

# One from the Heart

## Love

The effectiveness, purpose, and ultimately the true joy of your life is found by living a life rooted in faith, hope and love (1 Corinthians 13:13). Faith, hope and love form a simple and powerful core for all that we are and do and it's these elements that enable us to see the breakthrough!

As a society we are obsessed by love and love stories. The biblical description of love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8), is a lot different from the world's definition of love.

The Apostle Paul seems to be saying that love trumps everything. Perhaps it is because he understands that God is love and all that God has done, and still does for us is motivated out of His love and this sets the benchmark for how we are to love one another. (1 John 4:7-11)

### **A Love Story**

From the beginning of the creation of the world, God designed us to be in a love relationship with Him. (John 3:16)

This love is so strong that it pursues us, paid the ultimate price for us and sacrificed to live for us in a way like no-one has ever done. This is God's pursuing love expressed ultimately in Jesus!

And in God's great plan to demonstrate His love to the world He created, He has designed it so that every Christian would be like a giant neon sign that displays the evidence of being in relationship with Him so all would know of His great love.

### **Growing Up and Leaving Love**

We tend to move away from love as a primary response to God as we grow up. It's as if we place a higher value on or rely on other aspects of our relationship with God instead of love.

But God wants our relationship with Him and others to be defined by love. (Revelation 2:2-5a)

We don't graduate from a love founded relationship with God. Living from this root, or core of love prevents the destruction of relationships, both our relationship with God and others. (John 15:9-12)

### **Created for a Love Relationship**

God Himself pursues a love relationship with us. He is the one who takes the initiative to bring us into this kind of relationship.

He created us for a love relationship with Himself. That is the very reason we were created; it is the ultimate purpose of our life and should and can be very real and personal to us.

God never designed a relationship with us where we were just to obey Him like robots. God designed us to be thrilled by Him and to enjoy Him. (1 John 4:16)

1. A revelation of God's love is the crucial thing that changes us
2. It's God's love that transforms us
  - + When I love God - I am ruined for the world - little else matters
  - + When I experience and know God's love - I am settled about everything else
  - + When I am loved by God - I am compelled to follow His heart

This is crucial to seeing the breakthrough of the Kingdom of God - heaven invading earth. We can't expect to see God's love flow through us to others if we haven't experienced God's love for ourselves. Love must be at the root of all things.

God abides with the person who is at home with love.

## **Love Opposed**

Just like faith and hope, love is also opposed. Most of us struggle through life because we are afraid to receive and give love. We are basically afraid of intimacy. This hinders us from having intimate fellowship with God and healthy relationships with others.

At the core of this fear is deception. Satan, who is described as "the father of lies" in John 8:44, continually lies to us about the character of the Father. Our adversary tells us that God does not love us unless we perform well enough to earn His love. He tells us that God is abusive, angry, aloof, impatient and constantly disappointed with us.

If the enemy of our souls can convince us that God has rejected us, is upset with us or has withdrawn from us because of some sin we committed, he knows we will hide from God and try to live our lives performing well enough to earn His love, thus increasing the depth of our guilt and shame pushing us further from our Heavenly Dad.

## **An Overflow of Love**

We act in love towards others because we have experienced God's love and want to share God's love. (2 Corinthians 5:15) We love others because we have experienced, and we know a love that brings us joy and peace and freedom. We want others to experience that same feeling of being loved!

Love should be the motivator and means by which we minister to everyone. There is no breakthrough without love!

## Discussion Questions

1. Do you know the love of the Father? Have you experienced the liberating, faithful love of God? Are you able to say that you love God with all of your heart?
  2. Are you comfortable with love? Are you aware that the Father takes delight in you and that He thinks about you all the time? (Zephaniah 3:17) Discuss how this makes you feel.
  3. Is there an area you have been believing a lie about how much God loves you?
  4. Discuss the correlation between abiding in God's love and being able to love others well.
  5. Read - John 17:26. Jesus prays to His Father for us to experience the same love Jesus and the Father had for one another! Need to experience the love of God afresh again today - ask Him. He is willing! Pray for one another to experience a fresh baptism of the Father's love.
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