

## True Love

### Scripture Reading — 1 Corinthians 13:6-7; 1 John 3:11-18

*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*  
—John 13:34-35 —

In 1929 Broadway tapped its toe to Cole Porter’s catchy new song: “What Is This Thing Called Love?” Soon it became a jazz standard, later to be sung by Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, and many others. More recently it was sung by Wynton Marsalis and Gwyneth Paltrow. And why not? It’s catchy.

Maybe this song lasts because it asks a question any person would ask: “What is this thing called love?” Though the focus of this song is romantic love, we can think of this question asking about love in general, and people have all kinds of ideas about that.

Everyone seems to have a definition. A freshman says, “I love chemistry, but not calculus.” A child says, “I love my cat.” A woman in her twenties says, “I love my family.” A middle-aged grocer says, “I love steak.” A pastor says, “I love the church.” An old hymn sings, “My Jesus, I love thee.”

Jesus said the greatest commands are to love God and people (Matthew 22:37-40). He wants the agape love of God to characterize all his followers. All through the New Testament we are called and inspired and commanded to this selfless, unconditional kind of love. In Galatians 5:22 Paul calls it “the fruit of the Spirit”—evidence of God’s Spirit working in us.

So what is love? Jesus shows us on the cross.

### Prayer

*Father, you loved the world so much that you gave your only Son, that whoever believes in him can have eternal life. Thank you! Amen.*

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