

# How to Love 2 – Devoted and Honored

## How to Love Bumper Video

Welcome back to Redemption Church in Plano Texas. You are here and I am glad. My name is Chris Fluitt and we are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of our HOW TO LOVE sermon series.

## The World knows TO LOVE.

The world we live in knows it needs TO LOVE. Every movie, book, song, everything popular in our culture carries the message that life is better with love. They are not wrong with this message; however, this world is missing important knowledge.

The world knows TO LOVE, but the world lacks the understanding of HOW TO LOVE.

## How to Love

Last we talked about a love that is sincere. A love that removes the masks of hypocrisy and is true and honest.

We also discussed the difficult lesson that we are not meant to love everything. Because we love, we should hate evil. Because we love we should cling to what is good. We need a love that can discern evil from good.

We have been focusing on a passage of scripture, Romans 12. Let's read this together.

Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere.

Hate what is evil; cling to what is

good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Our prayer for this series is this, "Lord teach us how to love."

We have need to be taught, but we also have need to be un-taught. The world has led us to believe false things about love.

## **The world: Love is best**

On the cover this lesson does not seem harmful. The Bible tells us that love is the greatest of all (1 Cor 13:13). The notion

that love is our best option is true, but to truly understand the world's lesson of "love is best", we need to ask some clarifying questions.

Best for whom?

Best by what standard?

Does "best" have a shelf life?

Why do most marriages and friendships end? They end because someone decides it would be "best" to end the relationship. It is usually not agreed upon who this ending is "best" for.

Remember for a moment something tangible you owned that you really enjoyed. Maybe a car, a shirt, a pair of shoes, a computer, a tv, or a phone come to mind. You held this object in high regard because it was "your best."

Perhaps you have driven in a car and thought, “this is the best car I have ever owned.” Maybe you have thought, “Wow! This TV is so much better than all my previous TVs.” Perhaps you saved up to purchase or were given a pair of shoes and the moment they were yours you knew, “These are the best shoes in my closet.”

But where is that “best” car today? Is that TV still something you consider best? Are those shoes still in “best” condition? Did you go shopping to replace what used to be best?

The world’s teaching on “love is best” requires some addendums.

Love is best for me right now...

This current love is best, at least until

better comes along.

Love is best for me, who cares if it is not what is best for you!

So many divorces are caused by someone finding someone else they “love” best. The divorce rate is above 50% and yet nearly everyone of them vowed to love “for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do us part.”

Many relationships die when someone is replaced...

It is clear, the world teaches us to find a love that is best for us in this moment. If the moment changes feel free to change partners. To quote the prophets Crosby,

Stills, and Nash, “if you can't be with the one you love, honey, love the one you're with.”

If the qualities of the relationship change, feel free to replace the relationship. In this regard love is not much different from shopping for the best car, tv, or phone.

Let's stop and be thankful for those who continued to love us when we were not at our best.

Be thankful for a spouse that loves you even when you are not at your best.

Be thankful for friends who have not traded you in for another.

Be thankful to God who loves us when we are nowhere near our best.

The world teaches us that love is a quest for the best, but God teaches us differently.

## **God: Love is blessed**

Seeking what is “best” is a never-ending pursuit. God instead gives us what is blessed.

Love is both a blessing you receive, and a blessing you give. Love is a blessing that God gives, and never takes away.

\*Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in love.

In these few words God teaches us how to love. Let’s try to understand these words.

“Be devoted” in the Greek is philostorgos. It means mutual affection and tender kindness one to another. This one simple

word teaches a lesson that so many need to learn.

Love is a mutual blessing one to another. Love is not a one-way street, but a collaboration of care. Love is both giving blessing and receiving blessing.

## **Give & Receive Blessing**

Chances are good that you do one of these better than the other and perhaps struggle with the other. In the lesson of HOW TO LOVE you need to know Love is blessed. Love is both receiving and giving mutual care and affection.

If we are giving love, but not receiving love then we have a one-sided love. Love must be mutual.

Perhaps you eagerly serve but refuse to be served. “No that’s ok I’ll get it...” You could be denying someone’s mutual love! Perhaps you have trouble receiving a compliment. What you think is being humble is actually rejecting mutual love. Perhaps you are an expert at giving love, but you struggle with feeling worthy of love or the humility of love.

