

Serving One Another In Love

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[0:00] I've been going through a series here talking a little bit about family and the household! And just even those principles that we've been looking at, you need to understand also apply! in other areas of our lives. But we need to understand the importance of marriage, the importance of family. In that we've been understanding this through the context of Psalm 127 where it says, except the Lord build the house. The Lord needs to be centerpiece in the home. And from the very beginning, when the Lord joined Adam and Eve together in the garden, He established something not only for their good and protection, but something that was a benefit for us even today, for our benefit and for our protection. And it's a bond worthy of our devotion and worth guarding with our heart. And that's what marriage is, a covenant that asks each of us to lay aside what's best for ourselves and consider the other instead. You know, because as we think about this idea, we're going to talk this morning about serving one another in love. Now here's another principle that applies to anybody when it comes to serving. But this morning we're going to look specifically within marriage and the dynamics of that applying to us because what does it mean to serve your spouse?

You know, have you really stopped to consider that in your relationship? What does it mean to serve your spouse? Have you ever noticed that serving another seems to come unnaturally to us? Because naturally instead of having a heart for service, we have a heart of selfishness, don't we? You know, we desire to protect ourselves what's best for us? Because I want you to understand and just think for a moment, could it be that the problem is not the serving but the source from what you're trying to serve?

Because if we try to serve out of our own selves, our heart is always selfish of what benefit am I getting from this? What am I going to gain by this? In a marriage, I want you to understand, it's kind of like a two-person team. You know, there's a lot of two-person team activities out there. But one thing you'll notice that whether it's, if you've ever played ping pong with two people or tennis or other games, you know, when you see that, what happens if both of them try to fight for the ball every time?

How successful are they? It fails pretty quick, doesn't it? You know, oftentimes, you know, we've been, our grandkids are getting a little older now and we're going back to watching youth sports again.

[2:51] And the one thing about youth sports that I found out is I don't even call it a game, I just call it bunch ball. Because you throw a ball on the field and they all bunch to it. Doesn't matter what it is, they all grab together and bunch together on it. But what are you trying to teach them? That they have to do what? They have to serve one another by being where they're supposed to be doing what they're supposed to do. Because if we all try to compete with one another, your team is going to do what?

It'll lose. It'll be the loss. In a relationship, the same is true. If you're both trying to compete, compete, it's going to be a losing proposition. Because I want you to understand, God did not design marriage as a competition. But oftentimes, people enter into it with that mindset. You know, when we see that is in that dynamic is very important because when both are willing to set the other up for success, you know what? The team wins. A marriage wins when once, when they serve one another for each other's benefits. And we understand that, that's that championship mindset of saying, I want a team that's going to win. That means we need to serve correctly. To be in our place doing what we're supposed to do in the relationship. And to understand the importance of it because, but I want you to know that teamwork alone is not enough. Because the question is not only whether we are serving, but the source from which we serve. Because as a servant in marriage, a servant-based marriage draws its strength, not from yourself, but from

Christ. Because if your relationship with Christ isn't right, you know what? You're going to have a hard time having a relationship in a marriage that's right. There's going to be a conflict that's going on always behind the background.

And that dynamic is important this morning as we look together in this, as we take a look over here. Look over to Galatians chapter 5. Let's stand together this morning. As we look here, Galatians chapter 5 in verse 13 tells us this. It says, Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, Heavenly Father, as we come before you this morning, Lord, as we take a look a few moments in this reality of service and the opportunity that we have, Lord, we pray to you with the work and hearts here this morning, Lord, that we might consider, are we serving, are we doing what we ought to do for the right reasons? Lord, it is not selfish motivated, but out of love motivated. Lord, to love others just as you loved us. And Lord, as we look at this reality here this morning, Lord, you might just stir our hearts and our minds here this morning to contemplate the reality of it and where we stand with you.

[6:10] And Lord, that we might not just think about it, but Lord, we might respond to it. Lord, to understand the need that is involved in actually doing what you would want us to do. And Lord, we ask these things here this morning in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. You know, we find here in our text, Paul, the Apostles, he's writing to a church at Galatia that's in an argument and a discussion about things, and he's beginning looking here because they're talking about salvation in Galatians, the argument of how is one saved. But I want you to understand is he says that we've been called to liberty.

When you're saved, you are set free from the bondage of sin. You're at liberty. Now, this liberty, he points out very quickly, and he warns this just a little later, that freedom can turn towards the flesh. Because a little later in Galatians, he talks about those things of being self-seeking and strife and envy. I want you to understand, God doesn't set us free so we can go to those things.

