

1 Corinthians 13 // A More Excellent Way

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[0:00] I don't know how comforting it will be when the pastor of the church says that he's an idiot. But I was an idiot. And I need to explain why. I had such a fun time at the football game. I really did.

Now I need to explain a little bit about that. I wasn't like, I was raised in a country where football was like the BC Lions.

And that was it. And if they got the Grey Cup, who cares? That was what I was raised in. I played rugby. I played soccer. Typically British things to play. And then I got into ministry.

And it's like ministry in Canada is remarkably difficult. I'm not saying it's easy here, but it's very different. And you have to think of these things. Well, okay, let's gather people. Let's do something for fellowship. Let's do that.

We've got to gather and invite. And it's like pulling teeth sometimes. And here I am on Friday. And Jamie has told me this several times in very polite ways that it's important.

[1:02] And I was there on Friday. I'm like, oh, I get it now. The whole town is here. Right? Nobody needs to work at fellowship. You're all fellowshiping. Right? And this is great. And for whatever reasons, Hernandez did everything. But that's a sign from the point.

I loved it. I had so much fun. And I thought, okay, this is going to be a kind of regular. I'm going to go tomorrow at four. I still have no idea what I'm doing. So if you can help me learn the game of football, I'd really appreciate it.

But it's one of those things we have to learn in love that stretch us, that pull us out of our comfort zones into places where we can be better and more loving. And I've been marching through the book of Acts and thinking, okay, well, this is great.

I love the early church. It's one of my favorite things to do is to read about it. But every now and then, you've got to put a bookmark in it and think, okay, let's just expand this for a little while. It's like when we're teaching through the book of Revelation in our Tuesday study.

Okay? We're going through that. And you have to understand from a Hebrew writing point of view, what they will do is they will share some information. Okay? Share that same information again with a little bit more detail.

[2:07] And then share the same information again with even more detail on top of that. So the book of Revelation, it looked like, well, didn't we just get through this? This starting over? And that's not true. What's happening is it's showing a lot of information with even more detail as it unfolds.

And so I thought instead of breaking through the book of Acts and just powering through it and thinking, this is what the early church should be. This is how we should be as a church. I thought, let's take a few weeks out and look at the fruit of the Spirit.

Because these are things that we need to have in increasing measure in our lives in love, in joy, in peace, patience, self-control, faithfulness, gentleness.

I mean, I could go on and on. We're going to go through it. Just take a pause from the book of Acts for a little while so that we can major on the majors. So today we're going to be in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, that beautiful passage on love.

And I want to share just a little bit that I've done a fair share of premarital counseling and marrying couples. And it's always the same.

[3:15] Oh, he's just so perfect. You know, we never fight. We never argue. We agree on everything. And, you know, I kind of look there and it's like the engaged couple, they have Christmas in their eyes and everything's before them.

You know, and here I am a battle-hardened being married for a few decades. And it's like, oh, honey, just give it a couple of weeks, you know. Just wait. And it's not a bad thing, right?

We all come into it thinking we know about love until you realize this passage was written as a correction. It was written as a correction because the church was starting to go off the rails a bit.

And so we have to look at that with some deep honesty. It's important to look at love in its proper context in that it's a decision, it's difficult, and we absolutely need the Lord in order to pull it off. Love is different. When I get into premarital counseling, I don't know why I'm talking about this too much, but when I get into it, you know, a lot of people will start, well, let's look at the biblical model of love. And I do get into that, but one of the first questions I ask in the first meeting, who's going to manage the money?

[4:22] You bring up the most argumentative topics early on, not to make the couple argue, but to have them talk honestly with one another. Well, I don't know if the money will work out for itself.

No, it won't. You know, well, I just thought he'd do it. No, he doesn't want to. Okay, we need to be able to talk about these difficult things in premarital counseling. You know, all of it.

What's your relationship like with your in-laws? What's it going to be like going over for dinner?

Yeah, we get into that. These are important things because they become topics of argument. And learning how to argue, learning how to love one another is vital.

Vital. So learning how to love one another in light of what 1 Corinthians 13 is, is really important for the church. Truly important. So we're going to take some time and get through that.

Because one of the main evidence of a Christian mature life is love. And it's not the feeling easy love, right? I love that guy.

[5:24] I love that girl. They're just so great. It's like, good, until they do something that isn't so great. And then do you still love them? Right? Paul wrote this passage because the church had been abusing its gifts.

