

Impact Others

Lisa Scheffler, author

This is an exciting time in the life of Christ Fellowship! In the next few weeks we'll be unveiling a new vision that will guide our church for the next several years. This vision will focus our direction, but it is rooted in who we are as a church. At the heart of Christ Fellowship is our desire to be "all about Jesus" and our mission is to be "people helping people find and follow Christ." That isn't changing. In fact, our prayer is that through this vision, God will use us to reach more people for Jesus and make an even greater impact in our community.

So in this week's Engage God Daily we're going to focus on the idea of impacting others. It's one of Christ Fellowship's four practices, along with engage God daily, connect in a group, and worship in a gathering. Sharing the love of Jesus in practical ways with those around us is a vital practice for everyone who follows him. It's also related to the other three practices. It should be the inevitable outcome of our one on one communion with God. It's the action steps that come from our relationship with other believers as we "spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24). It's the acts of service inspired by our time worshipping together.

When you truly love Jesus and take seriously your allegiance to him, his priorities become yours. And Jesus loves to share his love and goodness with others. So this week, let's reflect on our call to impact others for Christ.

We're going to discuss four of the mission fields that we're called to:

- Our home
- Our church
- Our community
- Our world

Day 1

Impact Others at Home

The people that we have the greatest impact on are those closest to us. Whether you live with your spouse and children, your parents and siblings, with a roommate, or even if you live alone but have close-knit ties with others, you've probably found that it's in these relationships, for better or worse, that people glimpse the "real you."

When I was a new mom and left my daughter with her sitter, I always worried that she would become the tantrum-throwing toddler that I was often encountering at home. I was amazed to discover that this version of her never made an appearance. When I expressed my surprise to

the wise woman who looked after her, she nodded and smiled. She told me that children often “save their bad” for their parents.

That’s likely true of most of us. We can put on a façade for the outside world and do our best to act like the good Christian we want to be, but within our close and comfortable relationships, we can behave in ways that display how desperate we are in need of God’s grace. The selfishness, anger, jealousy, and fear that sometimes churns beneath the surface tends to ooze out at home. So how can we impact our families for Christ when they often see the worst we have to offer? We must ground our treatment of them in Christ’s love.

Today, read through part of the most well-known passages on love, 1 Corinthians 13, and consider how you can apply it to our most intimate relationships. While this passage was written to the church at Corinth to encourage them to show greater love for one another, it can speak to those of us who want to show greater love to our closest family and friends.

Read

1 Corinthians 13:1–8 (NIV)

***13** If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² 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 do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails.

- Notice the word “if” and the word “but.” What contrast is Paul setting up?
- Summarize Paul’s point and then consider, what your relationships will look like if you *don’t* exhibit the kind of love Paul describes here?

Reflect

Unlike the bright and shiny families we often present ourselves as on social media, families are often messy and complicated. It’s often true that behind the smiling Instagram photos there are moms who are guilty, overwhelmed, and depressed, Dads who are anxious and stressed out, and children who are struggling to get their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs met. Behind the glossy suburban façade are families that need to find Jesus as their hub before the pieces fly apart.

Central to who Jesus is and what he asks of us in return is love. Not love in the romantic pop song sense, but love as a verb. Not as an internal feeling, but as an expressed action and way of life. If we don't understand the true definition of love as Paul describes it here, we won't find the peace and stability in our homes that we desperately want.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul reveals his frustrations with the Corinthian church because they are exhibiting gifts such as tongues, prophecy, faith and generosity that are consistent with their faith in Christ, but without the love that is central to our relationships — both with God and others. These believers were giving the appearance of spirituality without living it out in their day to day interactions. We can do the same. We can demonstrate tremendous proficiency and giftedness in our jobs, in the ways we serve at church or in the community, and in superficial social interactions that make it look like we have it all together, but neglect to show those closest to us real, genuine, Christ-like love.

Because distinctly Christian love is rooted in Christ and flows from the sacrificial love he shows us, all our relationships should seek to find his love at their center. Our love must imitate Christ in his life, teaching, ministry, and death, seeking to take on the shape of Christ's story because that is authentic Christian love. Over and over Christ shows us that real love demonstrates a deep commitment to the good of the other person, even when it costs us.

