

Introduction:

1. It seems like when one big event or holiday is over, there is always another one waiting to take center stage. Last Sunday was the Super Bowl, and this Sunday is Valentine's Day. As we all know, today is when couples have an opportunity to express and show their love for each other. But come tomorrow, the thought of expressing love will quickly vanish away for some. The Valentine candy displays will begin to disappear, and the Pro-Flower.com commercials will be gone. People will begin to prepare for the next big holiday. While the idea of expressing our love to our spouse' is often confined to this one day in our culture, the Bible speaks of love as something that is to be expressed 365 days a year.
2. This morning we examined 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, where we learned that the language of love is not just lip service, but is action. We examined some aspects of the language of love, and how we say "I love you." However, we only touched the surface of what the Bible teaches when it comes to the language of love.

The Lesson:

I. With Calmness (1 Corinthians 13:5).

A. Real love is not easily provoked.

1. Hopefully, couples can say that it is their spouse that knows them best. It's a blessing that through marriage we can have someone that knows our likes and dislikes, and one that we can trust. This covenant relationship of marriage has been provided for us as a blessing, but at times can be turned into a curse. Instead of walking in the light of God's word where He instructs us to please our spouse's, we will go to the dark side and do our best to annoy and make our spouse angry. Spouses know what to do and say that will cause their mate's blood pressure to boil over. We know exactly what buttons to push.
2. But when a spouse does go down this path, how should the other person respond? When our spouse's action is wrong, how are we to react? We are to react with calmness (1 Corinthians 13:5). This is how we demonstrate our love for them. Even if your husband comes home from a bad day at work and is doing things that he knows will annoy you, God wants you to respond with calmness. Spouses must decide to refuse to go down that naïve and childish trail of allowing their spouse to dictate their actions and responses. The way we react to situations must be according to the way God tells us in His word. God tells us to love with calmness.

B. Why do we push our spouse's buttons?

1. Have you ever asked yourself that question? What was your answer?
 - a. Some may say that when they do it, it's just for fun. Really? What about when your spouse becomes bitter and resentful towards you? Then will it be funny?
 - b. Some may say that they do it because they want to get even with their spouse. Really? That's not what God wants us to do (Romans 12:17).
 - c. There may be times when spouses are just oblivious to what they are doing. As couples, God wants us to be sensitive to each other needs. We need to know what's going to put a smile on our spouse's face and avoid the things that put a frown on their face.
2. Whatever the answer is, we need to fix this behavior immediately and quit allowing the devil any room in our marriages. It is an evil thing to use the personal, intimate knowledge that we have of our spouse to aggravate them. Sadly, this will occur. But when it does, let's say "I love you" with calmness.
3. But how do we demonstrate a love of calmness.
 - a. A simple I love you, hug, and kiss can go a long way when our spouse begins to act childish and foolish.
 - b. Being honest with our spouse and letting them know how we feel when they commit certain actions in a calm and sincere manner is another way of saying "I love you" and that I want to handle this as a Christian should.
 - c. When we see an argument brewing, let's lead by example and pray with our spouse. This is the love that God desires that we have.

II. With Optimism (1 Corinthians 13:7).

- A. Love hopes all things.
 - 1. Hope is part of the DNA of love that God teaches us to have. Hope is what allows us to prevail in difficult situations. With hope comes optimism. It is the disposition to look on the more favorable side of events or conditions and to expect the most favorable outcome.
 - 2. We've heard the analogies of looking at the glass half full instead of half empty. While it may sound cliché, that is the attitude that we should have in our marriages. In fact, we view a lot of things in our lives with optimism. Cowboy fans are optimistic that their team is going to be so much better in 2010 despite the evidence to the contrary. With fans, good or bad, they are always optimistic about their teams. Shouldn't we have the same spirit of optimism with our spouses? What's killing our marriages is that too many of us have this pessimistic attitude, that things are never going to get any better, and as a result we are setting ourselves up for failure.
- B. So how do we demonstrate our love with optimism?
 - 1. We demonstrate this love by assuming that our spouses are doing things with the right motives. Has your spouse ever done something and the first thing you think of is, "Why are they doing this?" Could it be that maybe they were just attempting to express their love to you? Love believes and hopes all things (1 Corinthians 13:7). Love is a choice, and we need to decide that we are going to believe the best in our spouse. Wives, maybe your husband happened to get you a waffle maker for Valentine's Day. It doesn't necessarily mean that he wants you to be a slave to the kitchen. He could just be dumb in knowing what a good gift looks like. Or maybe he brought this gift so the family could begin making memories together making waffles every Saturday morning.
 - 2. We demonstrate this love by trusting in God knowing that He can change our situation. Which means we are going to live and do what He says even when it becomes difficult. Sisters, if the head of your house has turned into a headache, God says to love him with optimism (1 Corinthians 13:7; 1 Peter 3:1). Husbands, if your helpmeet has now become a hindrance, God says to keep on loving that woman just as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25).
 - 3. We can demonstrate this love by showing appreciation to our spouses. It took 43 years for the Saints to win the Super Bowl. The fans throughout the years were still optimistic about the team. When they succeeded, they showed their appreciation. As our spouses change for the better we need to let them know that we see and recognize what they are doing. A card, note, or flowers can go a long way in showing them our love.

III. With Endurance (1 Corinthians 13:7).

- A. Endurance is the idea of preserving, overcoming, or remaining steadfast no matter what. Jesus should come to mind when we discuss the idea of endurance. He endured the cross for us, and it was all because of love (Hebrews 12:2). This type of love goes against our culture. Many view love as something to show as long as things are going well. God wants us to say I love you by enduring all situations.
- B. How are we able to express this type of enduring love?
 - 1. When you are in the middle of an argument that probably will not be fixed right away, tell your spouse that you love them. Tell them that no matter what, you're not going anywhere.
 - 2. When health, financial, or family challenges come up, make sure that you never use the "D" word. Tell your spouse that you meant the promise you gave them in front of God and all of those guests at the wedding.
- C. Job is a great example of what it means to endure (Job 2:9). One of the toughest things Job had to endure was his wife. Will we be like Job or like his wife?

Conclusion:

- 1. Tomorrow is February 15th. What is so special about this day?
- 2. It is another opportunity to demonstrate the love that our spouses deserve from us.