There was division. There was disunity. There were things that needed to be course corrected because people were just peopling. And that happens. And that's okay. But love absolutely has to be before us, in us, through us.

The Lord's love in us. So let's get into verses 1 to 2. Wow. If I speak in the tongues of men and 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. Wow. Wow. Wow.

The Corinthian church was really into playing church. They did it well. They unfortunately tolerated sin. They weren't willing to point it out when it needed to be pointed out.

[6:30] They were in a place where it's okay. Well, the gifts are good. And they are good. And the gifts didn't stop in the first century. The gifts are alive and well today. They truly are.

But we can get to the point where we worship them and idol them in a way that's unhealthy. And the Corinthian church was doing this, but they weren't having love. Because love is a decision.

And it's difficult. They looked like a church, but there was an absence of love. There's a quote that actually floats around. And there's two different quotes that come from two different people that are kind of the same thing.

So the one I'm going to use today is from Warren Wiersbe. Truth without love is brutality. And love without truth is hypocrisy. People can be brutal and say, well, I'm just being loving.

An example would be this guy. And I haven't really talked to him for a lot of years now. But many years ago, Joseph and I, we went to church. And it had been a few years since I'd seen Joseph after that experience.

[7:33] I just bumped into him on the street. And he just looks at me and smiles. He says, wow, the years have not been kind to you. You know? I'm like, well, okay. I mean, now knowing Joseph, he was being loving.

Probably said you packed on a few pounds, right? But did he have to say that? You know? It's like, do we have to be that brutal? No, you don't have to be. You can choose to have a filter.

But if we go the other way around, oh, everything you do is wonderful. Oh, you're just amazing. You know, you're just, you know, I mean, you could go on and on and on again. It's okay if you sin.

It's okay. It's all right. God's going to still love you. Yeah, God's going to still love you. But you've got stuff to work out. And unless we love each other enough to say, can I help you through that? Then we're being too permissive.

So love without truth is error. But truth without love is brutality. Truly. We have to be careful with that. We could speak in a gift of tongues, have all kinds of spiritual encounters.

[8:36] They're in the Lord, but they're meaningless unless we have love. All we do as a church, all the ministries that we have here, they can do all sorts of good in the world.

But if it's without love, it's pointless. I wish I was making that up. I'll read this again. If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I'm a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And if I have prophetic powers and I understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but not have love, I am nothing. You know, one of the things I notice about the summit, the youth ministry, and I've noticed it since day one of being here, there is a parental love for these kids that is so obvious.

It's pure, it's true, and you guys are doing an amazing job at loving the youth. That is a great example of real love, okay?

Because I know it's not a permissible love. Their challenge to change, their challenge to be set apart. That means something. That kind of love is what we need to infect the entire Church of North America.

[9:50] That kind of love. Parental, loving, real, and people respond to it. I came to Christ because of that kind of love in a youth organization.

Love is important. We're to love one another, really love one another. And I think the most important lesson in the school of faith is learning how to love.

And I heard somebody say not that long ago, and I've been thinking a little bit about heaven more often than not because we just had Gina's memorial yesterday. You know? And it's like, I heard someone say, and I don't know if this is true, so take this with a grain of salt, but it's like I like to think about this every now and then.

That when we get to heaven, the Lord isn't going to say, have you learned how to teach? Have you learned how to preach yet? You know? Have you learned how to, you know, perform an exegesis on every idea that anybody has about the Bible or anything?

Have you learned how to do all that? No, no, no. The question will likely be, have you learned how to love yet? Has that made its way into your heart? Have you learned how to love? It would be wonderful to have faith to work the impossible.

[11:02] It would be wonderful. But even the faith to move a mountain without love is meaningless. Just to give you an idea of how important love is.

You could have faith to move a mountain. You can make that as literal, as figurative as you want for this example. If you do not have love, it's a meaningless skill.

The ancient Greeks had four words for the use of love. You know, the Hebrews had rava, ahava, and dad. It's a little bit different, but with the Greeks, I'm sure some of you have heard this before, so I'm going to break it down.

And I'm going to say, first off, I am always uncomfortable when I talk about sex at church. And not because I'm uncomfortable talking about sex, it's because I have to be careful who I make eye contact with.

And this has been a thing, right? So there was a little while where it's like, you know, you're realizing you're looking at a woman and you're talking about erotic love. And you're thinking, okay, you know, your wife or your significant other is in another room and stuff.