In his commentary on this passage, Johnson sums it up this way:

“This love is above all else zealously concerned with the interests and welfare of the other. Going beyond mere concern, this love identifies with the other, taking up the interests and the concerns of the other and making them one's own. This is precisely what God's love expressed through Jesus Christ to us has modeled.”¹

Without this kind of love, we risk even our closest relationships being noise — being nothing and gaining nothing.

- Consider your family and other close relationships. Are you impacting those closest to you with Christ's love? How could you do so more?

Respond

Before the Lord in prayer, reflect on the impact you are having on those closest to you. Invite the Spirit to convict you of ways you are falling short of 1 Corinthians 13, confess and accept his grace and forgiveness. Pray for those relationships and ask the Spirit to guide you in being more loving.

Day 2

¹ Johnson, A. F. (2004). *1 Corinthians* (Vol. 7, p. 240). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Impact Others in our Church

The Christian church should be one of the most awe-inspiring organizations on earth. People from every background and walk of life coming together in love and unity to worship God and serve others. People empowered by the Holy Spirit to give supernatural wisdom, compassion, and help to the watching world. People should be wowed by the church. If they're not, why aren't they?

It takes every one of us doing what Paul describes in Romans 12:1–8 before we can be the body that Jesus desires us to be. Today let's think and pray about how we can impact one another in the family of God.

Read

Romans 12:1–8 (NIV)

***12** Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

- What gifts does Paul highlight here? How should they be used?

Reflect

The gifts are what happens when the Spirit of God takes the living sacrifice offered by a believer and uses it for the good of the body of Christ.² A believer's dedication to God and their commitment to impacting others is demonstrated in the exercise of their spiritual gifts in serving others. According to verse 3, human pride is wrong because all natural abilities and

² McKnight, *Reading Romans Backwards*, unpublished manuscript, 2018.

spiritual gifts are from God. As a result, every Christian should have a proper sense of humility and an awareness of their need to be involved with other members of Christ's body.

In verses 4-5, Paul explains that a parallelism exists between a believer's physical body which has parts with differing functions, and the community of believers in Christ as a spiritual body. The point is that each member functions to serve the body, not the body to serve the members.

In the Greek, there is a word play in verse six, "*Believers possess different **charismata** ("gifts"); but each one is the product of God's **charis** ("grace").*³ It's important for us to remember that the gifts Paul lists are just that, they are given to us by the Spirit to build up the body of Christ. They aren't conjured up in our own strength or for our own purposes.

Paul lists different gifts of the Spirit in three of his letters: here in Romans, in 1 Corinthians, and in Ephesians. None of the lists are identical and only prophecy and teaching appear on all three. Paul is not giving us an exhaustive list.

Even though he mentions several gifts by name, Paul is leaving room for the Spirit to empower people to meet the specific needs of the body at a given place and time. "Whatever the Spirit prompts you to do for the good of others is a spiritual gift."⁴ While God has created us uniquely with certain talents and abilities and it's good to prayerfully seek God's guidance as to how he might consistently use you in the body, we can get analysis-paralysis when it comes to gifting. Notice that Paul has stated things very simply and directly. If you have a gift, then use it, because you're what the body needs. So, if you're not sure what your gift is, show up and serve and see what happens!

The Spirit will do incredible things through those who are willing. I've seen a person who is usually quiet and shy boldly proclaim the gospel to a crowd. I've seen people who "aren't good with children" bless the socks off some preschoolers. If you're willing to be a "living sacrifice" and want to be used by God to impact others, you will be. The body needs you! How will you do your part?

- How is the Spirit using you to bless the body of Christ? How has he gifted you?
- Are you regularly serving in some capacity in your local church? If not, why not?
- If you're not involved in serving at Christ Fellowship, check out some of the opportunities at <https://cfhome.org/nextsteps/serve-others/in-the-church/>

Respond

Take some time of personal reflection. What would you like to do? How has God wired you? What life experiences have you had that would prepare you for a specific ministry? The

³ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 764.

⁴ McKnight.

answers will vary from person to person. Praise God for how he has gifted you and ask him for the boldness to step out in faith and impact others in your church family.

Day 3

Impact Others in our Community

One important way we can impact others is by caring for the under-resourced in our community. In our area, there are people with insufficient food, clothing, and housing. There are those who are suffering from the loss of their marriage or the death of a loved one. People all around us are suffering from crippling anxiety and are trapped by addiction. In addition, there are many people in our area who have found themselves isolated and alone. The sick, the unemployed and the prisoner need our help and compassion. There are so many needs, and so many opportunities to impact people for Christ.

