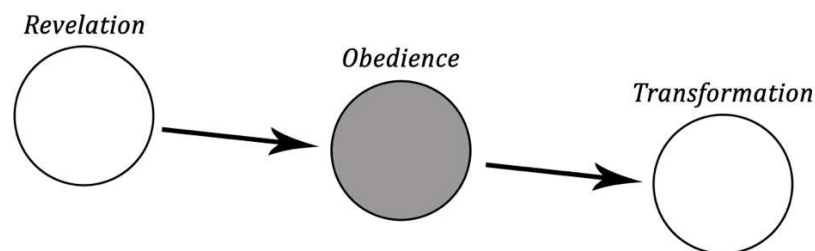


The Transformed Life: The Proof of Transformation

Dave Buehring June 19, 2022

Review

- 1) We are in a series over these summer months on bringing some definition to what it means to walk as a disciple of Jesus.
- 2) “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” – **Matthew 4:19**
 - a. A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and on mission with Jesus.
- 3) We are in our third week of talking about *being changed by Jesus*. Two weeks ago, we talked about The Process of Transformation.



- 4) Last week, we looked at The Priority of Transformation.
 - a. “But we all, seeing the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, as in a mirror, *are being transformed* into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.” – **2 Corinthians 3:18**
 - b. “Fashioned to resemble; similar”; “resemblance over time”
 - c. **“Discipleship is the process of becoming who Jesus would be if he were you.”¹**
- Dallas Willard
 - d. We talked about how God is the one that transforms our heart, and how our heart is the source of our allegiances and affections, and the command center of our decision making. We looked at 18 passages of Scripture helping us better understand what God has to say about the heart.
 - e. What is in our heart is the “real you”!
 - f. We also talked about God’s *plumbline of truth* and how **our reactions are windows to our hearts!** Relational storms, difficult situations, challenging circumstances. How we are to respond: “Lord, why did I react like that?”
- 5) Today, we are going to look at **The Proof of Transformation.** How can we – and the world around us – really know that we have been transformed by Jesus?

The Way All People Will Know

- 1) Scripturally, two things distinguish disciples of Jesus from other people on earth:
 - a. God’s presence
 - “Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?” **Exodus 33:16**
 - b. Love
 - “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” - **John 13:34-35**

¹ Dallas Willard. *The Great Omission* (Zondervan, June 13, 2006)

- In reality, it's like God built into this an accountability with the world around us! The world has a right to measure our words with our actions!
- **Love = being a good relater to people.**
- “Beloved, let us **love** one another, for **love** is from God, and whoever **loves** has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not **love** does not know God, because God is **love**.” - **1 John 4:7-8**
- “We **love** because he first **loved** us. If anyone says, ‘I **love** God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not **love** his brother whom he has seen cannot **love** God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever **loves** God must also **love** his brother.” - **1 John 4:19-21**
- Contrast with today's world: Love “If I agree I love you;” “If I don't agree, I don't love you.”
- This is a guard against self-deception.
- “We are only as close to the Lord as we are close to the person we love the least.”
~ Joy Dawson ²

Brief Background of the Church in Corinth

The city of Corinth was a major commercial center of Southern Greece at the time of Paul's writing. It was made up of Greeks, Romans, and people from the Asia – making the religion of the city a mixed-bag. Made up of both the rich and poor – with a great chasm between them.

Corinth was the home of the temple of Aphrodite. She was known as the goddess of sensual love and pleasure. It has been said that 1,000 prostitutes served the temple. It was a city known for its wild immorality, paganism, and debauchery. It was the “sin city” of its time. The word “Corinthian” was used by the Romans for someone who was excessive in their immorality.

While Paul was teaching in Ephesus, he received troubling word from fellow believers in Corinth of quarrels in the Corinthian church, which Paul sought to address with this letter.

Their central problem in this newly founded church was that they could not or would not detach themselves from the world they were used to living in. They were having problems “shaking off” the ways in which they used to live before meeting Jesus.

Their Sunday gatherings were a mess, with a few folks even getting drunk from communion. Theological arguments were plentiful, and people were suing each other. Immorality was rampant – beyond what was even tolerated by pagans around them – to the point a man was sleeping with his step-mother. Some in the church were having very real spiritual experiences that were getting out of hand, and others were using their spiritual gifts without referencing others (Chapter 12).

This is our context as we explore 1 Corinthians 13 today.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.”

² Joy Dawson. *Intimate Friendship with God*. (Chosen Books, 2008) p. 80

Love is more important than any of the gifts Paul just laid out in chapter 12!

- a. The tongues of angels. Speaking in tongues seem to have a high value among the Corinthians. Noisy gong, clanging cymbal.
- b. Prophetic powers to understand all mysteries, or all knowledge. Nothing.
- c. All faith to move mountains. Nothing.
- d. Giving away all that I have. Gain nothing.
- e. Deliver up my body to be burned (martyrdom – the ultimate sacrifice) Gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 – Expressions of Love

Not a natural love, but a supernatural one. Impossible without yielding to the Spirit of God. Forged within us by the Holy Spirit. Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians. Helps us to discern what is “fleshy” vs. godly within this passage. As we read this, consider this through the lens of relationships.

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” **Galatians 5:16-23**

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul begins to counter what is going on in the Corinthian church with love. Love is, beyond a shadow of doubt, the proof of a transformed life! If their theology – or what they believe about Jesus didn’t translate to becoming better relaters within the Body of Christ, their faith, as he stated in verses 1-3, is nothing!

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” – **John 15:12,13**

Note as we go briefly go through this, how it is rooted in laying one’s life down for another. How to be a godly relater to people. How to relate to others more like Jesus.