[12:02] You can't focus on them. And so I think, okay, well, I'm going to look at the guys, which makes it even weirder. So I'm just going to say this. Eros is the word in Greek for erotic love.

There we go. Now I have a bond with that wall. All right. We have to take it lightly because this is, but this is all true. Storge, the family love.

Right? The love you have within a family unit. That's important. Philea love, which is the brotherly love. Okay? Now, it might be weird to go up to some, go up to Sean Joy and say, man, I phileo you, buddy.

I really do. That may sound strange, but that's the love you can have between people, brothers and sisters. Right? And then there's agape. Now, men, don't get excited because you saw this on a wall hanging in Hobby Lobby.

Okay? Because agape is a tough love. It's not an easy love. There are strong arguments on both sides of whether this is God's love or not.

[13:10] Okay? It is in part, but we can also love our sin where we sacrifice for it. We set our will towards it. And God's love is so much higher than that.

So I'll confess right now, I'm still working that part out. But there are aspects of agape that we need to learn from. Because it's a love that loves without changing.

This is one of the things in premarital that I go through. It's a love that does not change. There may be sun one day. There may be winter and snow the next. But the love must stay the same.

The love that we have in church. Whether the building is full or whether it's empty. The love must stay the same. Whether our ministries are reaching the entire Texas county.

Or just two families. The love must stay the same. That is an agape love. It's self-giving. And it's love that loves without wanting repayment.

[14:09] I've said before and I'll say again. Love's only regret is it doesn't have more to give. It doesn't want to receive in return.

That is an agape love. That is a marital love. It's a love that gives without expectation of return. And it can be given to the unlovable people.

And that's another form of agape love. If we love people who are easy to love. What benefit is there in that? Love means we have to love the difficult.

Even if you're on the receiving end of that. Love means loving the difficult. Did you know where the word agony has the same root word as agape?

Agony? Okay. Imagine that for a second. You stretch for something with an agonizing grip. And that sometimes is the decision to love and what it looks like.

[15:11] It isn't easy. And you're going to agonize over it. And maybe it will never be returned to you. But you do it anyway. And that's where I see God's love in this. God so loved the world.

That he gave his only son. That whoever believes in him will have eternal life. John 3.16 It's not an emotional love.

And we can read this chapter and think that Paul is saying that if we aren't friends with everybody, then we're nothing. And that is not what it's saying. Because you can love someone and not like them.

Maybe that's going to be freeing for some of you here today. Okay. But let's be honest. You can love someone and not like them at all. Well, what do you mean by that?

Well, somebody gave me a good test a long time ago. It's the elevator test. You can love someone to hope they never get stuck in an elevator. You don't want to wish that upon them.

[16:08] But you can not like them. If you are, you don't want to spend six hours in there with them. Okay. So ask yourself. Do I like this person enough to spend six hours in an elevator with them?

I'm hoping to your spouse. It's a yes and amen. That's a whole other conversation if it's not. But we'll get there someday. You can love without like. I may not like some things that happen.

Some opinions I come across. But I can love the person and honor them. By not talking about them behind their back. By not thinking the worst of what they do. Right? I can not like some of the things that people say or act or how they behave.

But I can love them by thinking I'm going to pray for them. And be here for them for whatever they need. Okay? Like doesn't mean or love doesn't mean you have to have someone's face posted on your refrigerator at home.

Maybe you do. Great. But love is a higher call than like. Like is going to go up and down all the time. And if you've been married long enough. I guarantee.

[17:12] And maybe don't respond to this. I assure you that there are days where you're looking at your spouse and thinking I just don't like you right now. I don't like the way you handled that. What you said.

How you treated me. I don't like that. But I love you. Okay? Love demands more. Verse 3. If I give away all I have and deliver up my body to be burned but have not love I gain nothing.

I could give away all I have to feed the poor. I could offer my life up as a sacrifice. But if I'm not doing it in love it's nothing. Can you start to see how this is a challenging verse for weddings and things like that for a passage if it's not fully understood?

We have to look at it in its fullness. Now normally we wouldn't doubt anybody that's busy serving a church or giving of their heart or giving of their life or laying their life down for others.

Normally we wouldn't question that at all. But what Paul's saying is true and I believe it to be true. If we do it without love it's nothing. Love must come first.

