

**LOVE AS A WAY
OF LIFE**

- Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 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. 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.

- Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. **1co 13:1-8**

But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

- ❖ What makes the difference between “lovers” and those people who seldom show an attitude of concern and care for others?
- ❖ What are the characteristics of loving people?
- ❖ How were these character traits developed?

The seven characteristics of a loving person:

- ❖ Kindness
- ❖ Patience
- ❖ Forgiveness
- ❖ Courtesy
- ❖ Humility
- ❖ Generosity
- ❖ Honesty

- ❖ They are habits we learn to practice when we decide to become authentically loving people.
- ❖ They are basic, practical traits that are doable in everyday life.
- ❖ Each trait is critical. If you are missing one in your relationships, you are missing something significant.

WHY WE WANT TO LOVE

True Success

- ❖ You are a person with multiple relationships. If you are like most people, you want to have the best possible relationships.
- ❖ However, it's likely that you've discovered how difficult relationships can be.
- ❖ We have misunderstandings over who gets the car, Who washes the dishes, and even why someone left the coffeemaker on we might in the break room.
- ❖ The key to success is discovering the power of loving others.

- ❖ What does true success look like? Everyone seems to have a different answer: money, promotion, fame, tenure, winning the game. All these are legitimate pursuits, but what is the one thing that gives a true sense of accomplishment ?
- ❖ Success is “leaving your corner of the world better than you found it.”
- ❖ Whatever your sphere of influence, when you are seeking to enrich the lives of others through relationships, you will find the most satisfying form of success.

- ❖ The truth is, you are made for relationships. To experience the richness of loving relationships is better than anything money, fame, or professional acclaim could bring.
- ❖ When we love others because we value them as individuals, we experience a joy unlike any other.
- ❖ Most of us have a desire to be better lovers. We want, not only to care for others, but also to love authentically in all our interactions.

- ❖ When all is said and done, the most satisfied older adults are those who have invested their lives in giving love away.
- ❖ As someone once said, everyone loves a lover.
- ❖ Self-centered living leaves us alone and empty.
- ❖ Love as a way of life leads to the deepest satisfaction possible.

The Meaning of Authentic Love

- ❖ The meaning of the word love is often confusing because the word is used in so many different ways. Every day we hear people say things like, “I love the beach. I love the mountains. I love New York.
- ❖ Love is not an emotion that comes over us or an elusive goal dependent on the actions of others.

- ❖ Authentic love is something within our capabilities, originating in our attitudes and culminating in our actions.
- ❖ If we think of love as a feeling, we shall be frustrated when we can't always work up that feeling.
- ❖ When we realize love is primarily an action, we are ready to use the tools we have to love better.
- ❖ Authentic love brings out our authentic selves, the people we want to become.

- ❖ You have heard that it was said, 'You shall **LOVE** your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
"But I say to you, **LOVE** your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. **Mt 5:43-45**
- ❖ "For if you **LOVE** those who **LOVE** you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? "**Mt 5:46**
- ❖ "But I say to you who hear: **LOVE** your enemies, do good to those who hate you"

Lu 6:27

THE BEAUTY OF AUTHENTIC LOVE

- ❖ Authentic love is as simple and real as the kind of love it takes to listen to an employee who is having a difficult day, to take your kids out for a back-to-school dinner in August, to donate money to the lot fire department, to compliment a friend, to give your spouse a back rub before bed, or to clean the kitchen for your roommate when you are already tired from a long day of work.

- ❖ Authentic love might be as bold as the kind of love that motivates the saints to give their lives for the Lord or for others.
- ❖ It's true that those who live lives of love are not exempt from the difficulties of life.
- ❖ History shows us that many people, even the most loving. Not only have suffered earthquakes, floods, etc. but have even been persecuted for advocating a life of love.
- ❖ One of the beautiful things about living a love-filled life is that we are not dependent on circumstances for our satisfaction.

- ❖ We find joy in our choice to love others, whether or not they love us in return and whether or not circumstances go the way we want them to.
- ❖ Love might be accompanied by feelings of compassion for those we are helping. But first, love is an attitude that says “I choose to focus my life on helping others.”

- ❖ When we love authentically, we realize how radical true love can be.
- ❖ Love is enough to change a superpower. For example, by taking care, of the poor and loving even their enemies, Christians in the first few centuries overcame a decaying, self-centered culture.
- ❖ We might not fit into the world around us when we set out to love others, but authentic love gives us the opportunity to discover a deeper joy than ordinary ways of the world can give.

A Matter of Survival

- ❖ All this may sound good, but in a world of constant conflict, does love stand a chance?
- ❖ Not only does love stand a chance in this world, but in fact it is our only chance. If we can come to respect one another as fellow humans who need one another and choose to look out for one another's well-being, the potential for good is unlimited. If we fail to do so, we shall lose our dignity and we shall use the technological advances of the last fifty years to destroy one another.

