

LESSONS THAT SHAPE OUR LIFE - 6 - LOVE

1John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and **everyone who loves is born** of God and **knows** God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love.** ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us (SHOWN TO US), that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, **that we might live through Him.** ¹⁰ **In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us** and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ **Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.***

I. LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER

A. GOD'S LOVE BRINGS THE GIFT OF LIFE TO US. THE FRUIT OF THIS LIFE WE'VE BEEN GIVEN IS TO LOVE OTHERS

- OUR ABILITY TO LOVE IS BORN OF GOD
- OUR ABILITY TO LOVE COMES FROM KNOWING GOD
- ALL LOVE STARTS WITH GOD AND NOT WITH US
- GOD HIMSELF IS LOVE
- SINCE GOD LOVES US THIS WAY, THAT'S THE WAY WE SHOULD LOVE EACH OTHER. WE LEARN OUR LESSONS!

II. THE LESSONS OF LOVE CELEBRATE LIFE AND NOT PERFORMANCE

- THAT'S WHY LOVE MUST BE UNCONDITIONAL- Not linked at all to behavior or as a reward when certain conditions are met.

A. THE PRODIGAL FATHER - LUKE 15 - HE DID NOT LEAD WITH RULES. HE LED WITH IDENTITY-AFFIRMING ACCEPTANCE - "YOU ARE MY SON"

Luke 15:22 *"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³ And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴ for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.*

ILLUSTRATION - LOVING MY LOVED ONE TOWARD DELIVERANCE AND CHANGE FROM ADDICTION AND DEPRESSION.

- *THESE HAVE BEEN THE HARDEST LESSONS OF MY LIFE.*
- *TRANSFORMATION IS CHANGE. IT IS CHANGE TOWARD GOD'S LOVE AND AWAY FROM MY OWN LOVE.*
- *IT HAS TAKEN YEARS - IT BEGAN BY DEMANDING CHANGE, THREATENING CONSEQUENCE COMBINED WITH ANGER, TEARS AND HEART BREAK. We're not after reform, we are after transformation*
- *IT CAME DOWN TO JUST FIGHTING FOR LIFE. AFTER MANY TRIPS TO THE HOSPITAL IN THE NIGHT. We gave up on better behavior and focused on just staying alive.*
- *WE CAME TO THE DECISION JUST TO LOVE AND SUPPORT THROUGH THE JOURNEY AWAY FROM ADDICTION.*
- *IT HAS BEEN MUCH PRAYER AND SUPPORT. BEING CONSISTENTLY PRESENT AND AVAILABLE.*

B. GOD'S LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL, STEADFAST, UNFAILING, FORGIVING, COMPASSIONATE AND HOLY

- ***LEARNING TO LOVE OTHERS CAN BE THE MOST PRACTICAL AND LIFE-CHANGING MISSION OF OUR LIFE***
- ***LEARNING TO LOVE OTHERS CAN BE VERY AGGRAVATING, OFTEN INCONVENIENT AND EXTREMELY FRUSTRATING***
- ***LEARNING TO LOVE OTHERS WILL TAKE YOUR ENTIRE LIFETIME. So you better get busy***

A. THE PITFALLS ON OUR PATH TOWARD LOVE

- ***THE JOURNEY TOWARD LOVE IS ABOUT RESTORING IDENTITY. We speak identity to the one we love, while at the same time we are learning who we are, or rather, what we are made of.***

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.

1. DOING GOOD WORKS APART FROM LOVE IS MEANINGLESS

1Pet. 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere **love** of the brethren, **love one another fervently with A PURE HEART,**

2. SLOPPY AGAPE IS MISGUIDED, ANYTHING GOES LOVE. IT'S NOT LOVE, IT IS PERMISSIVENESS. Check our own heart. Are we loving or are we absent? Clue: LOVE HURTS

Matt. 18:12 "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? ¹³ And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. ¹⁴ Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

- **THIS IS NOT ABOUT BACKSLIDERS, IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE WHO HAVE VALUE, BUT HAVE LOST THEIR WAY.**

4. TOUGH LOVE - IS ABOUT THE APPLICATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUS STANDARD. IT IS THE MOST PAINFUL KIND OF LOVE. INTERVENTIONS / BOUNDARIES / CONSEQUENCES **The motive must always be for revelation not for punishment**

- **SOMETIMES, WE MAKE RULES FOR OTHERS BECAUSE WE ARE AFRAID. Those rules will not release life. (Lk. 15 - Father didn't refuse son. He let him go and welcomed him back. He received him as a son when he came back. **He celebrated life.****

III. PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR

1John 4:17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have **boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.**

¹⁸ *There is **no fear in love**; but **perfect love casts out fear**, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.* ¹⁹ *We love Him because He first loved us.*

1. **LOVE IS A COMMAND** - *Every command comes with the grace to obey it.*

Matt. 22:37 Jesus said to him, “ ‘*You shall love the LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.*’³⁸

This is *the* first and great commandment. ³⁹ And *the* second is like it: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*”⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

- **LOVE IS NOT A FEELING.** *THE AFFECTION OR ATTRACTION WE EXPERIENCE MAY MATURE INTO LOVE. BUT FIRST, WE MUST UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME AN AGENT OF HIS LOVE.*
- **WHEN WE LOVE OURSELVES IT ALLOWS US TO CHOOSE TO LOVE OTHERS WITH THE FULL UNDERSTANDING THAT WE MIGHT HAVE TO PUT OUR OWN DESIRES ASIDE SOMETIMES**

2. **LOVE IS A BAPTISM** - *IT IS AN INFUSION of His LOVE that exceeds our own capacity to love*

THE “BAPTISM OF LOVE” WORD - *We were praying about what to do about **situations that we couldn’t fix or change**. Accepting that we can’t change people or their behavior. All efforts in that direction will become **control and manipulation**. Everyone gets a choice.*

GETTING A BAPTISM OF LOVE SOUNDS A LOT LIKE FEELING A GUSHING, OVERWHELMING, LOVING EMOTION. IT’S NOT. It’s to experience extremely hard, scary, unjust situations involving people during which **you choose to learn to love**. After you do, you will get a **small upgrade**. Then it happens all over again and you get to choose love again. Maybe the choice is a bit easier. The next time, the choosing may be even a bit easier. **THEN, AGAIN AND AGAIN AS YOU LEARN TO RESPOND THE WAY GOD DOES IN EVERY SINGLE CIRCUMSTANCE.**

3. **LOVE IS AN ACTION - LOVE DOES** (Bob Goff). *Love can be seen. What does love look like?*
4. **LOVE IS A CHOICE - IT IS NOT A BLIND LEAP. IT IS MORE LIKE A GRACEFUL DIVE, WITH AN OCCASIONAL BELLY-FLOP**
5. **REDEMPTIVE LOVE IS ALWAYS A SACRIFICE (BUT IT IS NEVER ENABLING)**. *It is not permissive. It is always calling others higher. It is always based on Identity and value. REDEMPTIVE LOVE RELEASES LIFE!*

1 Corinthians 13:4,7-8 TPT

Love is large and incredibly patient. Love is gentle and consistently kind to all. It refuses to be jealous when blessing comes to someone else. Love does not brag about one's achievements nor inflate its own importance. [7] Love is a safe place of shelter, for it never stops believing the best for others. Love never takes failure as defeat, for it never gives up. [8] Love never stops loving. It extends beyond the gift of prophecy, which eventually fades away. It is more enduring than tongues, which will one day fall silent. Love remains long after words of knowledge are forgotten.