



August 2024

**Theme:** Courage to Act

**Scripture Passage:** 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 13

Hello, my name is Rev. Jee Hae Song. I am serving as an Associate Director of Missional Excellence at Upper New York Annual Conference and also as a Methodist Chaplain at Hendricks Chapel of Syracuse University. This month, we are together in prayer for the courage to act.

How do we spell love? You may say L.O.V.E. Also, in 1 Corinthians 13, the apostle Paul gives several rules for spelling it: Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way. Love is not irritable or resentful. Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (vv. 4-7)

In short, love is acting selflessly rather than selfishly. The thing is: knowing this rule and living that way are two different things.

Love doesn't come naturally. In order for us to love, we have to struggle against our selfish nature. We must work hard. So, what do we need to do to truly love?

Again in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, Paul gives us the answer. Please note that the Greek word he uses for love is Agape, which is not the common Greek word for love, such as philia or eros. Paul used Agape and he did it on purpose.

Agape describes the highest form of love, which embraces universal and sacrificial love that transcends and persists regardless of circumstances. Agape is the kind of love that is felt by a person willing to do anything for another, including sacrificing themselves, without expecting anything in return. God has shown us this Agape love through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Today, we are invited to practice this Agape love. For this reason, we need to remember that love is not just a feeling of the heart but an act of will.

Though it may be difficult, it is not impossible. We can begin with baby steps. We can be patient. We can be kind. We can refrain from being envious, boastful, arrogant, or rude. When we are tempted to dominate, we can abstain from insisting on our way. We can be pleasant instead of irritable. We can keep records of good doings instead of wrongdoings. We can rejoice in the truth.

When we continue to practice the baby steps, we will eventually be able to take giant strides of bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, and enduring all things.

We can practice love before we can be completely changed into loving nature. And in turn, your loving behavior will transform you into a loving person. Love is not just a feeling. It is an attitude and action.

Therefore, love is the call for discipleship. It is the commandment. It calls for courage to act.

“Now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.” (13:13) If all else fails, love remains. So, my friends, “Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.” (Ephesians 5:2)

### **Prayer for the Month**

Let us pray: God of love, we thank you for your love that had poured out on us while we were still sinners and unworthy of your love. With thanksgiving, we commit ourselves to practicing love in this world. So, Lord, lead us this month to a loving attitude. Order our lives around us to transform our communities. Make our lives the vehicles of love by which people are led to you. And empower us to be courageous to love when it seems difficult to love. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, who was obedient to the point of death because of love. Amen.

### **Prayer Queues or Breath Prayers for the Month**

- **August 4** - Lead us, Lord, to a loving attitude.
- **August 11** - Order our lives around love to transforms our communities.
- **August 18** - Vehicles—Make our lives the vehicles of love by which people are led to you.
- **August 25** - Empower us to be courageous to love when it seems difficult to love.