As you read today's passage, identify the different groups of people in need and how Jesus identifies himself with them. Notice the various ways in which they received assistance.

Read

Matthew 25:34–40 (NIV)

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

- What examples of people in need do you see in this passage?
- Are there similar groups present in Collin County? What others you can think of?

Reflect

Years ago one of my Bible study leaders posed a provocative question that I want you to think about: "At the moment we accept Christ and are saved, why doesn't God take us straight to

heaven?” God often leaves Christians here on earth for decades and decades after they place their faith in his Son — living in this broken and fallen world, continuing to sin and be sinned against. Once our eternal destiny is secure, why don’t we get to start eternity?

Because our salvation is not all about us. While our faith cannot be less than a personal, saving relationship with Christ, it is so much more. Of course God leaves his redeemed, Spirit-filled people on earth. We have work to do! Who else will spread not only his message, but live out the implications of it in ways that draw others to Jesus? While God can act through supernatural miracles anytime he likes, he most often chooses to work through people. As his heirs and ambassadors, we can help bring God’s justice, love, generosity, peace, compassion, and mercy to this earth right now.

As we saw in Day 1, it is love that should characterize our relationships with others. As we saw on Day 2, each of us makes up part of the body of Christ and are given Christ’s work to do here on earth. Today’s passage from Matthew 25 reminds us of at least some of what this work entails. Jesus identifies himself not with the powerful and privileged, but with those in need. When we serve those he loves and cares for, we serve him.

Notice that none of the acts of service that Jesus speaks of require unique skills. They are simple acts of help such as offering food and companionship. You don’t need a specialized training to do any of the tasks that Jesus highlights! You just need the willingness to share his love and compassion. To be present and offer what help you can.

Because God has a special place in his heart for those in need, they provide an opportunity for each of us to demonstrate our love for Jesus by serving them. The question then is this: will we have God’s heart of compassion toward those who need it? To acquire that heart may mean banishing our personal biases and crossing societal boundaries. Are we willing to do that, to associate with those society might look down on? Are we willing to leave our comfort-zones and enter into the uncomfortable messiness of those with physical, emotional, and spiritual needs? Are we willing to adopt the priorities of a poor, homeless Nazarene who laid down his life to save you and me?

Sometimes we can get so overwhelmed by the vast needs of people in our community that we don’t know where to start so we do nothing. The problems of homelessness, addiction, mental illness, joblessness, domestic violence, and more are huge. So don’t try and solve a problem — help a person. Meet a need in your neighborhood, workplace, or child’s school. Donate to or volunteer with a local organization that helps people in your area. Take a bag of toiletries to the women’s shelter or take a shift at the local food pantry. Start small and see where the Lord takes you!

- What work needs to be done in your heart in order to reach out to those in need?
- How can you get involved in impacting those in our community with the love of Jesus? Need a place to start? Check out <https://cfhome.org/nextsteps/serve-others/community/>

Respond

Take some time today in prayer before the Lord. Ask him to soften your heart toward the hurting and then bring to mind a person or group of people that you can help.

Day 4

Impact Others in our World

Pastor Mike Stewart talks about growing up in rural Oklahoma during the wheat harvest:

“The fields would be filled with golden stalks moving together like ocean waves in the breeze. When the wheat is ready, there is a ten to fourteen day window of time when it must be harvested. It can be a round the clock effort; the men operating the combines, the women and teens driving grain trucks to the elevators to deposit the wheat and returning to the fields for another load. Meals are eaten on the fly because the time is urgent. And everyone keeps one eye on the sky. A sudden thunderstorm could make the fields muddy and bog down the combines. The grain would then have to dry for several days while still on the stalk before it could be deposited at the elevator. After the harvest is completed, there is a great feeling of satisfaction and relief. Each farm family has partnered with God in producing another year’s bountiful harvest.”

Several times in scripture, Jesus talks about fields ready for harvest. In John 4:35 he says, “I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.” But he is referring not to grain but people who must be reached for Christ. See what he says in our passage for today, Matthew 9:35–38

Read

Matthew 9:35–38 (NIV)

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

- What truth does Jesus proclaim here that we need to hear?