[18:19] It's hard to believe in a way. It's just that love is so valuable. Love is so set apart from our normal mode of operation as human beings that it can be a challenge for us.

So let's look at what love is and what it is not. Verses 4 to 8. Love is patient and kind. I'm actually just going to stop right there. Those are the two pillars of love.

Patience and kindness. Everything else put into that context if you will. Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way.

It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things. Believes all things. Hopes all things. Endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies they will pass away. As for tongues they will cease. As for knowledge it will pass away. Love is described with action words.

[19:21] You notice that? Because there are decisions to be made in order to love someone. It's about how love can be seen in action. Through patience and kindness.

And if you have been around for a little while. You might realize that you do not need patience and kindness. With people that are amazing. You need patience and kindness.

With people who are unkind, impatient, rude, intolerable, difficult. Do you see where we are going with this? Love is a higher call. And love is patient and kind.

So this means we shouldn't think of ourselves more than others where love is concerned. To think about others in the right way demands love.

The Corinthians were impatient in public meetings. Really impatient. And I know you might have a roast on right now. And I'm looking at the clock. Don't worry. I'm watching it. But let's not be impatient.

[20:17] Okay. They were envious of other people. But love removed their envy. They were prideful of their abilities. And love would remove that pride.

And help them promote others ahead of themselves. Romans 12.10 says, Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. How long has it been since we have outdone someone in showing someone else honor?

The world would have us in a place where we would think, Well, look at my resume. I'm fantastic. Look at all of the things that I do. I got a shopping list. I'm on, you know, for the church. I do all of this good stuff.

That's great. That's awesome. Now, outdo one another by finding those good things in someone else and saying, Way to go. Man, I praise God for what you're doing here today.

You know, and I will say this flat out right now. Like, I've done three, well, two funerals, one memorial technically. So far here. And I'll say this. Stephanie and Barb and you guys with the food team.

[21:23] It's like a well-oiled machine. My goodness. It just kind of unfolds and happens. And like, boom, the family's fed. Like, it's impressive. Okay.

And I don't want to say doing a funeral or speaking at a memorial is easy. But I tell you, my job is easier when I look at all of that stuff just happening. Okay. Now, a wrongful person would say, I pulled this off.

I did this. But they don't. I didn't hear a word of that from anybody yesterday. They just humbly served and got the stuff done. Thank you.

Great job. Outdo one another with honor. Start looking at people in the church and pointing out how amazing they are. And don't do it for the sake of hearing something back.

Oh, no, it's you. Really, you're great. Don't look for that. Make a habit of going around and outdoing one another. I'm going to read this again. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

[22:28] What a wonderful challenge for a church. Outdo one another. If you're going to be competitive in church, be competitive with that. Outdo one another. If God's love is in us, we will be long-suffering, patient, even with those who annoy us.

And that happens, if we're honest. The Corinthians church was at each other's throats. They were suing one another. There was infighting. It was just a mess.

And this is why Paul comes along, and if you read just in the last part of 1 Corinthians 12, he says, I want to show you a more excellent way. And the more excellent way is love.

Love is patient, and it keeps no record of wrong. We can do this in our hearts, can't we? We have a little shopping list, you know? Well, they bothered me. They said this wrong thing 10 years ago, you know?

And I'm going to hold this against them until the end of time. No, no, no, no, no, no. I'm going to share a story I didn't think I was going to share. But so getting to know people in the community, getting because I'm new.

[23 : 34] I've been here about five seconds, and I'm still getting to know folks. And I remember running into one guy who said, oh, yeah, I have a problem with that church. And I was like, oh, okay. And I'm curious. Like, what is that? Well, you know, somebody did this.

Somebody said that. I'm like, oh, man, I'm really sorry. I said, like, well, when were you last here? 2004. 2004. Bro, I said it's time to move on, man. You know?

I mean, seriously. You're talking at this point over 20 years ago. Someone said something wrong. You would have hated me back then, you know? We have to be able to move on from these things. We have to be able to let things rest or go and make things right. Matthew 18 in dealing with conflict demands that we go to our brother and say, look, you stepped on my toes. And maybe you'll earn a brother by doing that instead of harboring.

Love does not keep a record of wrong. And so another thing I tell, you know, people that are in their honeymoon stage of the engagement, let's put it that way, right? Don't make a record of wrong.

[24 : 35] Don't store up resentments. Deal with things immediately. Sit down with one another and say, you know what? Like, I know we come from different upbringings and stuff, and I know, you know, so-and-so's crazy or whatever.