- ❖ We might have loftier ideas of what it means to love, such as making a grand sacrifice of time or money or even giving our lives, but why should we be willing to die for someone when we won't fill up the gas tank for her? Every trait of authentic love begins with small things.
- ❖ Love is not only realistic but our only hope of survival.
- ❖ If you truly want to love someone, begin in small ways.

How Can I Grow in Love?

- ❖ No matter what our backgrounds are, being a loving person does not come without work.
- ❖ Something in our makeup as humans fights against our desire to love authentically.

Kindness

- Love suffers long and **is kind**; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; **does not behave rudely**, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.
- And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? **Mt 5:47**

The Key to Love

- We usually are kind to the people who are kind to us.
- But what does it look like to be kind in the face of injustice and ill-treatment?
- **KINDNESS**: the joy of meeting someone else's needs before your own simply for the sake of the relationship.

The Big Impact of Small Kindnesses

- One of the steps in learning to express acts of kindness is to observe acts of kindness
- Often, especially in the family, we take acts of kindness for granted.
- Someone washes towels, mops floors, cleans mirrors, and mows grass.
- Exercise: Record every act of kindness you observe throughout one day.

A Matter of Survival

- It is a matter of human survival. In a dog-eat-dog world, eventually there's only one dog left. Without acts of kindness, the world becomes a dark and lonely prison for each of us. With acts of kindness, we can help one another survive.
- Examples:
 - Corporate kindness e.g. extreme makeover
 - Individual kindness:

- ❖ Almost anyone can respond to a crisis situation because the need is so glaring. It takes a truly caring person to identify opportunities of kindness in the flow of daily life
- ❖ We often become so involved in our own concerns that we fail to see the needs of those around us.
- ❖ Once we see the needs, we must take the giant step from seeing to responding. That : will probably mean sacrificing one or both of two prized possessions, money and time.

- ❖ More than two thousand years ago (that's two thousand years before the rush of faxes, iPods, and cell phones), the Greek philosopher Socrates warned, "Beware of the barrenness of a busy life."
- ❖ We might not think we have time to compliment the receptionist or to let the person at the front desk of the movie theater know that someone's car lights are on in the parking lot.

- ❖ How much more fulfilling our lives could be if people were more important to us than the clock!
- ❖ When kindness becomes a natural part of our lives, we don't need to stop and think about whether it is worth it. All of us have different abilities and opportunities. The challenge is to use the knowledge and skills we have to meet the needs of those around us.

POSITIVE WORDS

- ❖ Do the words you speak in your home and job build up others? Or do they make life more difficult for others?
- ❖ If we live a life of authentic love, we will tie acts of kindness to words of kindness.
- ❖ It can be easy to slip into habits of teasing and putting down others, especially when the other person is a family member.

AFFIRMING WORDS

- ❖ The kind person looks for ways to verbally affirm others.
- ❖ Kind words affirm who people are and what they do.

HOPEFUL WORDS

- ❖ Kind words see the best in the individual and call it forth.

TRUTHFUL WORDS

- ❖ When we confront someone for the benefit of the other person in spirit of meekness, then even confrontation can hold words of kindness.
- ❖ The challenge is to speak the truth and to speak it in love.

Speaking With Kindness

- ❖ Become aware of the importance of words
- ❖ Listen to yourself speaking
- ❖ Replace unwholesome words with wholesome words.
- ❖ Remember the value of every person you meet.

Patience

❖ **Love suffers long** and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; **bears all things**, believes all things, hopes all things, **endures all things**. Love never fails.

- ❖ In Western culture we are not trained to be patient.
- ❖ In our personal lives we expect instant gratification.
- ❖ We pay extra to get products delivered over night. We use interstate highways that keep us from the from the slowed pace of local traffic, etc.

Everyone Is in Process

- ❖ People are in process and that many people desire to be more loving than they presently are.
- ❖ Though none of us deserves the patience of others, when we are patient in our relationships, we remind ourselves and others that each of us can be on the way to becoming better people.

❖ **Patience is allowing someone to be imperfect.**

❖ **Being patient in one area of our lives helps us be patient in all areas.**

All in the Attitude

❖ HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Each of us is in the process of change, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse, If we are conscious of this reality, then we will be more patient toward family members, coworkers, and friends.

❖ REALIZE THE POWER OF PATIENCE

- ❖ Harsh, stormy words only damage our connections with others and often cause people to increase their inappropriate or unloving behavior.
- ❖ It's much easier to be patient with people who are patient with us.
- ❖ But when we withdraw from the impatient person, we lose the chance to see the power that patience can have

HABITS TO ACQUIRE

- ❖ When someone is particularly impatient toward you, consider it an opportunity to be particularly patient toward her.

