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Love is...; 1 Cor 13:4-8a

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Introduction – 1 Corinthians 13 is the great love chapter in the Bible. We've just celebrated Valentine's Day, a day to celebrate love. The world has its own philosophy, meaning, and practice of love. Since we live in this world, being constantly influenced by it, we can easily adopt the world's definitions and practice, which is entirely at odds with God's definition and practice. The latter is true and genuine and the former is counterfeit. 1 Cor 13 will help us pursue true love toward one another and especially between husband and wife. If we love our spouses this way, we will have happy, holy, and healthy marriages.

- I. Love is the Opposite of Selfish (vv4-5)
  - a. Love is patient. You see we become very impatient with one another when we are given to self, but when we are given to one another, we learn the virtue of patience. In our fast paced, busy, self-centered world, I don't know of a greater or more needed expression of love than this.
    - i. One instance of our impatience is how we react to the sin or failures of others. As sinners, we tend to deal with sin in this way – we tend to minimize our sin and we tend to maximize the sin of others. When we allow that tendency to enter our marriages, it creates a miserable marriage. Ill. "I've got a good reason for my sin"
    - ii. We can get to the point that every little thing our spouse does, gets on our nerves. Their personalities, their habits, their tendencies, their routines – we grow impatient with everything about them. Ill. Toothpaste Why? Because we can't control their every little move. They won't do exactly what we want them to do, and we're impatient and frustrated with them.
    - iii. Prov 19:11 – Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense. There are true offenses and there are those things we make offenses.
    - iv. Love is patient. Love overlooks offenses because we are all sinners and none of us are perfect.

- v. Marriage is two imperfect sinners living together as one. Learn and pray and practice patience.
- b. Love is kind.
  - i. You see patience is love in the passive tense – it just lets things go without letting them come in between us. Kindness is love in the active tense – it intentionally goes out of its way to say and do little things here and there to express love and help and encouragement even when it is not appreciated or returned. Love is just kind.
  - ii. Love doesn't say "I'll do this for you if you do this for me." Love just does it because that's what love is...kind. You see how different God's love is from the world?
  - iii. Just imagine how happy our homes would be if we lived to outdo one another in kindness!
- c. Love does not envy or boast. This is two sides of the same issue.
  - i. Love is not jealous when our spouse excels or has success or brings in more income or has more friends – love does not envy the good in our spouses, it celebrates and applauds it.
  - ii. On the other hand, the spouse that enjoys these good things does not boast or hold it over or compare it to one another.
- d. Love is not arrogant or rude.
  - i. Have you ever been around someone who can't be happy unless they're putting other people down to make themselves feel better? It usually comes across in the form of a joke or sarcasm. If that person happens to be your spouse or you happen to be that spouse, your marriage is misery.
  - ii. You see love doesn't look down or put down. Love looks up and lifts up.
- e. Love does not insist on its own way.
  - i. Love does not claim to always be right 100% of the time. Love looks to serve rather than to be served.
  - ii. Ill. Home after work
- f. Love is not irritable or resentful. (3 things)
  - i. If you keep a record of every time your spouse has wronged you, nothing your spouse can do will ever make you happy. You'll always be irritable and resentful. Psalm 103:12 says the Lord casts our sins as far as the east is from the west. He

wipes our record clean. When we confess and repent and ask forgiveness, He looks at us and sees the righteousness of Christ instead of all of our filthy rags.

1. A willingness to actually forgive and stop holding the past against one another is absolutely essential for a healthy marriage.
  2. You've got to be able through the grace of God to start over and start clean.
- ii. Stop assuming that all of your assumptions are correct. I am convinced that false assumptions are the root of 90% of broken relationships. We assume we know motive and intent behind actions and words. We assume we can read the heart. We assume we know the reason why people do what they do and why they say what they say. And when we assume, we become irritable and resentful. We become irritable because we no longer believe that person capable of any good. We grow resentful because any good that person enjoys feels like an insult toward us.
  - iii. Give grace. Give room. Give the benefit of the doubt.
- II. Love is Opposed to Sin (v6)
- a. Love is opposed to sin because it clings to truth. That's what makes it true love, biblical love, godly love.
  - b. This is where God's definition of love is completely at odds with the world's definition of love.
    - i. There's a popular hashtag and saying found everywhere today; love is love. Notice you don't find that description in 1 Cor 13 or anywhere else in the Bible. In fact, 1 John says God is love. So love is love is not a biblical description of love; it's a worldly description of love.
    - ii. I understand that statement to mean that if some kind of feeling or attraction or expression or commitment is present, then the very presence of that feeling, attraction, expression, or commitment is justification and validation enough. All kinds and expressions of love are equal and justified.
    - iii. That's not true. Think, if you claim to be a believer, stop and think. If that were true there would be no restraint or

restriction on any relationship at all, every intimate or sexual relation would be justified – no matter what age, number, gender, or even if a marriage was involved if it were true that love is love.

- iv. But the Bible speaks of sexual immorality 32 times. Entering into an emotional or intimate relation out of the confines of marriage between a man and a woman is not love; it's sin's counterfeit for love. Love does not define love; God does.
  - v. Sin's counterfeit will ruin you eventually and ultimately eternally. That's what sin does. But God's love will save you and make you whole. That's what God does.
- c. Guys, listen to me as your pastor. God has called you to be a spiritual leader. If the way you say you love or you express your love to your girlfriend, fiancé, or spouse is causing her to sin against God, that's not love. That's not patient. That's not kind. That's selfish. That's sin.
- i. Guys, don't see how far you can go on a date. You're ruining her future marriage and yours. Treat her as one created by God in His image. Honor her, don't dishonor her.
  - ii. Men, don't take your fiancé to hotels overnight or have her move in with you before marriage. She belongs to God. Protect her purity, don't violate it.
  - iii. Husbands, don't fill your mind with unholy images and fantasies and then press those expectations on your wife and defile the sacredness of the marriage bed. She is God's daughter.
  - iv. Ephesians 5:25 says we are to love our wives as Christ loves the church. And Christ loves us in a way that we become more like Him, not less.
  - v. Men – be men of God in your relationships and your marriage.

### III. Love Refuses to Give Up

- a. Bears all things – puts up with each others faults and failures. III. Learn to put up with a lot of junk
- b. Believes all things – focuses on the good rather than the wrongs, strengths rather than the weaknesses. III. Which lens do you wear?
- c. Hopes all things – keeps working for righteousness in spite of any obstacle

- d. Endures all things – better or worse, rich or poor, sickness and health, till death do we part
- e. Love never ends. According to the world, you can fall out of love or you can grow to love another. But not according to true love. Godly love never fails, never stops, never ends.

Conclusion – How in the world can we love our spouse for a whole lifetime in this way? Because this is exactly how God loves us for eternity! By the grace and the power of the gospel, we love because He first loved us!!