

How to Love 3 – A Love that Works

How to Love Bumper Video

Hello to everyone worshipping with us in person, and hello to everyone worshipping with us online. We are Redemption Church in Plano Texas. My name is Chris Fluitt and we are in the 3rd week of our HOW TO LOVE sermon series.

The World knows TO LOVE.

Every movie, book, song, everything popular in our culture carries the message that life is better with love.

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 devoted and honors others above self.

In love we seek to give blessing and receive blessing. God teaches us about a love that is not chasing after what is “best” but a love that is “blessed.”

We told you about the only competition that should be present in your love is the competition to out-do one another in honor.

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 easy

It was love at first sight. They just looked across the room and they both knew they had found the one person they were destined to be with. Our entertainment industry has beat this drum loudly until we have all grown deaf.

The World teaches us that love just “happens.” Some are under the impression that love is a destined force and that there is only one soulmate for each person. Others yet believe that love is a chemical reaction that takes place in your brain. Every one of these conclusions paint love as a thing that happens quickly with little to no effort.

With “easy love” everywhere, is it a surprise that “easy depression,” “easy divorce,” and “easy abuse” also seem to be everywhere?

The feeling of love is easy, but a “HOW TO LOVE” relationship takes work.

God: Love is Work

Love is hearing the baby in the a.m. hours and not rolling over and pretending you never woke up.

Love is in washing machines and lawn mowers...

Love is in helping your friend move on your day off...

Love is in volunteering your time...

Love is often showed by working a job you hate.

Love is work...

*11 Never be lacking in zeal

The word the New International Version translates as “zeal” is translated as “business” in the King James version. That Greek word is often translated as hasteful diligence and care... In other words, love is work.

The act of loving someone requires work. And that may be the trouble because we often hate work.

Work is often a chore. Work is often a painful burden. Work is often thankless. Work is many times not something we enjoy.

God: Love is Work

The teaching from God that love is work is not very tempting. And perhaps for a few minutes we need to hear this message.

Love is work. Love is so much more than a date where two people wear cute clothes and hold hands.

Love is work. Love better be more than a sexual encounter. We live in a world where many men help make a baby, but few love enough to become fathers. We also live in a world where many women may make a baby, but many refuse to love the baby enough to carry the child to term.

Love is work. Love is not just seeking to feel good. Real love, just like work often feels difficult and painful.

It would do us good to count the cost of the work of love.

*11 Never be lacking in zeal

Never be lacking in work. Always be working in love. Don't call in and act like you are sick just because you don't want to go to work today... Never be lacking in the work of love.

The text doesn't just tell you to always work, but to "not be sluggish" in working. It uses the word translated as slothful or sluggish. It says NOT TO BE SLOTHFUL OR SLUGGISH in the work of love.

God: Love is Exciting Work

Don't be sluggish, be energetic and active. Don't be slothful; be dynamic and lively. This is how to love. You excitedly work for your love.

This changes everything. The most boring dead-end job can become exciting if you are working for the right reason. The most boring or painful activity becomes worthwhile when you are working in love.

Does this describe your love? Are you energetically working your love? Are you dynamically working in love? This is how to love!

The World: Love is Hot

This should hardly be a surprise.

The following scene describes every 90s teen movie... 2 guys are standing (in the mall, in school, or at a party) and some cute girls walk by. The nerdier

of the 2 friends turns to his buddy and says, “I think I’m in love.”

So much of the world’s understanding of love is attributed to physical passion.

The World: Love is Hot (Carnal)

This understanding is carnal. The Bible tells us to avoid carnal mindsets and says they lead to death.

God: Love is Hot (Spiritually)

This might seem a little surprising. Perhaps in your love life you have not pursued someone for their spiritual “hotness.” Perhaps you have never considered a red-hot spirituality as attractive?

Yet I promise you, God teaches us that this is “how to love.”

*** Romans 12:11 but keep your spiritual fervor**

The word translated as “fervor” is “zeō” and it literally means hot. It means boiling hot and a fervent heat.

This is way different from the world's teaching of a carnal hotness. According to God, how to love takes a boiling hot spirituality.

God: Love is Hot (Spiritually)

To really love someone, you need God's Spirit turned up to a high temperature... in your heart, your mind, your words, your soul...

One of the best ways to love someone, if not the best way to love someone, is to practice the spiritual acts of prayer, worship, forgiving, and faith.

Let us pray today that God will give us a spiritual fervor to love.

If you are having trouble loving... you need to rekindle your spiritual fervor.

I don't want you to guess what I am saying... I'll come right out and say it.

There would be fewer divorces if the man & wife were boiling hot with God's Spirit.

Healthier marriages are found in this altar today. Stronger relationships in your family are found in spiritual worship.

Friends that agree together on the things of God are far more beneficial.

We have a final lesson to be untaught.

World: Love serves _____

The world has 2 versions of this lesson. Here is the first one...

World: Love serves self

It is very easy for love to be self-serving. Love can be perverted to serve sinful problems like lust, greed, jealousy, & hatred.

