



## “Real Love Grows Up”

Pastor Paul Taylor/Mother's Day/May 10, 2009

God wants us to mature in our love because we are naturally born selfish.

John 15:9-13

- **It starts with being loved, *then* learning to love others.** If you haven't been loved, it is hard to give love. Jesus Christ can fill all love gaps if you let him. He will do it personally and through people.
  - **John 15:9-10**, *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.*
  - **Eph. 3:16-19**, I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and *to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*
- **When you really love someone-you share “joy opportunities” with them.** What are joy opportunities? The opportunity to experience life's joy that you could have spent on yourself but instead you gave it to someone else to enjoy. **You let someone else experience the joy instead of yourself. You find your joy in them experiencing joy.**
  - **Mature Leadership learns to apply this truth; immature leadership does not. (Personal Story)**
  - **John: 11-12**, 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.
- **Mature love. John 15:13**, Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command.
  - There is a sweet spot to remaining in God's love; *we must follow his example of laying down our life at his direction, with his empowerment of being loved.*
  - **Eph. 4:15-16**, Instead, speaking the truth in love, *we will in all things grow up into him* who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 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.
  - What does this mean? I believe God is saying, no love, no growth. It is a life principle. Businesses' or organizations that experience true growth will do it because of unselfish love for their employees and customers. Families: same principle. Churches: same principle. Hidden selfishness is rewarded by stunting the emotional and spiritual growth of people, relationships, organizations and nations-Christian or not. You may fool people but you don't fool God who has set this principle in place. *Selfishness stunts growth, unselfish love causes growth.*

**So what is mature love?** *It is unselfish love.* In this world we are surrounded by great examples of selfish love. Our natural tendency is to give so we can get. We will give “love” with the expectation that it will be returned to us. Unselfish love is giving away opportunities for others to be happy. Giving the experience of happiness to someone else brings an unselfish person all the happiness they desire; they are fulfilled by *seeing someone else experience* joy. That is pure God love.

**A mother's love is a good example of unselfish love.** It reaches across the racial barriers, belief barriers, the rejection barriers to love, to adopt, to give their lives unselfishly so that others can live, experience acceptance, joy, life responsibility and growth. God designed mothers to demonstrate his unconditional unselfish love; even in the animal kingdom. (*WMV News Clip*)

**Going Deeper: Because selfishness & sin has left its mark on all of us, we all struggle to know true love and how to give it.** If you really love someone, you want them to experience joy and happiness. Right?? But both mothers and fathers are increasingly robbing their children of true love and true joy because *their love* has not matured as it needs to.

- Increasingly parents are afraid of losing relationship with their children so they give to them in the wrong ways. Giving to our children out of guilt for our parental mistakes. Not developing responsibility, lack of discipline, lack of respect for authority, selfish parental lifestyles, rob children of learning to grow up and experience the joy opportunities of learning responsibility, discipline, confidence, character, moral values, humility, which teach them to truly succeed in life. The true joy is seeing our children or those under our charge, grow up, reproduce unselfish love and responsibility for God's honor and the betterment of society.
- Being overly permissive or overly harsh are the ditches the enemy prowls to find his victims to feed on. That is where offenses, resentment, bitterness, rage, anti-social behavior and ultimately death will breed its victims.
- That means teaching, re-teaching, with patient firmness-holding children to a Christ honoring morals and values, disciplining out of love not frustration and irritation. It means not making their beds or picking up after them. Caving into children's selfish, harmful demands or threats. Not paying their way to everything; not keeping them from the realities or pains of life but teaching them how to go through them with the support and counsel of God's Word and your Godly examples. Teaching them to work, to appreciate what they are given, to value others, to respect authority, to work through problems instead of running from them, teaching them to stand up in the face of ridicule and rejection.

**To come to an end today I want us to back up to the beginning:**

- Admit that we need God's help and help from others to break the selfish cycle in our lives. It doesn't require perfection, it requires us to *first receive God's love*, and *allow him to re-teach us* as parents or singles, to fill the holes and gaps left by our own parental examples and by life. We will never get it all together first-because we are all a work in progress. Jesus Christ is the "hole-filler" so none of us will ever have an excuse for not getting emotionally, spiritually healed or significantly improved. Those holes are designed to lead us to God. Otherwise we would live independently and never need him.
- Look for people with proven examples of Godly success and make an appointment with them to hear what they have learned from their successes and failures.
- Look for "joy opportunities" to give away to someone else. When you can begin to do this, it means you are growing up. Find your joy in someone else experiencing joy.