Patience in Action

❖ CHOOSING TO LISTEN

- ❖ Patience is being willing to temporarily put up with unloving or emotional behavior in order to get at the issue that stimulates the anger.

❖ GETTING THE FACTS

- ❖ You cannot make a loving response until you have been patient long enough to get the facts. That means being willing to ask questions in order to understand another person's thoughts and feelings.

Patience in Words

❖ FACING ANGER

- ❖ If we lash out with harsh, bitter, condemning words, we make the situation worse.
- ❖ Patience is not “agreeing” with the other person in order to avoid an argument.

❖ A POSITIVE VOICE

- ❖ Every time we are frustrated, we have a choice. We can lash out hurtful words or we can ask questions, listen, seek to understand, then choose to speak words that bring healing.

The Efficiency of Patience

- ❖ Emotions, conflicts, and human needs are rarely well organized, and we can't expect them to be. But learning to process them in a positive way is crucial.
- ❖ When we are patient, we acknowledge that relationships are more important than schedules.
- ❖ The surprise is that when we put relationships first and exercise patience at home and in the workplace, our productivity and quality of work actually increase.

Letting Go of Hurry

- THE MARSHMALLOW TEST
- Cultivating the trait of patience increases our chances of success and contentment. When we commit ourselves to loving authentically, our attitude reflects our ability to focus on what is most important a le moment and patiently wait when necessary.

Becoming Patient with Ourselves

- ❖ We too are in process, even when it comes to growing in patience.
- ❖ To have an idea of what patience is, one need only watch a child learning to walk.
- ❖ Whatever the source of the stress, we are more likely to be impatient when we feel life pressing in on us. We become perfectionists.

The Process of Developing Patience

❖ BREAKING OLD PATTERNS

- ❖ Find a method to break the negative patterns
- ❖ Replace negative behavior with positive behavior.

❖ ACCEPTING REALITY

❖ SOLVING THE PROBLEM

- ❖ Patience focuses on the problem, not the person.

A New Agenda

- If you are facing a situation with a child, friend, colleague, or spouse that seems to be taking over your life, consider what it would be like to exchange your agenda in the relationship for an attitude of patience and understanding.

Forgiveness

- "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" Mt 5:23
- **Mt 6:12** And **FORGIVE** us our debts, As we **FORGIVE** our debtors. **Mt 6:14** "For if you **FORGIVE** men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also **FORGIVE** you. **Mt 6:15** "But if you do not **FORGIVE** men their trespasses, neither will your Father **FORGIVE** your trespasses.

- Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"
Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."
Mt 18:21-22

- Violence, though horrific, is expected in today's culture. Forgiveness catches us off guard.
- It goes against our assumptions.
- If we want to be loving people, then we must learn to forgive. We must forgive the deepest hurts of life as well as the daily offenses of a" a family member or a clerk's overcharging us at the hardware store.

**True forgiveness
can come only when
justice and love
work together.**

- True forgiveness can come only when justice and love work together.
- To live is to have the potential of hurting others and being hurt.
- Without forgiveness, we are left only with justice when wrong is done.
- If justice were meted out today to everyone, most of the populace would end up in prison and hell.
- We all have the opportunity to overcome our self-centered natures and learn to live for the benefit of others. That means forgiving those who offend us.

- Forgiving those who offend us, does not mean ignoring wrongs done to us.
- Our sense of justice will not allow us to overlook unloving actions. If it did, evil would prevail in the world.
- But in the tension between justice and love, love can be the more powerful reality.
- **Forgiveness is the choice to love rather than demand justice.**

Learning to Forgive

- First, a wrong is committed. We are hurt and angry because our sense of right has been violated.
- Cool off
- Confront with gentleness, truth, and an offer of forgiveness.
- Ideally, the other person owns up to the wrong and expresses a desire to not repeat it in the future.

- We lift the penalty of our anger and receive the individual back into a restored relationship with us.
- We refuse to allow the person's misdeed to thwart future growth in the relationship.
- This kind of forgiveness requires another person's participation as well as our own.

The Limits of Forgiveness

- Forgiveness does not come easily.
- Forgiveness does not remove all the consequences of wrong doing.
- Forgiveness does not immediately restore trust. But without forgiveness, trust cannot be restored.
- Forgiveness does not remove the offense from one's memory.

Negotiating Differences

- Simple irritation with someone's behavior does not call for forgiveness and apology.
- Irritation instead calls for negotiation that may lead to the person changing his behavior or may lead to an acceptance of his behavior.
- Likewise, personality conflicts do not call for forgiveness. One person is by nature organized, while another is spontaneous. If these two people work or live together, they may create tension.

**No long-term positive
relationships exist
without forgiveness.**

Loving the Person Who Refuses to Apologize

- 1. RELEASE YOUR ANGER
- 2. CONFESS (your inability to handle your anger)
- 3. RETURN GOOD FOR BAD.
- 4. USE YOUR PAIN WELL

Courtesy

Courtesy: the act of treating everyone as a personal friend.

