5

Love, the Greatest Gift

Key References: 1 Corinthians 13; *Steps to Christ,* chap. 1, pp. 11-15; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, pp. 1091, 1092; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 128-131; Our Beliefs, nos. 23, 10, 14















Sabbath

DO this week's activity on page 46.

power**text**

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

power**point**

God's family members show love to one another.

Do you find it difficult to love some people? Have you ever read 1 Corinthians 13 and wondered how you could have the qualities described? Do you think it's even possible? Let's read about Tina and her family to see how the qualities described in this chapter could be applied to our lives today.

Love is patient, love is kind. . . . It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). This was a very familiar Bible passage for Tina and her two brothers. The message was simple, and it made so much sense. Tina didn't think it would be difficult to love others, as the Bible teaches, but she was in for a surprise!

Tina was 10 when her parents decided to raise foster children. Her family wanted to share the blessings God had given them with those less fortunate. Over the years, God rewarded their desire by sending them a total of 75 children! Tina and her brothers gladly accepted the children and shared their toys with them. They also shared laughter, tears, birthdays, holidays, their parents, and, most of all, the love of Jesus.

One time Tina's parents gave each of the children a gift. The children enjoyed their gifts and played with them throughout the day. As she went to sleep that evening, Tina placed her new gift on top of her dresser. The next morning when she woke up she noticed that her gift was not where she had left it. Had it fallen on the floor? Did she leave it in the living room? Tina looked all over her room, but couldn't find it.

5

Sunday

READ Read Deuteronomy 6:5-9 and this week's story, "Love, the Greatest Gift."

THINK How have your ideas about love changed since you were a child?

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, 1 Corinthians 13:13. Practice it every day.

PRAY Ask God to show you this week what He wants you to know about love.

Monday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 13. Why do you think it is important to read this chapter every day?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, list good things that are meaningless if done without love.

PRAY Ask God to give you the gift of love.

Tuesday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

ASK Using this passage, ask yourself such questions as, "Am I patient and kind?" Choose one of the traits in the passage and spend the next 24 hours practicing that trait.

PRAY Thank God for giving you an example of how to love through Jesus' power.

"Mother, have you seen my gift box?" asked Tina, coming down the steps and going into the kitchen.

"No," said Mom. "Didn't you take it to your room last night?"

"Yes, I thought I did," said Tina, looking troubled, "but I can't find it."

Entering the dining room, Tina found her brothers talking intensely about their missing gifts. It didn't take long before Tina noticed that there were empty



chairs at the table. Just then Dad came in with the report:

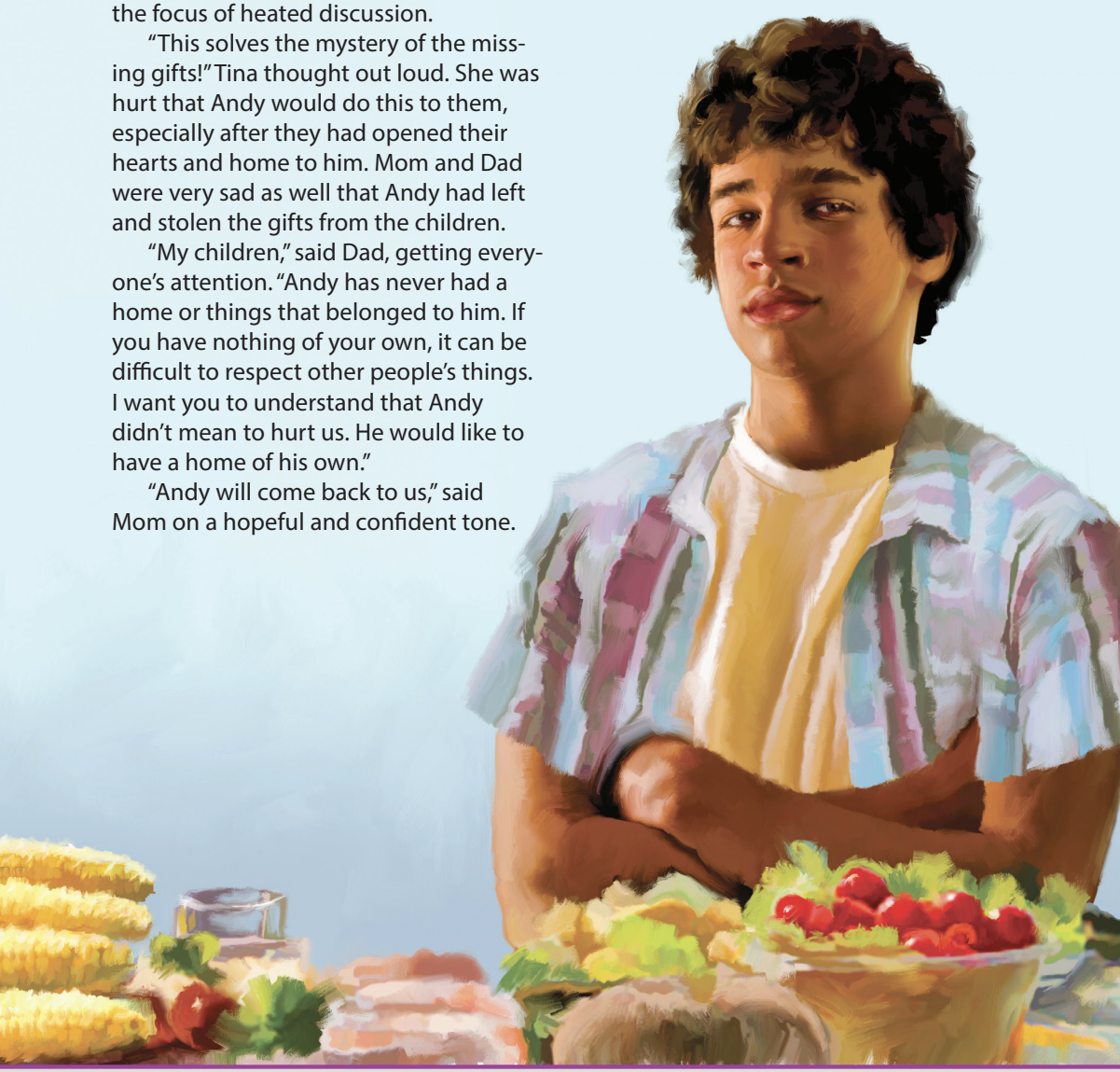
"Andy has run away!" Dad's voice was filled with anxiety. "He's not in his room, and I couldn't find him anywhere around the house or on the street." The children all looked up in shock and disbelief. All of a sudden Andy's disappearance became the focus of heated discussion.