If this is you, then you need to learn how to love. You need to learn the collaboration of care that is “philostorgos” – mutual love.

If you are receiving love but fail to give love then you also have a one-sided love.

Perhaps you struggle to serve like you should. Maybe saying, “I’ll do the dishes”

is what is lacking in your mutual love. Perhaps you have trouble giving a compliment. You need to open your mouth and be actively grateful and praise others in love.

Perhaps you receive love with ease, but it is difficult for you to reveal your heart.

Love is blessed. Love is “philostorgos,” the mutual receiving and giving of blessing.

Last point on this subject... Perhaps you have come to merely expect service. Could it be that you feel unloved even though you are being blessed with affection?

If you merely expect compliments then you may not receive them as mutual affection... and even though you are given

the loving compliment, because you expect it, you go on feeling unloved.

If you merely expect your partner to work the job and come home, you may not receive their effort as love... and even though they are working a stressful & difficult job to bless you, because you expect it you go on feeling unloved.

If you merely expect the laundry, the dinner, and the clean house, you may not receive this gift as love... and even though you are being served in love, because you expect it, you go on feeling unloved.

**Expectations become obligations and rob you of the blessing of love.**

Stop operating under the burden of expectation & obligation and start operating in the mutual blessing of love.

The truth is that you can be loved in a multitude of ways, but you allow your perspective to blind you to the gift of love.

\*Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in love.

The word for love here is not a love that is often celebrated by the world. The word for love here is Philadelphia and it means the love of a brother or sister. The word Philadelphia means to cherish someone as a family member. This even holds more meaning when we understand that the family of God goes beyond your DNA and family to learn how to love? Learn to cherish one another as children of God.

Husbands and wives, married couples, you should have a romantic love, but you should also cherish one another as children of God. Your spouses highest calling is to be a child of God... their second highest calling is to be your partner... their 3<sup>rd</sup> highest calling is being a parent to children.

Singles who want to one day get married... YOU MUST VIEW YOUR PRESPECTIVE PARTNER AS A CHILD OF GOD. Before you are married, you are to treat them as a brother and sister only! This is pleasing to the Lord. This is honoring to your marriage covenant.

In a world that is infatuated with sexuality, become infatuated with your partner's Spirituality.

A woman who knows her Bible... She is a rare beauty!

A man who prays... He is a keeper!

A woman who has Godly wisdom... You don't just want her in your bed, you want her in your life. You don't just want her body, you want her mind, her heart, and her soul.

“A man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful but his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” (Psalm 1:1-2)

...That is a man to build a life with. That is a man who will love you.

The world wants you to go after what is best right now... that kind of love is cheap. It is not really love.

Go after what is blessed! Find someone you want to bless and who also wants to bless you. The mutual blessing of love.

The world has another lesson we need to un-learn.

## **The World: Love is a Competition**

The world gives us the idea that we need to compete to earn love.

Every dating-reality show has taught us that you must be “HOT” if you are going to win the rose.

“One way or another I’m gonna getcha, getcha, getcha...” That Blondie song taught us that love is a competition and to win you must give an unstoppable effort

to get them... “I’m gonna find you... I’m gonna win you...”

The world teaches us that love is a competition to gain the trophy.

It also teaches us to compete within the relationship. We have seen husband and wife, children and parent, and friends fight each other from within the relationship.

The world teaches us to compete to score higher... to win greater... to be crowned champion...

So, the couple meets at the night club and they compete to end up with each other that night...

They begin to date and continue to compete with their differences to gain superiority...

If they date long enough they will compete to go all the way and actually get married...

In marriage, they may compete by manipulating one another...

In divorce, they will compete to see who gets the most in the settlement...

From start to finish their relationship was a competition and an endless string of one-upmanship.

God teaches us a different lesson...

**GOD: Love is a \_\_\_\_\_**

There are a lot of good words we could have put in the blank...

Love is a collaboration. Love is a cooperation. This is all true and good... but let's look back at our text.

10 Be devoted to one another in love.

Honor one another above yourselves.

After considering the words in the scripture... but also because I like to preach confusing points... I decided to go with...

