

Flourishing in the Workplace – 09 - Loving One Another

Introduction

Your love is an expression of your confidence in God's great and precious promises. Your love is a demonstration of your trust that God's will is being accomplished. Your love overflows from all that God has provided for you.

All things begin in love, flow from love, are perfected through love and return to love. All God's activities are loving activities. When God creates – God creates in love; when God rules – God rules in love; when God judges – God judges in love; when God forgives – God forgives in love; when God speaks – God speaks in love.

Love comes to you as an unsolicited and undeserved gift of life from your Father above. This gift of love overflows out of you into the lives of others.

You can love because God has forgiven you and wiped the slate clean of all your sins. You can love because God has freed you from the burdens of hate, jealousy and unforgiveness that you have carried towards others. God has empowered you to demonstrate his love by forgiving people even as he has forgiven you. You can love because God is keeping you from temptation.

Love is an overflow of the transforming power of God at work in your life. Your love for others comes as a result of your intimate relationship with the God who is love who has revealed himself to you and called you by name.

When you in quiet trust and obedience, stand confidently and willingly in his presence, God fills your cup with love until it overflows. When your cup is overflowing with God's love and somebody bumps into you, God's love will spill over into their life.

The fruit of love that you freely share with those around you blossomed and grew in the time you have spent abiding in God's presence.

When you are abiding in God's presence and you do your work – you work with God's love; when you are abiding in God's presence and you serve others – you serve with God's love; when you are abiding in God's presence and you spend time with others – you love with God's love.

Read

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'

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1 John 3:11-24

¹¹ For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

¹⁹ This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

1 John 4:7-21

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

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John 15:1-17

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

See also: Galatians 5:6, 13; Col 3:12-14; 1 Peter 1:22

Study Questions

1. All the pronouns in the Lord's prayer (Matt 6:9-13) are in the first person plural (our, us). Why would that be?
 - a. What are all the things God does in the Lord's Prayer that enable you to pray "our"?
 - b. What does it mean to pray with the word "our"?
2. In John 15:1-17 – Jesus says that he is the vine, and we are the branches. Jesus invites us to remain in him and reminds us of the love that he has for us.
 - a. What does God do for your soul, your spirit, your emotions when you remain in him?
 - b. What are the outward expressions of abiding in Christ?
3. Is loving others something we need to add to our 'to do list' or 'bucket list'? Can you self-generate love? If not where does love come from?
4. (*If time permits*) Sometimes loving others is not easy. Sometimes loving others comes at a great price. Share a story about the cost of loving someone else (either your own or story of somebody you know, or a story you have read). Why did they love this way?

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5. What is more important in your life – confidence before man or confidence before God?
 - a. Read 1 John 3:11-24; 1 John 4:16-18 – How do we live so that we can have confidence before God? How do we live a life without fear?
6. When you love someone (particularly a brother or sister in Christ) what impact might that have in their life?
7. Does loving a person mean
 - a. You allow a person to make mistakes?
 - b. You do a task because you can do it faster and better, and you are doing everything else anyways?
 - c. You need to set boundaries for yourself?
 - d. You need to remain in contact with a person?
 - e. You need to agree with a person?
 - f. You need to let a person continue to harm you or someone else (physically or emotionally)?

Application

Who is one brother or sister in Christ you are having difficulty loving? They too like us are chosen by God, they too have been made holy through Christ's death and resurrection, they too are dearly beloved by God ... They too need to daily clothes themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience ... just like we sometimes need a little help with a button or a zipper in a fancy piece of clothing so also they may need a little love today.

What is one step you can take this week to show love to that person? Share that with your partner, and pray for each other that God would give you a loving heart.