"This solves the mystery of the missing gifts!" Tina thought out loud. She was hurt that Andy would do this to them, especially after they had opened their hearts and home to him. Mom and Dad were very sad as well that Andy had left and stolen the gifts from the children.

"My children," said Dad, getting everyone's attention. "Andy has never had a home or things that belonged to him. If you have nothing of your own, it can be difficult to respect other people's things. I want you to understand that Andy didn't mean to hurt us. He would like to have a home of his own."

"Andy will come back to us," said Mom on a hopeful and confident tone.

"Until then, we have something to do. We must remember that God loves each one of us. He has forgiven us, and if we follow His example, we should also forgive others when they do wrong to us. In Ephesians 4:32 we read, 'Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave



Wednesday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

THINK Think of something unselfish that you can do for someone today (such as spending free time helping him or her).

PRAY Ask God to help you practice love without being like a "clanging cymbal." Use love in everything you do.

Thursday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 13:11-13.

THINK Why do you think Paul talks (in verse 11) about being a child and being an adult in a passage about love?

SING Sing "Jesus Loves Me."

PRAY Ask Jesus to help you love others the way He loves you.

Friday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 13 again.

THINK Why is love greater than hope or faith?

DO With your family, light a candle at the beginning of the Sabbath. As each person passes it to another, tell what you love about the other family members.

PRAY Thank God for lighting up your life with His love. Ask Him to help you be a light by loving others around you.

you.' Let's pray that God will help us find Andy."

The family prayed for Andy and asked God to help them forgive him. Later that afternoon Andy was found. He was sorry for what he had done. Tina was still hurt and a little angry, but she remembered her parents' words.

At the evening meal Tina sat right next to Andy and thought to herself, *Now is my chance to show love and forgiveness to my brother.* She said a quick prayer asking God to help her love Andy, although she didn't feel like being kind to him. Andy slouched in his chair and started gobbling up the food on his plate. The family members tried to include him in conversation, but he didn't seem eager to talk. Then Tina broke the silence:

"Andy, we are glad that you returned home!" She was smiling as she continued. "We missed playing with you today! How good to know that our team is complete again." Tina felt peace, and she knew that God had helped her forgive her foster brother.

One afternoon a few days later she sat thinking of Andy and how she had felt when she had found out he had run away. It was then she realized that we hurt God when we run away from Him. She remembered what Dad had read in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 at worship: "Love is patient, love is kind. . . . It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." So, right then and there, Tina decided that by God's grace she would nurture a spirit of love and forgiveness toward others.

God loves us so much, and He wants us to love others the way He loves us. Will you allow His love to change you? Will you love others God's way?



PUZZLE 5

LIVE UP TO YOUR HIGH CALLING

Instructions: Just as you want to get rid of these sins in your life, cross off the following sins from the letters below them. The words formed from the remaining letters reveal a Bible verse that tells us how to live up to our high calling in Christ Jesus.

immorality impurity idolatry witchcraft

hatred discord jealousy fits of rage

selfish ambition dissensions factions envy

Dselfishambitionon'tletanyoidolatrynelo
impurityokdownofactionsnyoubecaenvyuse
youareyoimmoralityung,butsetanexdiscord
ampleforthebeliedissensionsversin
spehatredech,inconduct,inlofitsofrageve,infa
witchcraftithandinpurjealousyity
(1 Timothy 4:12).