

# DROPPING YOUR GUARD: THE VALUE OF OPEN RELATIONSHIPS

AUTHENTIC LOVE  
1 CORINTHIANS 13



## The Heart of the Matter

What is love? If we were to ask ten people that question, we would probably get *at least* ten different answers. And there are many different kinds of love. We feel affection toward those we admire and who warm our hearts. We love our friends with whom we feel a deep connection. And we feel romantic love toward a spouse. But the highest form of love is charity—the type of devotion that seeks the highest good of another. This love serves unconditionally, regardless the cost. The Bible talks about this kind of sacrificial love in 1 Corinthians 13. This is the kind of love that we need most of all, and it finds its fullest expression in God’s relationship to us.



## Discovering the Way

### 1. Love Is Essential, Not Optional (1 Corinthians 13:1–3)

Love is the essential ingredient in friendships, congregations, marriages, and all relationships.

### 2. Love Is a Demonstration, Not an Inclination (1 Corinthians 13:4)

Love is an action and requires that we freely give of ourselves to others.

### 3. Love Is a Magnet That Draws Us Together (1 Corinthians 13:5–6)

Love draws individuals to one another and keeps people together.



## Starting Your Journey

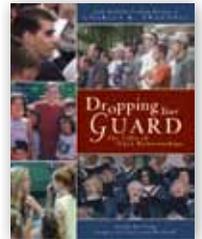
Love is a long-term investment, not a quick return (1 Corinthians 13:7–13).



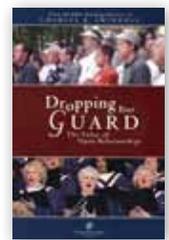
## Tools for Digging Deeper



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