

THE MINISTRY OF LIFE 8 - THE GREATEST IS LOVE

I. THE MOST ESSENTIAL QUALITY OF LOVE IS TO ACT FOR THE HIGHEST GOOD OF THE ONE YOU LOVE

1Cor. 13:1 *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.*

A. THE TRUTH ABOUT DOING GOOD WORKS LIES IN MOTIVE

1. NO HUMAN BEING IS CAPABLE OF LOVING OTHERS IN THIS WAY without divine intervention. Human self-interest always gets in the way of it.
2. WITHOUT LOVE, OUR WORDS AND DEEDS MEAN NOTHING
3. WITHOUT LOVE THERE IS NO SPIRITUAL BENEFIT TO US

B. WHAT DOES LOVE LOOKS LIKE?

1Cor. 13:4 *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

1Cor. 13:8 *Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.*

1. EIGHT WORDS FOR LOVE - **AGAPE** - God-quality love, **EROS** - physical or passionate love, **PHILEO** - brotherly love or affection, **STORGE** - Familial, paternal love, **PRAGMA** - practical, mature commitment, **LUDUS** - Infatuation, flirtation, **PHILAUTIA** - Self-love from healthy self-esteem to narcissism, **MANIA** - Obsessive love

- **WE AS BELIEVERS ARE CALLED TO THE HIGHEST LOVE**
- 2. **LOVE DOES** - *Bob Goff* - **Love is what we DO, not ONLY what we feel. ACTION MOTIVATED BY LOVE IS POWERFUL**
- 3. **LOVE IS SACRIFICIAL** - *From inconvenience to martyrdom*

John 15:13 *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*

- 4. **ILLUSTRATION** - *Bruce's care for George Ingledew up to and after his death. Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS)*
- **NO MATTER WHAT ELSE HAPPENS, PEOPLE SHOULD ALWAYS FEEL LOVED WHEN WE MINISTER TO THEM**

C. MATURITY IS WHAT EQUIPS US TO LOVE

Love **ALWAYS** requires a journey. Learning to love happens one decision at a time. PLUS, there is always the follow-through.

1Cor. 13:11 *When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

- 1. **THINKING AS A CHILD IS NORMAL FOR CHILDREN**
- 2. **WHEN ADULTS ARE CHILDISH WE CALL IT IMMATURITY**
- 3. **MATURITY COMES WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR**
- **EVERYTHING I NEED in order to TO BE MATURE IS WAITING FOR ME IN JESUS CHRIST**

Phil. 3:13 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.*

II. THE GREATEST IS LOVE

1Cor. 13:13 *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

A. LOVE MATTERS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE

- **LOVE MATTERS MORE THAN WEALTH**
- **LOVE MATTERS MORE THAN SUCCESS**
- **LOVE MATTERS MORE THAN ANY OTHER SPIRITUAL VALUE**

At the end of all things, everything will cease except for love. Love goes on forever. It never ends, never fails, never gives up.

B. THE GOAL OF ALL CHRISTIAN LIVING IS - LIFE. LIGHT. LOVE.

1John 3:1 *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.* ² ***Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*** ³ *And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

1. **BECAUSE WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, WE ARE ABLE TO LOVE LIKE HIM. WE HAVE CAPACITY**
2. **PURIFYING OURSELVES IS THE WORK OF BECOMING LIKE HIM**
3. **BEING THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD MEANS WE ARE DEMONSTRATING FOR THE WORLD THE WAY TO GOD'S LOVE. WE ARE AFTER THE RIGHT COMBINATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, MERCY AND BOLDNESS IN ALL OUR WORDS AND DEEDS**

C. LOVE IS TENACIOUS - It never gives up or fails (If we don't quit, we win)

Rom. 5:1 *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,* ² *through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* ³ *And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;* ⁴ *and perseverance, character; and character, hope.* ⁵ ***Now hope***

does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

1. LOVE IS COSTLY. BUT, IT'S WORKING ENDURANCE IN YOU

III. LOVE IS OUR VICTORY - LOVE ALWAYS WINS, BUT IT'S MOSTLY ALWAYS IN OVERTIME

Rom. 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?** ³³ Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:
"For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Rom. 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- **BE A MINISTER OF LIFE TO OTHERS. GIVE THEM THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN YOU**