraham.

Genesis 12:2-3 ESV

"I will make you into a great nation, (the children of faith) and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

The church has been commanded to love, and those that love us, God will bless. Those that love us not, are placed under the curse of God, that is to continue to live under His wrath without the knowledge of Him, and if they so die in that state, will be without Him forever.

It is Paul's last way of saying, those that chose not to love in the church as I have taught you through the writing of this letter, let them be **anathema** or cursed. It is a restating of the call to obedience he gave us in Chapter 5:

1 Corinthians 5:11-13 ESV

¹¹But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater,

³ This means that the origin of *μαρναθά* can be sought only in the first Palestinian community, that it had an important place already in the worship of this community, and that as a fixed term, like the Hebrew *אָמֵן* or *וְשִׁמְנָה*, it was then adopted untranslated into the worship of the Greek speaking Christian world.

Thus *μαρναθά* is an important and authentic witness to the faith of the primitive Palestinian community. This confessed Jesus, the exalted Christ, as its Lord. Karl Georg Kuhn, "*Μαρναθά*," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 470.



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reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. ¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges those outside. **“Purge the evil person from among you.”**

A Loving Fellowship will seek to protect their own while at the same time love their enemies by turning out the impostors. When a church applies not discipline to someone that claims to be a Christian while they still practice sin on purpose, especially against others in that church, it is unloving and damning to them if we do not remove them from the body.

1 Corinthians 5:4-5 ESV

⁴ When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

But Pastor Jody that is unloving, no it is very loving of both the person and more importantly the Lord Himself. Paul gives this peculiar saying right after **anathema** and it is the word **μαρναθά**; meaning the Lord is present! ⁴ The Lord is present in the church, the Lord is present in the act of Communion, the Lord is present in the demonstration of Baptism, remember people are bringing sickness and death on themselves by abusing communion ([1 Cor 11:30](#))! The Lord is present among the body therefore let the body love as Christ and let those that love not the body be forewarned for Christ will not be defamed, mocked, or slandered as is demonstrated by how we treat one another. It may sound harsh, but people may be yet saved if you purge the evil from among the body and give them time to come to their senses out in the world.

Now here come the conclusion:

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. ²⁴ My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

⁴ “He who does not love the Lord, let him be cursed, μαρναθά.” Thus, if we take it to mean “the Lord is present,” Paul is saying: “You know that in the congregation we confess the presence of the risen Lord with the cry μαρναθά, and His presence, expressed in this cry, excludes from membership those who do not love Him.” Karl Georg Kuhn, “[Μαρναθά](#),” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 471.



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May Grace, that which you don't deserve = **His love** be with you. May my love be with you all, may you do what I have commanded you to do, and be how I would be, and love each other as you have been loved.

The Marks of a Loving Fellowship is to Practice Love in Subjection to those deserving recognition. Practicing Love in expressions of greetings and affections. Practicing Love in sometimes hard to do but very loving acts of discipline. And in this way, you too will bear the light of Christ in this world.

[CALL TO OBEY]

1) Obey by gladly submitting to proven, sacrificial servants

- Identify: Name three people in your church who consistently lay down their lives for the saints (start with your elders; include deacons and seasoned members). Write their names down.
- Seek counsel: Ask each one a specific question about your walk (marriage, parenting, time, money, service). Receive their counsel as marching orders unless it clearly contradicts Scripture.
- Imitate and recognize: Publicly thank one of them in an appropriate setting (member meeting, small group, or a note read to the body with elder approval). Then copy one concrete practice you see in their life (e.g., prayer routine, hospitality pattern, service slot).

2) Obey by practicing sincere, embodied affection and presence

- Greetings: Contact 1-2 absent members with a simple, warm message: "You were missed; how can I pray for you?" Follow up with prayer.
- Holy-kiss equivalents: Intentionally use culturally appropriate, pure signs of peace—firm handshakes, side-hugs, a hand on the shoulder—so that your body says what your mouth confesses: we are at peace in Christ.
- Hospitality: Put one date on the calendar this month to host a member or new attender. Keep it simple. Presence over polish.

MP

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Charge: Let us prayer and ask our Father to help us be subjective to those that have shown they are subjective to Christ, to help us greet each other with affection as the Lord would have us outdo each other with honor, and to correct us when we are not putting on love first and foremost.

Prayer

Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus which was lived for us. Our Lord as an act of Love came and sought out His lost rebellious family. While we were still far from God, He lavishly loved us, giving us His earned favor with the Father. Instead of loving others with our lives we loved ourselves above all. All praise to our King, our new Adam, who loved the Father with perfect obedience.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. Instead of gratitude and thankfulness for a right standing with God we rejected His love, His leadership, His Lordship. Our treasonous behavior demanded the price of our lives which in Love He gladly paid. Now instead of a hopeless eternity we are given a future that will forever be linked to the Love of God. Thanks be to our High Priest for His eternal sacrificial love!

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]



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* The Congregation will stand

Elder – **“Christians, what do we believe?”** Congregation – recites:

LBCF 1689 Chapter 27. Of the Communion of Saints, Paragraph 1. Fellowship Between Believers

Pastor Jody:

All saints are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by His Spirit and by faith, although this does not make them one person with Him.

Congregation:

They have fellowship in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory.

Pastor Jody:

Since they are united to one another in love, they have communion in each other’s gifts and graces,

Congregation:

and are obligated to carry out these duties, both public and private, in an orderly way to promote their mutual good, both in the inner and outer aspects of their lives.

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, who loved us in perfect love, providing a perfect sacrifice, and fulfilling perfect restorative discipline to His children.

Go in the name of the Son, who loved us in perfect love, by living a perfect life, providing perfect submission to the Father, turning our punishment into corrective discipline.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, who loves us perfectly, helping us to live a life of loving worship, now go and be a light unto this world!



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[FELLOWSHIP CONVERSATIONS]

1. Which of the seven marks of love (evangelism, service, submission, refreshing fellowship, respect, hospitality, affection) most needs strengthening in our home and church? What is one concrete step we can take this week?
2. "Be subject to such as these" (1 Cor. 16:16): Who are the faithful workers we should recognize and imitate? How can we tangibly honor and support them (prayer, notes, shared burdens, practical help)?
3. Hospitality (vv. 19–20): What would it look like for our household to be more open to saints and seekers this month? Set one date, one guest/family, and one simple plan.
4. "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (v. 20): In our culture, what are fitting, holy expressions of affection that build unity (e.g., warm greetings, embraces, thoughtful words)? Where do we need to repent of coldness or cliquishness?
5. "If anyone has no love for the Lord... Our Lord, come!" (v. 22): How does love for Christ shape our love for His people? How does living in light of His return (Maranatha) change our priorities in evangelism and service this week?



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