Reflect

In verse 35, Matthew summarizes Jesus’ activity during his earthly ministry. He was teaching, proclaiming the good news that the kingdom of God had arrived and was healing the sick. The

spectacular nature of Jesus' ministry attracted large crowds. As Jesus observed the crowds, he had compassion on them. The verb "to have compassion" (*splanchnizomai*) is used by the Gospel writers 12 times. Suggesting strong emotion, it means "to feel deep sympathy." Jesus loved the people and was moved by their great need.

Jesus uses two agricultural illustrations to portray both the people's condition and the appropriate action to take. The people were harassed and helpless, like sheep, without a shepherd. Like sheep bothered by wolves, with no real shepherd to guide and protect them, the people were lost. They were helpless before the religious leaders, wandering about without spiritual guidance. The religious leaders, who should have been their shepherds, had failed them miserably. In response to the people's "helpless" condition, Jesus encouraged his disciples to ask the Lord of the harvest, God the Father, to send out additional workers. The harvest was ready, for the kingdom was at hand (Matthew 4:17). But workers were needed to do the job!

The need for workers to point people to the Good Shepherd hasn't changed. We need to be out in whatever field the Lord guides us to, whether it be here in North Texas, or somewhere across the globe. If we aren't called to "go," we can help "send." We can support our global workers who are reaping in fields beyond our physical reach.

Just as Jesus did, we are to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God. As Christians, we know and believe that something monumental happened a little over 2000 years ago when Jesus Christ entered history. His birth, life, death and resurrection matter to every single person. It is extraordinarily good news for everyone! It is summed up by Paul in 1 Corinthians:

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15:3-6)

According to the Bible, something has happened, is happening, and will happen that changes everything. And while some of the impact is immediate, the repercussions of the gospel are massive, far-reaching, and eternal. The gospel is not a set of principles, a subjective way to see the world, or a collection of good advice. It rests on a historical event that has colossal implications: individually, relationally, and cosmically. As Christians we have the opportunity to not only proclaim this news, but to also help people understand what it means for them.

Many of us get intimidated by the idea of sharing our faith. If that describes you, think about it this way: you are really just telling a story. This is a story that began with creation, climaxed with the death and resurrection of Jesus and will end with his return and the renewal of all things. But this is no fairy tale that you're telling because this is a story that has impacted you personally. Your story is part of the big story! And the person you're talking to? It can become their story too.

You can also help another person see how the gospel will make a major difference in their life by explaining how it has made a difference in yours. We're not trying to be pushy or judgmental. We're just telling our stories.

People all over the world are ready to hear and receive the gospel. You can participate in the harvest by having meaningful conversations with people around you. Get to know your neighbors and co-workers. Talk with them about things that matter. Allow the same compassion that Jesus exhibited guide your relationship with them and pray for opportunities to tell them what God has done for you.

And to reach the world? When we're once again able, consider going on a short term mission trip to another part of the world so you can learn firsthand what life is like for people in contexts different from your own. Support global workers now with your prayers and finances. Visit Christ Fellowship's global worker page online to find out how you can help. (<https://cfhome.org/global-workers/>)

- How can you help with the ripe harvest of people who are ready to hear the gospel and respond to Jesus? How can you share your story with people where you live and support the efforts of those harvesting far away?

Respond

Praise God for the gospel! It is life changing. Take a moment to think about some of the ways God has changed your life since you started following Jesus. Develop a short "testimony" that you could share with someone else. Also spend some time praying for Christ Fellowship's global workers.

Day 5

We've covered a lot of ground this week as we've considered how we can impact others. Take some time to reflect on each mission field. Where is God asking you to focus?

Reflect

We've talked about impacting others in:

- Our home
- Our church
- Our community
- Our world

Read through the passages we read this week and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the Word:

[1 Corinthians 13:1–8](#)

[Romans 12:1–8](#)

[Matthew 25:34–40](#)

[1 Corinthians 15:3–6](#)

Connect

Our desire to impact others should flow from our love for God and our faith in Christ. It's not something we do to prove we're a "good person" or in the hopes of getting something in return. Jesus Christ laid down his life so we could live for eternity in his presence. This is something he did for all of humanity, and it's a message we get to share.

The Holy Spirit empowers us so we can make a difference in the lives of others right now. We have experienced God's love, goodness, and mercy, so let's share what we've received with those around us. Ephesians 2:10 tells us, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Spend some time in prayer and ask God how he would have you impact others.

Respond

How is God calling you to impact others? Think about something you can do in the short term, today or this week, and something you'd like to work towards in the next month or so. Consider asking a trusted friend to hold you accountable.