But you know what? You and I need to work this out in a different way. Get good at talking with one another. And it's like that in church as well. We have to be good at talking with one another, even if it's the hard conversations.

So, I don't know if somebody's getting engaged here recently or whatever. For some reason, I'm just hammering on that. I don't mean to be. But I will just say that there's a very interesting parallel. Because when we leave Christmas in our eyes and everything is great, right, we don't have to work very hard for it.

But it's when the rubber hits the road and difficulties happen, love is tested. And love endures. Like is up and down all the time. You wake up on a Monday morning and feel like it's raining inside of your house because you're in a bad mood.

You know what? That's okay. There's nothing wrong with having a bad day. But love must remain a constant. And I'm going to talk about that next week, the difference of happiness and joy. Anyway.

[25 : 42] Love celebrates when someone has a victory or is promoted. When I hear of some other church doing something great, I'm like, man, way to go. Awesome.

The kingdom is being spread. People are hearing Jesus. What else do we possibly want? But when someone does something really well in the church here, you know, go for it.

Outdo yourself. Outdo them by giving them the honor and saying, well done. How can I help?

Okay? Don't resent. Don't hold up. Don't keep a record of wrong.

Rather, outdo yourself and say, man, you're really grooving right now. I just want to pray for you.

What can I do to help you? How can I love you right now through this? Instead of feeling threatened. Love wants others to be preferred before us.

Because love does not envy. You know, something we have to wrestle with here. Envy killed Abel. Okay?

[26 : 45] Envy almost ruined Joseph's life. And envy brought Jesus to the cross. Matthew 27, 18. For he knew that it was out of envy that they delivered him up.

Envy is a very real sin. So I believe it when I hear in Romans. Outdo one another by giving honor. Because envy is a poison.

It really is. Love focuses on the needs of others and not ourselves. Verse 4 to 5. Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast.

It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. Where there is love, there's kindness and good manners. Just simple good manners.

Just dealing honor. If you're in the middle of a conversation and you get up and you walk out. Well, that's not very good manners. Right? Just say, you know what? I've had enough of you right now. I just need to bookmark this.

[27 : 42] Okay? That's okay. If you're in a conversation with me and I'm just a little too much. You have my full permission to say, I've had enough of your personality right now. I just need to go and take a breather. That's okay. Right?

I don't see that as a negative. What I see as a negative is getting up and just going. And I'm like, what? Talk. Converse. Because sometimes it's so easy in life to get triggered and irritated and provoked by people.

Little landmines. Little things that just happen and they can just blow up on us. And we're not careful. We can say we're triggered and irritated all the time because the world is filled with annoying people.

We can say that. But that's not the problem. The problem is that we need more of God's love in our life. So we start seeing other people through his eyes. Instead of judging them, we start loving them on his terms.

It will change us as people on a very fundamental level if we do them that way. Because this isn't a small sin we're talking about here. Moses was kept from the promised land because he was triggered by anger.

[28 : 52] Enough to strike a rock. Think about that for a moment. Our anger might delay us from blessing. Be aware of this.

Surrender this. Because when we're bitter against someone, irritated by someone, we're not loving them as ourselves. Think about it for a moment. I'm going to use myself as an example.

If I make a mistake, right? If I say something stupid, which is almost a weekly basis, okay? If I do something or say something stupid, I want people to go like, oh, it's okay. It's all fine, right?

But if someone were to say it to me, oh, where's my list? I'm going to write that down. You know, September 26, I said this. I will never forgive them. That's the flesh. That's the wrong way to go. That is not the love of God. Okay? We have to love others as we love ourselves, which means love and forgive to the measure you want to be loved and forgiven.

[29 : 51] That is a hard task to do. That's the love we're talking about in 1 Corinthians 13. Love and forgive to the measure you want to be loved and forgiven.

So in other words, gossip, bitterness, slander, revenge. No. No. No. Because that's not what you want to have done to you. There's an old saying.

It's a bit of a Calvary Chapel saying, but blessed are the flexible because they will not be bent out of shape. Right? I think it's a good thing to know. Just blessed are the flexible. Be flexible with one another. Verse 6.

It does not rejoice of wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. So in other words, you know, when somebody that you may love but not like and something bad happens, you're not there like, ha, ha, ha, see, I told you.