## **GOD: Love is a Competition**

Wait what? Isn't this what the world taught?

The world teaches us that love is a competition to be hotter and to get your way... It is a competition to achieve greater, but God's competition is different.

10 Be devoted to one another in love.

Honor one another above yourselves.

The English Standard Version reads this way...

## **Outdo one another in showing honor. (ESV)**

It is a competition of sorts. A competition seeks to outdo your competitor. Yet, while the world seeks to OUT DO you in achieving greater honor... God teaches us to OUT DO one another in giving honor.

The world's idea of competition is to gain more honor even if it means dishonoring the competition.

-The football player who high steps into the endzone is not just gaining honor but is dishonoring the competition.

-The social media argument that dissolves into name calling is not just about winning

the battle of ideas but seeking to dishonor those with different ideas.

-The co-worker with their sights on the promotion will often try to gain honor by throwing you under the bus during the meeting with the boss.

These examples are not love. 1

Corinthians 13 tells us “Love does not dishonor others.”

## **The World: Love is a Competition of Dishonor**

The world’s lesson: love is a competition of dishonor.

God’s lesson on how to love includes a competition of honor.

## **GOD: Love is a Competition of Honor**

What would your relationship look like if you did not dishonor, yet competed to out-do one another in honor?

To OUT DO someone in giving honor, you must stop trying to only honor yourself. You must stop thinking only about yourself and start thinking of others.

10 Be devoted to one another in love.  
Honor one another above yourselves.

The verse does not tell us to dishonor ourselves... but to honor above yourself.

If you cannot honor a person, then you do not love that person.

Who is it that you have trouble honoring? That is a person you have difficulty loving.

Perhaps you don't want to honor them because "they will think they have won."

**“They will think they have won.”**

If this is in your mind and heart, then you are in the wrong competition. You are participating in the world’s competition where you seek to gain honor by dishonoring others.

Instead, love should be “you have won.”

**“You have won.”**

You have my honor. With my own mouth I will speak, out loud, honors for you. I’ll say it publicly in front of others just to honor you in front of others.

Love honors others above yourself. And if we love each other our only competition will be an effort to out-do one another in

giving honor. In love we must honor one another.

When was the last time you pulled a “you have won” in your marriage? Parents when was the last time you honored your children... and honored one another in front of your children?

God has given us lessons on how to love, but God has given us something even better.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

More than a lesson, God has given a demonstration. The greatest demonstration of love is Jesus on the cross.

## **The world: Love is best**

Jesus on the cross refused what was best for Him. He took what was worse for him because it would be best for others.

The stripes from the whip were for your healing.

The blood and the water that poured from his side was for your forgiveness.

His death was so you could live!

Jesus chose what was blessed over what was best.

## **God: Love is blessed**

Jesus blessed you from the cross. Why would he do that? Because He loves you! He demonstrated His love for you. You are loved by Jesus. You are blessed by Jesus.

Will you mutually love him back? Will you bless Him back? In these next moments, will you seek to choose what is blessed over what is best?

## **The World: Love is a Competition of Dishonor**

Did Jesus dishonor anyone from the cross? Did he ever lift-up his voice or fist against those who were harming him?

No, God demonstrated His love by honoring us from the cross.

## **GOD: Love is a Competition of Honor**

He wore a crown of thorns, a crown of dishonor, so that we could be crowned with glory and honor.

1 Peter 5:4 (NLT) And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

He received dishonor on the cross, but he was not concerned with that dishonor... he was focused on your honor.

**“You have won.”**

Honoring someone says, “you have won.” This is exactly the love demonstrated on the cross. Jesus declares you have won.

He has honored you above himself. He loves you.

Will you honor him today? What would happen... what would this church look like if for the next 10 minutes we tried to out-do Jesus in giving honor?

Jesus has revealed to us how to love.

## How to Love

The person you are having difficulty loving... Jesus loved them on the cross. God is demonstrating to you HOW TO LOVE that person. Jesus honors that person, will you? Jesus blesses that person, will you?

As we prepare our hearts to talk to God, let us all read again His Word.

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Jesus you are devoted to me. Lord, I want to devote to you right now.

Jesus you have honored me above yourself. Lord, I want to honor you above myself.