I want to acknowledge Heather Zempel here, whose faithful biblical cultural studies helped me get at the meaning of Paul’s expressions of love.

Also, my own ongoing growth here...yielding to the Holy Spirit’s shaping in our lives.

1) Love is Patient

long patience, suffer long, patiently endure; slow to anger and in avenging

This is patience with people. It is a decision to not give up on someone. If you dig into the original language, this specific kind of patience refers to the restraint of power. It’s when you have the right and ability to pull a power play on someone, but you choose not to.

It’s the Father running toward the Prodigal Son so he could throw him a party before the rest of the community could throw him under the bus. Love is willing to play the long game because it is patient.

2) Love is Kind

to show oneself useful, act with benevolence

Kind doesn’t just mean nice or polite. It means doing something useful or beneficial for another person. Looking for a way to use what you have to meet another’s need or bless their lives. Love leverages any power or position they may have for the sake of others: influence – possessions – gifts – insights – words of encouragement.

3) Love Does Not Envy

warmth of feeling for or against (boil); earnestly covet, zealously have, desire

There are two kinds of envy. The first is when I want what you have. The other is more deceptive. It's not wanting you to have what you have because I can't have it. Love doesn't put objects, possessions, or opportunities between people. It appreciates what others have without entertaining jealousy, sincerely rejoicing in their being blessed!

4) Love is Not Arrogant

vaunt itself; a self-display, extolling one's self excessively

Love doesn't operate out of arrogance fueled by its root, insecurity. It is not puffed up, so consumed with self that it cannot see the contributions of others in their lives. It doesn't assign value based on comparison. "Me – You." They are others-centered, not self-centered. Sees other's value, contributions, celebrates, and honors them/role.

5) Love is Not Rude

act unbecoming or unseemly; detracting from one's appearance, character, or reputation; disgracing another

Love doesn't deflate others. It isn't rude or impolite. It honors others and demonstrates respect. Love listens. Love disagrees without devaluing.

Sometimes we think we are taking a stand or are defending truth, but does it resonate with love? Yes, there are times we are to bring correction, realigning people to Scriptural truth! Matthew 18 is a three-fold process – relational context (home churches).

6) Love Does Not Insist on its Own Way

to seek after, require or demand from others

Not consumed with gratifying themselves over meeting the needs or desires of others. Love is about actively choosing someone else's highest good. Sometimes that means making decisions against yourself. It is laying down our lives to fill up another's with what they may need.

In this context...love actively seeks to maintain unity...to preserve the precious Bride of Christ. If eyes are only on ourselves – our desires, our opinions, our gifts/destiny – we miss out on the bigger picture! "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." - **Ephesians 4:1-3**

7) Love is Not Irritable

does not irritate, provoke or arouse anger

It is not easily triggered – and doesn't trigger other's triggers! Not overly sensitive and touchy, or on edge. Doesn't quickly pick up offenses. Not someone people have to walk on eggshells around – gauging one's mood to see if they can approach you.

8) Love is Not Resentful

to count, number, compute, calculate, make an account of

Not keeping a record of wrongs. This speaks of holding things over another's head. Dragging out another's wrong, holding grudges, throwing it back in someone's face. Seeking revenge. The complete opposite of forgiveness.

9) Love Does Not Rejoice at Wrongdoing, but Rejoices with the Truth

unrighteousness, iniquity, injustice, wrong

It mourns sinfulness, taking no pleasure in another's failure. It grieves when others are grieved and hurting. Love doesn't find joy when someone messes up. Love doesn't share a prayer request just to let everyone else in on the dirt in someone's life. You are able to rejoice when the "true truth" emerges. (*Plumbline: seeing truth through crooked lens*).

10) Love Bears All Things

forbear, cover, protect, preserve, to keep secret or conceal

Even though they may know the weaknesses of others, they protect or conceal what they know, so as to preserve them. If it is an issue that needs to be talked about, they go to them, not to the whole world! Love covers!

11) Love Believes All Things

commit to, to trust with, be persuaded

Love always trusts. Trusts in God in the midst of everything that comes one's way. Does that in relationship with others. Trusting God with them in the midst of unplanned life events, current difficulties, what other people may think.

12) Love Hopes All Things

hope

It persists through dark times. Love doesn't give up. It continues to love even when there is not love in return or hoping for a different outcome. Hoping in the Lord for a better future, a superior solution, a more glorious day!

13) Love Endures All Things

to endure, remain, persevere under trial, bear bravely and calmly, not flee

Endurance is a kind of patience. This is the kind of patience that endures suffering. It's about keeping calm and carrying on in the midst of adversity and chaos. It's a military term that speaks of standing your ground even as bullets are whizzing past your head. It's staying steadfast even when circumstances are perpetually inconvenient.

This is the patience of the powerless. Of the vulnerable. It's the patience that addresses sin and brokenness not in a momentary snap of the fingers. It is a patience that endures.

14) Love Never Ends

falls off, fails, perishes, to be without effect

Still fully present when everyone and everything is gone. It remains when nothing else is standing. In it for the long haul.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the two things that distinguish the disciples of Jesus from other people on earth? Are those two things present in your life daily?
2. Discuss, "love" = being a good relater to people. Substitute "is a good relater" instead of "love" as you read 1 John 4:7-8.
3. In reading all of the different expressions of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, **think of them in terms of "love is a choice in the midst of feelings; actions and not just feelings," as you read out loud**— love is: patient, kind, does not envy, is not arrogant, is not rude, does not insist on its own way, is not irritable, is not resentful, does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, never ends.
4. What did the Holy Spirit reveal to you today?
5. How are you going to obey this in your life?

NOTES