Right? You don't rejoice in something bad happening to someone. And maybe that's something, if you show compassion, might be a bridge to relationship where that love will turn into like.

[30 : 50] Right? We don't know. But love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

These are love's sweet companions. Strong, believing, hoping, enduring love. We can all admit, the most days we feel like we can maybe be strong.

We might wake up tomorrow and feel, you know what? Maybe I can be patient. And maybe we'll wake up on Tuesday and think, you know what? Maybe I have enough strength to handle the situation I'm going through.

But love demands more. Because when we are in a loving place, other people love us and we're receiving that love and we're giving that love too.

Verses 8 to 13, and I'll close shortly after. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away. As for tongues, they will cease. As for knowledge, it will pass away.

[31 : 55] For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partials don't pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child. I thought like a child. I reasoned like a child.

And when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part. Then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

So now faith, hope, and love abide. These three, but the greatest of these is love. The Corinthian church was like a kid playing with a bunch of toys.

Okay? No. That's my thing. This is my thing. He's breathing in my direction. I don't like the way he's looking at me. If you have kids, you know exactly what that narrative sounds like.

Okay? There's just things that happen that trigger a kid or set them off sometimes. And it's like impossible to console because they just don't want to share. And they get greedy.

[32:56] Right? And when you're a child, that's okay. You kind of expect children to do that and work that kind of stuff out. And as a parent, you guide them towards a better way. Now, share your toys. Be nice to each other.

Right? Be kind. Don't poke each other's eyes out. You know, just be nice people. And as a child, you think along those lines. You think, no, no, no, no. It's all about me, me, me. But as an adult, as we grow, you expect the child to grow too.

Well, all of a sudden, those childish ways are put behind us. And we grow up and realize, you know what? Sharing really is caring. Right? You know, sharing is a good thing. Honoring one another is good.

It doesn't have to all be about us. And we get into that mode and we start to see, oh, this is what community is like. Go to a football game. You're going to love it. And I was right. I did.

I don't know why I came back to football. Anyways, okay. The thing is, you expect a child to mature and start thinking and speaking maturely.

[33:57] It could be the same with the church. We all have to keep growing ourselves as individuals so that our church continues to be loving, more maturing, and growing in the right way towards God.

And I hate to lay it on our shoulders today, but that's up to you and me. The building isn't going to do it for us. Though the blessed place this is and the wonderful space it is, it's us. We have to do the growing and the maturing.

We have to be the ones that love God more and choose love on a regular basis more and more.

We will not be complete until we stand before Jesus one day.

The very best we can do is start stepping and falling down in the right direction towards him by loving one another more and more and more. Outdo one another in honor.

Start, instead of making a list of wrongs, start making a list of rights. I think they did this so well. I did this so great.

[34:57] You know, I'm going to embarrass Derek Ingram. I don't think he's here today, which is good. Now I can embarrass him because he'll have to be here, so I don't. So, here's the thing.

Derek's teaching Wednesdays on the summit.

The first time I went there, Derek's like, Oh, I'm sorry, man. I could have done such a better job. I'm like, Dude, you did great. You know, it's like herding cats at best and you did a wonderful job. You taught. The kids are engaged.

They listen to you. What more do you want? They heard Jesus. This is good. And that's the thing is sometimes we just need, like what Kathy mentioned recently, an attaboy, right?

We need an attaboy. It's like you're doing a good job. We don't know what struggles we have in our lives or what difficulties we have. And sometimes the last thing we need is someone to come along and say, You know, you could have done this better.

Sometimes what we need to say is, I really like how you did this and this and this. How can I help you? So outdo one another with love. Because it's going to take that agape love, the love that is of the will for the difficult, for the hard situations, for the hard people.

[36:01] And you know what? I have to look at the fact that I'm one of those hard people sometimes too. And I hate to say it, but so are you. Because we are all that way at times. We need someone to love us with an agape love.

We need to love others with that same love. Love is the more excellent way. And I just can't help but think that it truly brings a smile to God's face when his children are loving one another, supporting one another, and even when it's a difficult love to offer and to give.

I can't help but thinking like, he's just, now you get it. Now you get it. So let's move on together in love. Let's build this church in love.

They'll know we're Christians by our love. Do you know when it says that, it's not talking about outside. It's talking about the love in here. They will see us and know we are Christians by our love. And they'll want some of that. So be the light by being the love, even when it's hard and difficult and you have to make the choice to love. Let's pray.