He sets us free that we might be apart from them. And when we understand this principle that he's pointed out here, we're called to liberty and to use that liberty to serve one another in love.

That liberty is not, what is it in it for me? You know, that's a modern concept of liberty. Liberty, how do I gain from this? Where a biblical concept of liberty is how do I use my freedom for the benefit of others? How do I use what Christ has given to me for somebody else?

Because just as he purchased us on the cross, as we'll look a little later, is the reality, he set us free. And he did that not out of self-seeking for himself, but for our benefit.

[8:10] He set us free. And we see here this morning that proper use of liberty to serve one another in love is something that transforms a marriage. It transforms a marriage. The same liberty purchased that Christ purchased for us at the cross is the liberty that he calls us to spend loving one another.

And it begins in your own home. You know, it begins right where you're at. You know, oftentimes people take a lot of time to look outside. What can I do? How can I do this someplace else? But you know where it begins? It begins at home. Because what you're not willing to do at home, you're not willing to do truly someplace else. Because home is actually the hardest part, isn't it? You know, sometimes it's easier to serve strangers than to somebody that you're living with. It becomes a problem because as we notice here, service is the proper use of our freedom in Christ. You know, look again there at verse 13. Notice what he tells us here. And he says this, and for brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for the occasion to the flesh. You know, the liberty Paul speaks about here is freedom from the law's condemnation. But he immediately turns that freedom of what's been given inwardly to an outward expression of it, to understand what's been transformed. Because true

Christian liberty doesn't curve inward towards self, it curves outwards towards others. And in marriage, that's an important thing. This means using the freedom he's given you not to demand your rights.

You know, that's a concept we use quite a bit, isn't it? I am free, so therefore you must. God says you've been set free, now lay them down for the benefit of others. You have now the freedom of how you're going to use that liberty, of how you're going to employ that in the life. Because today we face with radical individualism. You know, that's our concept. Especially in America, we have a very radical idea of individualism. You know, I pulled myself up by my bootstraps. I did this, I did that.

You know, we have an eye problem. Because it's all about me. We live a generation, it's a me generation. You know, the cultural script says you need to come first, your identity is your own, and

sacrificing for another person is optional or situational depending on how it benefits you. You know, oftentimes we carry those same concepts into a relationship and then wonder why it struggles. Somebody that you said you want to love and to honor and to cherish and want to be with becomes instead of mutual benefit, becomes how does this relationship benefit me? And that's the reason we see a high divorce rate. Because it's not about the other person, it's about self. As soon as it becomes uncomfortable for self, it's time to go. And you'll see that a lot in relationships today. [11 : 37] And this assumption is not neutral. It's a direct antithesis of Galatians chapter 5 here when Paul says use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh. He's describing to us precisely what individualism does. It takes freedom and turns it inward. You know, we understand that self-gratification, self-preservation. But here he tells us to do what to love one another. To understand the importance of this picture, he says, notice in verse 13, but by love serve one another. By love serve one another.

In other words, he says the liberty you have ought to be used for the benefit of others also. Liberty is not something that's designed to be consumed upon yourself.

Because that leads you into places that you're going to get in trouble. You know, think about even Jesus here this morning. You know, over in John chapter 13, here we find Jesus does something for his disciples that's outside their mindset of how it works. It's contrary to how they think.

Because what takes place is as they sit around getting ready for a meal. As the meal gets done, what happens? Jesus gets up and he puts a towel about himself and he kneels down and he washes their feet. Now, culturally, that doesn't mean much to us today. You know, there's some people that take that and they want it. Well, in church, you ought to wash one another's feet. And I'm like, nah.

But I want you to understand the cultural picture. Because what was custom in the day was that when you had guests in your home, the lowest servant, that was their job, was to wash the guests' feet when they came in. It was considered the lowest position. I think we can all agree that's a pretty low position of servanthood. But here's the one who created the universe, gets up, and he puts himself voluntarily in this position to do something as a servant to his disciples.

[14 : 12] And we see that picture. And if you look there in John chapter 13, it tells us this in verse 14. It says, if I then also, notice this, your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. Now, notice the context here. He says, this is, verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If you know these things, happy are ye if you do them. Now, I want you to understand here, Jesus isn't saying you ought to wash people's feet. He's used that as a picture, an illustration to say, you ought to be able to serve whatever it takes for the benefit of another. Even if you think it's below you.

