

***How To Survive – And Thrive – During the Sabbatical
August 3, 2008 * 1 Corinthians 13***

Ephesians 4:15-16 – “Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

I. To thrive during the sabbatical, what 3 things does this verse call us to do?

- 1. Look to _____ (for He’s our _____.)*
- 2. _____ each other (for we’re His _____.)*
- 3. Carry out the _____ assigned to me (for my _____ matters.)*

Point 1 stresses that we’re to be a:

_____ community, and a
_____ community.

Point 2 stresses that we’re to be a:

_____ community.

II. How important is it that we grow and build ourselves up in love?

- A. It is proof that we are _____.*

- B. It is proof that we have the _____.*

- C. It is proof of our Christian _____.*

III. How does the world get love wrong?

- A. Love is proved by _____ first.*

- B. Love means never _____ a person or situation.*

- C. Love is being _____ to people.*

What does Jesus’ example show us about these ideas?

IV. The Characteristics Of Christian Love

A. Patient.

- 1. Why are conflicts inevitable in any community?*

- 2. What is the biblical procedure for handling conflict?*

B. Kindness.

- 1. Does kindness mean we will never hold another accountable or practice church discipline?*

- 2. What is the procedure for accountability & discipline in church life?*
 - 1. First there must be _____-telling.*
 - a. Beware the 10% rule!*

 - 2. But there must be _____.*

How do we do this?

 - a. When Jesus told us not to judge others, what did he mean?*

C. Other characteristics of love (and score yourself!)

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Ephesians 4:15-16 – “Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

I. To thrive during the sabbatical, what 3 things does this verse call us to do?

- 1. Look to **Jesus** (for He’s our **Head**.)*
- 2. **Love** each other (for we’re His **Body**.)*
- 3. Carry out the **work** assigned to me (for my **ministry** matters.)*

Point 1 stresses that we’re to be a:

Worshipping community, and a
Discipling community.

Point 2 stresses that we’re to be a:

Fellowshipping community.

II. How important is it that we grow and build ourselves up in love?

- A. It is proof that we are **saved**.*
- B. It is proof that we have the **Holy Spirit**.*
- C. It is proof of our Christian **maturity**.*

III. How does the world get love wrong?

- A. Love is proved by **feelings** first.*
- B. Love means never **judging** a person or situation.*
- C. Love is being **nice** to people.*

What does Jesus’ example show us about these ideas?

Because he loved us, He *overcame* his feelings rather than followed them, and thank God for that. Jesus did say, “Judge not” but then he called Herod a “fox” and the Pharisees “white-washed tombs”, he warned us to look out for false prophets, and he told an adulteress “go and sin no more” and he rebuked his disciples on repeated occasions for doing stupid, sinful things. Jesus was always gentle – he was so approachable that widows and children would run up to him, but he was not fluffy and syrupy and “nice”. He could express anger, but he never lost his temper. He spoke often about hell and judgment. He wept at the funeral of a friend. Wept over unrepentant Jerusalem. His love was passionate. “He’s not a tame lion you know.” John Eldredge would call Jesus ‘wild at heart’.

IV. The Characteristics Of Christian Love

A. Patient.

1. Why are conflicts inevitable in any community?

We have different perspectives. Different backgrounds. Different upbringings. Different personalities. Different ways of seeing things. Of course there is going to be conflict; what matters is that we manage conflict with love.

2. What is the biblical procedure for handling conflict?

Matthew 18:15-16. “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along...If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.” We manage conflict patiently, privately, prayerfully working toward reconciliation each and every step of the way. Doing what Paul says in verse 7 of 1 Cor.13. “Always protecting (the reputation of our brother or sister and the unity of the church), always trusting (that our better angels will prevail), always hoping (that reconciliation will be achieved), always persevering” because love is patient.

B. Kindness.

1. *Does kindness mean we will never hold another accountable or practice church discipline?*

In fact, if I am kind, then we will hold each other accountable and practice discipline. Psalm 141:5 – “Let a righteous man strike me – it is a kindness.”

2. *What is the procedure for accountability & discipline in church life?*

1. *First there must be truth-telling.*

- a. *Beware the 10% rule!*

John Ortberg points out that when we have to have a difficult conversation with someone, we’ll summon the courage to have the meeting, we’ll pour out our hearts and say at least 90% of what we want to say, but then when it gets down to brass-tacks, and we come to that thing which we really need to say, the crux of the matter, the last 10%, we fudge, we backoff, we get fuzzy when that’s where we need there to be clarity.

2. *But there must be grace.*

How do we do this?

Galatians 6:1 – “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.” Speaking the truth in love to another means that we go to them not as a sign that we are so much better than there are. We’re just as vulnerable to sin as they are! We need Jesus just as much as they do! It’s not that I’m better than you that I’m here; it’s that I want you to be better.

- a. *When Jesus told us not to judge others, what did he mean?*

When Jesus told us “Not to judge others”, he was referring to the world’s way of pointing out faults in others. When the world points out faults in others it’s not to build them up, it’s to build themselves up, to make themselves look better, and they do this by tearing the other person down, ripping them to shreds, dragging their rotten carcass across the world’s stage. Look, Jesus says, “You will be judged by God in that same exact way that you judge

others.” And you know, at the end of the day, that’s really all you need to keep in mind when it comes to learning how to speak the truth in love to others. Remember – it’s coming back to you.

C. Other characteristics of love (and score yourself!)