Self-serving love seeks itself. It seeks only what is good and pleasing to self. If it is less than pleasing... it wanes. If it requires cost this love checks out. God teaches us about this self-serving love.

Love is not self-seeking – 1

Corinthians 13:4

If it is self-seeking... it is not love. Make sure your love is not all about yourself.

World: Love serves self

The other version of this worldly lesson is...

World: Love serves spouse

This sounds great on the cover. Scripture even teaches us to serve one another, yet this can quickly become off balance and even harmful.

Some relationships become abusive and subservient. Some marriages have silenced spouses who are more like slaves than partners. Let me shout it aloud- That is not how to love.

If your understanding of love is to serve the spouse, you may find yourself in a loveless relationship. Last week we talked about giving & receiving love. If our understanding of love is to only serve a spouse, we may find ourselves in a situation where we give but not receive.

And when we awaken to the fact that the person we are serving is a flawed human, we will want to stop serving them and finally leave them to find another to serve. This is not a good situation, yet many are in this exact position.

So, is there an alternative? Let's look back to the Word of God.

Romans 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, **serving the Lord.**

God: Love Serves the Lord

The answer of avoiding self-service and enslavement is to serve and love the Lord. Let's think this through...

- We serve ourselves to “help” ourselves, better ourselves; you might even say bless ourselves... only to find that we hurt ourselves. Self service is not how to love yourself.
- We serve others not only because it helps others, but because it is healthier for us to not be centered on self. Yet the people we serve, fail, and that frustrates us. Sometimes we serve people who never seek to serve us back.
- When we serve the Lord, it is good for us. It solves the pitfall of seeking self. Even greater news is that when we serve the Lord, we are serving the only one who will never fail. When you serve the Lord, He will

never forget your service and never cease to reward your service.

If a spouse starts serving someone outside the marriage it will lead to problems, but if you invite the Lord into your marriage and serve the Lord in your marriage, it will lead to great blessing.

Relationships should make you better.

A good relationship ought to make you a better person, give you a better heart and a more fulfilled life. This is most true in your relationship with the Lord.

Serving the Lord makes you a better spouse, parent, and friend. Serving the Lord improves all your relationships.

And when you find out the person you are lovingly serving is a flawed human, you don't throw that person away. Your service to the Lord includes loving those that fall short, forgiving those who don't deserve it, and turning the other cheek.

A relationship with the Lord makes all your relationships better.

Husband, serving the Lord is the best way to serve your wife.

Wife, serving the Lord is the best way to serve your husband.

Parents, the best way to serve your children is to actively serve the Lord.

Children, the best way to serve your parents is to serve the Lord.

I am not going to pursue my own selfish desires, instead I will serve the Lord.

I am not going to enslave myself, instead I will serve the Lord.

Romans 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, **serving the Lord.**

Have you been lacking in any of these areas?

Have you been exhausted with the work of love? It is time to be excited again. It is time to have zeal.

Have you been spiritually cold? Rekindle your spiritual fervor. Burn hot spiritually.

Have you been serving the Lord? Do you believe it is

best to serve the Lord?

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

How to Love

God doesn't just tell us how to love, God demonstrates how to love. The greatest demonstration of love is Jesus on the cross. Let's compare our lessons to the light of the cross.

The world: Love is easy

Was the love of Jesus easy? No. Was the love of Jesus work? Yes.

God: Love is Exciting Work

What Jesus did was hard work, but it was also his "passion."

Acts 1:3 (KJV) 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his **passion** by many infallible proofs,

being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

“After his passion...” The cross was his passion. Setting you free from sin was his exciting work.

Remember the first recorded words of Jesus...? “I must be about my Father’s business.” (Luke 2:49)

Remember His last recorded words on the cross...?

“It is finished.” (John 19:30)

It was a heavy burden that caused Jesus pain, but it was also his “passion” because He was doing it for His Father, and for us.

The World: Love is Hot (Carnal)

The demonstration of love on the cross was not about physical attraction. Isaiah 53 says “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire him.” (Isaiah 53:2)

God: Love is Hot (Spiritually)

If anyone had a boiling hot spirituality it was our Jesus. He prayed for in the garden and sweated great

drops of blood. On the cross He prayed for you to be forgiven.

Jesus is so fervent spiritually that He is the one who baptizes us with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

World: Love serves _____

The world teaches us to either serve self or spouse. What did our Jesus do on the cross?

God: Love Serves the Lord

Jesus served the Lord upon that cross.

If Jesus would have served his mom on the cross, He would have gotten off the cross and gone home... although Mary would have been thrilled, she would have died in her sins. Because Jesus served His Father in Heaven, we all end up blessed beyond measure.

Jesus demonstrates love. Jesus demonstrates how to love.

These altars are open to everyone who wants God to help them.

Come on dad and husband who has lost the passion of the exciting work of being a provider. Come pray.

Come on mom and wife who has let your spirituality grow cold. Come pray and rekindle the flame.

Come all those who have been serving everyone but the Lord. Come find the true blessing of serving him.