Does America have a problem with that concept? I can't do that. When you think about the one who is Lord and Master, I'm going to say, I'm going to give you an example of serving one another. And knelt down and washed those who were following him. He displayed exactly what it means to love somebody else. To say, I don't care what the level or what the dynamic is. You know, when we consider that question, are you using the freedom God has given you, your time, your energy, and your gifts to serve the one that you're married to? Or serve others? You know? Or are they quietly being consumed by your own comfort and preference?

You know, today we have a lot of people who are even believers who say, I'll serve God as long as it's convenient. I'll serve God as long as it promotes me. As long as it shows for something that I'm going to benefit. You know what? Jesus said, the best servants are those who aren't self-seeking in glory.

But by love, serve one another. Service isn't self-promotion. You know, have you noticed today there's a lot of people who do things to try to promote, well, look how much I can put on my resume. I served here. I did this. I did that. All, they serve not for the benefit of what they're serving. They serve for the benefit of themselves to say, hey, look what I did. Look what I'm a part of. That's not in love, by love, serving one another. That's an application that we need to understand. Now, number two here this morning is simply this, service fulfills God's law of love. You know, to serve one another is not a self-focus, but it's serving is that display of God's love. It fulfills God's law of love.

[17 : 51] You think about it, what did Jesus tell us? What does the apostle write here? You'll find this theme throughout scripture. This concept is not a New Testament concept. Because take a look here, look at our text first, and then we'll look in the Old Testament for a moment. But notice what

verse 14 says, for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Now, Paul's telling them that in this context of liberty. To understand that picture he's quoting here from the Old Testament. You know, he's quoting the Old Testament back in Leviticus chapter 19. Leviticus chapter 19 and verse 18 tells us this. God's commanding his people. And he says this, thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people.

Think about the context of what he's saying this. He's saying even if somebody else isn't doing what they're supposed to do. Because isn't that a concept we talked about a few weeks ago?

The reality, oftentimes people enter into marriage to say, I will do this as long as it benefits me.

What's my benefit? And he says, thou shalt not avenge or bear any grudge against the people, the children of thy people, but thou shalt what? Shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

[19:33] Paul's context here is from an Old Testament context. It says, liberty allows you to love and to serve despite what somebody else does. Today, our basis of love often is what is my benefit instead of how can I use what I have in Christ for the benefit of others? To serve one another. You know, let me ask you a question. When it comes to this context, in marriage, who's your closest neighbor?

Very simply, it's the one that you lay down to by each night, isn't it? You don't get much closer than that. You know, we don't often think or talk our concept that in that reality, but that's the application, the first application of the principle. Because you know what? Oftentimes, there's problems within a marriage. And there's going to, when you have two people together, you're going to have problems. Liberty allows you to work through them properly. To not be hindered by a grudge or try to avenge. You know, that's trying to get even. That's a contest. And you know what? The people I've seen and I've counseled and I've talked to in life about when they're having trouble in marriage, you know what one of the biggest things is?

Is, well, they did that. You know what? If you lived with somebody, you know, if you lived it yourself, you'd be upset pretty soon. Because trust me, you're not the perfect part of the relationship.

The point isn't being perfect. The point is saying, Christ has set me free. I'm at liberty to love them properly. That's a choice of what you're going to do with that. Because when you think about our culture today, people enter into a marriage marriage as this 50-50 model.

[21:45] You know, that's one of those things people got to get rid of is this 50-50 mindset. Well, we're entering to a 50-50, we're going to make 100. I want you to understand that starts things off on the wrong dynamic.

Because what it says, as long as each of you contributes equally and have the rights and responsibilities are balanced and the relationship is evaluated by whether both parties are getting what they deserve.

Now, in your mind, in contract, that sounds reasonable. The reality, we already talked about that, marriage is not a contract.

You're not dealing in contract law. Contract law says, I said, I agree to this if you do this. Covenant says, I'm all in no matter what you do.

That's a thought process difference. And that's where the devil loves to twist because even though it sounds reasonable, but what a 50-50 relationship does, it produces a scorecard.

[22:58] It starts keeping track and tally. You know, when you sit down with a couple that's having a marriage, it's amazing. They pull out their scorecard.

It might not be a physical scorecard, but you know what? As soon as they start talking, it's a scorecard. They didn't do this. They didn't do this. Or they did that. They did this over here. It's like, you're focusing on the wrong elements here.

You're saying, they didn't fulfill their end of the contract. But remember, when you got married, you didn't enter into contract. You entered into a covenant.

Two totally different things. And when we understand the picture here, because a servant-type marriage that Paul describes here is not doing math.