Examples of courtesy in the life of the Lord

- The Samaritan Woman
- The children
- The deaf mute
- The man with leprosy

- Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; **does not behave rudely**, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. **1co 13:1-8**

The Value of Relationship

- The popular conception of courtesy is to be well mannered. The word courtesy, however, is much richer; it means to be “friendly-minded.”
- Courtesy is rooted in a belief crucial to every relationship: **Everyone we meet is worthy of our friendship.**
- **If we believe every person we meet is valuable, courtesy will be Inevitable.**

Treating Others with Courtesy

- SEIZING THE MOMENT
- ON THE ROAD
- LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR
- CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?
- MAKING THE SATISFYING CHOICE
- RECEIVING WITH GRATITUDE
- GIVING BAD NEWS
- SAYING I'M SORRY
- PAYING ATTENTION

Speaking with Courtesy

- Initiate conversation.
- Give your undivided attention
- Listen to understand, not to judge.
- When you must reject an idea, do it with grace.
- Apologize when needed.

How Do I Become Courteous?

- Let's be honest, some people irritate us. Yet with discipline we can be courteous even when we're irritated.
- Remember that every person you meet is struggling
- Know that every expression of courtesy enriches someone's life.

Courtesy Begins at Home

- Never speak for each other.
- Listen to each other empathetically.
- Ask j for what you want.
- when you have a conflict, focus on finding a solution rather than on winning.
- Make requests, not demands.
- Before you make a request for change, give two or three compliments.
- Once a failure has been confessed and forgiven, never bring it up again.

Humility

**STEPPING DOWN SO SOMEONE
ELSE CAN STEP UP**

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **Mt 5:3**
- Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. **Mt 18:4**
- And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted
Mt 23:12

Humility in the life of the Lord

- Samaritan Woman
- Zacchaeus
- The Cross
- Allowing us to reject him

- Research: “Compared to high-profile leaders with big personalities, the good-to-great leaders seem to have come from Mars. Self-effacing, quiet, reserved, even shy. These leaders are a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will”
- Many of us think of humility as a weak character trait, something we are supposed to show but only if we want to risk professional success and put up with people walking over us in our own homes.
- In fact humility is not an option on our way to making love a way of life

Peaceful Living

- The desire to be first is so ingrained in us that some may question whether humility can really be learned.
- The reality is that if we ever become humble in spirit, it must be learned. Have you ever seen a humble toddler?
- If we view humility as a way to experience the joy of loving others, it will become part of our attitude.

Humility: a peacefulness of heart that allows you to stand aside in order to affirm the value of someone else.

Becoming Aware of Your Place

- Once a wise grandmother told her grand son “Just remember, no one is better than you. And just remember, no one is worse than you.”
- It takes humility to live as no better and no worse than you are
- That means recognizing that you are just as valuable, and just as i^eak, as the people you are called to love.

Being Willing to Sacrifice

- True humility is more concerned with sacrificing so that someone else can get ahead than with pushing to get ahead ourselves. When an attitude of humility comes naturally to us, we are always alert to what sacrifices we might need to make to help someone else.
- If you want to show true love to someone, sacrifice something of value for the sake of the relationship.

Discovering the Strength of Humility

- George Washington humility helped prevent an uprising that could have damaged the democracy in the new country.
- While we naturally want to hide our failings and showcase our better qualities, a humility that lets others know exactly who we are has the potential to revolutionize our relationships.
- Humility, like every other loving character trait, is countercultural.

Humility as a Way of Life

- Reflecting on these three realities is the key to living out true humility:
 - 1- I have nothing that I have not received.
 - 2- My knowledge of the universe is limited.
 - 3- I am utterly dependent on something outside myself for life.

Generosity

Giving yourself to others

The Gift of Yourself

- Generosity may end with actions, but it begins with an attitude of the heart.
- When we generously give our whole selves, we show others how much we value them.
- **Generosity**: giving your attention, time, abilities, money, and compassion freely to others.

- If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. [Mt 5: 40-43](#)
- Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. [Mt 6: 20](#)

The Giving of Time

- Asking questions.
- Time to heal
- Family time
- The sacrifice of time

The Giving of Abilities

- Finding satisfaction
- The Power of vocation

The Giving of Money

Honesty

REVEALING WHO YOU REALLY
ARE

Living with integrity means

- Being open about our weaknesses.
- Recognizing the importance of truth Being consistent in behavior, words, tone, and meaning.
- Taking risks for the sake of truth.
- Keeping promises.

Rebuilding Trust

- CONFESSING IMMEDIATELY
- ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY
- BECOMING TRUSTWORTHY
- REMEMBERING THE TRUE SELF

**Love Never
Fails**