It's asking, what more can I give? You know, take a look over in the book of Philippians for a moment. Philippians chapter 2. You know, Philippians chapter 2 tells us here something very important.

[24:13] Philippians chapter 2.

Look down at verses 3 and 4. Notice what he tells us. let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, let each do what?

Esteem the other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but let every man also on the things of others.

To esteem the other better than themselves. Marriage is never meant to be a partnership of halves. It's not a 50 from you and 50 from the other.

It's a covenant that calls one to 100%. Because if you enter in with a balance sheet, you know what follows a balance sheet in marriage? Resentment. You know what else follows it?

[25:16] You have resentment, then you have bitterness. Then what do you have? You have anger. Are any of those beneficial for you?

Are any of those beneficial? When we understand what Christ is, when loving us like Christ loved us, it's important. Because when we consider that dynamic, you know, and understand the picture, what is the one need your spouse has that you've stopped noticing?

You know, sometimes it's easy when you hang out with somebody all the time to start missing things. You know, one thing I want to encourage you today, if you're married, find out what you can do for your spouse this week.

Something that you may have forgotten about. You say, preacher, now you're getting uncomfortable. You've got to remember, I've got to go home too.

It's not any more uncomfortable for me than it is for you. But you know, it makes a difference because I want you to understand when you do something out of love, it doesn't go unnoticed, even if the other person doesn't take note, God still takes note.

[26:43] God recognizes what you're doing. So understand here next, the mutual service builds a strong, wholehearted marriage. You know, builds a strong, wholehearted marriage.

You know, as we look here this morning, I want you to understand, look back at verse 13 again. And it tells us this, it says, for brethren, you have been called unto liberty, but only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.

You know, that's just like we read here a few moments ago in Philippians chapter 2. Let nothing be done through strife or what? Vainglory. What's vainglory? That's a good question.

Empty glory. glory. What's empty when we spend it on ourselves? Whether that's in marriage, whether that's a personal, any dynamic, vainglory, empty glory is saying, I want to be magnified or lifted up.

When Christ set us free, what does that do for us? It says, for His glory, Him to be glorified in us. And when we understand that picture and get the right perspective, it makes a difference.

[28:05] When both the husband and wife are competing to out-serve the other, it changes something. You know, the conflict deflates, the intimacy deepens.

You know, when we understand, it helps you serve together. Because mutual service builds a strong, wholehearted marriage. Serving together.

Loving together. Doing together. It makes a difference when people invest in that. You know, we have a great model of this within the Scripture.

You have a couple by the name of Aquila and Priscilla. They're the only couple in the Bible that's always mentioned together. Where you find one, you always find the other.

Interesting. But you know what they did? They served the Lord together. They were there together. It wasn't, well, one does this and the other does that.

[29:14] It said they were serving together. together. To understand that picture of working together. They never, it's never recorded that they were competing for credit.

You know, of how one was serving. It was just, there was a mutual dynamic. But I want you to understand today that many times I believe people are genuinely trying to serve.

but the problem is oftentimes we run on empty. We feel exhausted. You know, you think about today, you have two income households, youth sports that want to run seven days a week, a smartphone that demands your attention, a general exhaustion of modern life means that patience and generosity are the first casualties of a tired evening at home.

You're so done before you get there you don't even realize what's happening. You're exhausted and when somebody, when the mindset is and the reality sets in that I still have a responsibility to love, it's difficult.

I want you to understand this isn't necessarily a character problem but it's a depletion problem. when you run your life on empty.

[30:44] The answer is not to try harder but the answer is to draw more deeply from the one who sets you free. He is the one that says I will have the ability to give you what you need to do what you ought to do.

You know, when we look at the right picture, the right dynamic, the answer is not trying harder, it's drawing deeper from Christ, the one who has set you free.

You know, I spoke a little bit ago about Aquila and Priscilla. You know, Acts chapter 18, you find here that they pull Apollos aside together and instruct him together and to build those things together.

Their marriage was a shared ministry. The two lives wholly given to one work. You know, think about this. Look here in verse 24. It says, And a certain Jew named Apollos, born of Alexandria, an eloquent man and a mighty in the scripture, came to Ephesus.

The man was instructed in the way of the Lord and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently that things are knowing only the baptism of John. And we see here that as he comes, we find here that they pull him aside, Aquila and Priscilla, and give him what is needed.

[32:03] We find here that they taught him diligently. You know, being fervent in spirit and spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord. And we want to see Aquila and Priscilla pull him out.

Is the next verse on the slide? Okay, let's get this continued. Because it's the one I want to get to. I'm like, did that get put in there? Notice this. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue when Aquila and Priscilla heard.

They took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. Now I want you to understand there's a lot in that verse.

We could spend a lot of time right there. Because there's a theological point they're making here too. But I want you to see what they do. They served the Lord together.

It was a togetherness that made a difference. To understand the importance of it. You know, have you thought together for a moment of how the local church is enriched when marriages are built on mutual, wholehearted service and not rivalry?

[33:15] You know, serving one another is something that God has designed for us and for the benefit of everybody. To understand the reality of it, what would your marriage look like if both of you were more committed to serving than being served?

Would that concept change a relationship? I guarantee you it would, doesn't it? It would alter a lot of things because you know what it does?

It throws the scorecard out. it's no longer a contest or a competition because it's not about what you're getting, it's about your opportunity to love another.

To understand that picture, that dynamic, you know, when we serve, I want you to understand, I want you to challenge you to try to do one thing this week of unexpected service for another with no strings attached.

Zero expectation attached to yourself. You know, oftentimes, we do do a lot of service, but sometimes there's always a string attached.

[34:57] But we ought to serve not for what it benefits us, but for the well-being of the other. To understand that picture clearly. You know, this idea of service, we've been set free in Christ because even Jesus, you know, Jesus when he came, Jesus came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

You know, in Mark chapter 10 verse 45, the word of God makes it very clear, for even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto. In other words, God didn't come for his benefit.

And it tells us exactly why he came. but to minister, to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. Have you stopped to think that when Jesus went to the cross, it was a service for your benefit? He was ministering for your benefit.

benefit. That benefit of being able to offer salvation full and free for you.

[36:23] He shed his own blood as the ransom for your sin. The price that sin demanded. He He He Why did he do that?

Because he understood this principle, this reality, that you're a sinner who needs a Savior. He died in your place.

The Bible says the wages of sin is death. He died in your place and rose again so that you might be forgiven, that you might be able to call upon him, accept the free gift of salvation.

You know, the reality is oftentimes people are self-seeking, but salvation isn't about self-seeking on anybody's part because salvation is recognizing that yes, he is right, I am a sinner.

I have broken the law. I have done that which is contrary to the things of God. It's recognizing who you are, your need.

[37 : 49] When you recognize your need, he says you need to do something and that's to recognize it to him. That's called repentance. It's recognizing you're a sinner and he's the perfect one, he's the savior.

Turning from your sin to the savior. To say, I want what he has provided, the liberty to set me free. To understand the reality of it, your need to repent and to recognize you're a sinner that needs to turn to him and call upon him because you know what, it's not enough to recognize you're a sinner. today we have call in therapy. You know what most of the problem is? It's sin. And they expect a therapist to solve it who's charging you by the minute.

And Christ said, I have the solution for sin and I picked up the check. what greater thing is that? By love serving you. To understand that ransom that he paid is counted as yours. The ultimate example of serving one another.

[39 : 17] Your very salvation is a picture of God's love for you. to call upon him. You know, maybe you can understand the reality of a time when you called upon him.

But you know, if you're saved, it still can sometimes be draining. but I want you to let the love of Christ be the fuel for your service.

Because that empty tank of life gets refilled and refreshed when we refocus and draw from the well that's endless.

Of what we have in Christ. From the resources of his grace, you know, to serve another, to serve your spouse today. But let it be an act of worship.

You know, we don't do it for ourselves. Colossians 3.23 says, and whatsoever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men. Have you ever thought about by serving your spouse, you're honoring the Lord?

[40 : 37] Do it heartily as as to the Lord and not unto men. You know, that attitude alone will get rid of the score card. Because what Christ did on Calvary was remove the score card.

Your sin is gone. Now I want you to consider something else, and we're going to get into this a little more next week.

to be a week. But when you serve your spouse, it's the first sermon your kids see and hear about loving one another.

The first message your kids see is how you parents love and serve one another. We're going to look at that next week, so make sure to be back.

But I want you to understand, how are you serving in love one another today? Have you loved your neighbor as yourself?

[41 : 44] Because our well is not us, it's him. As heads are bowed and eyes are closed this morning, what about you today?

Are you willing to say, Lord, I need to use the liberty that I have in you because of your salvation to serve the one that I'm married to or to serve somebody else because the application goes far beyond just marriage.

It applies to everybody but directly in a relationship together. What are you doing? Is it selfish or is it serving?

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