

Introduction:

Why does pursuit of so many “good” things ...

...produce so many “bad” lives?

Consider this – “In the name of love . . .

- We give, and give, and give some more;
yet still feel guilty for not giving “more.”
- We get up early and come home late;
leaving little time or energy to relate.
- We are always on “the go;”
but love requires a time “to slow.”
- We start them early so they’ll be a star;
then spend our weekends in the car.
- We buy them computers and fancy phones;
only to discover they feel all alone.
- We celebrate their role on the traveling team;
then wonder later why at church they’re rarely seen.
- We make success what we reward;
but show little passion for His Word.
- We put our kids in the finest schools;
but fail to teach them spiritual tools.
- We withhold honest feedback from a friend;
then watch them repeat the negative consequences
of their actions again.

Learning to Love in “Real Time”

Situation #1: How does love respond to hurts?

- Truth: *Love is patient, love is kind . . .* 1 Corinthians 13:4a
- Practice: When you are hurt, wounded, rejected, or ignored, love “absorbs the blow (pillow) and returns a hug” (kindness).

Situation #2: How does love respond to differences?

- Truth: *Love does not envy, it does not boast, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.* 1 Corinthians 13:4b-5
- Practice: Love celebrates our differences! Love refuses to compare upward (envy) or downward (arrogance) 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Situation #3: How does love respond to failure?

- Truth: ⁶*Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.* ⁷*It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.* ⁸*Love never fails.* 1 Corinthians 13:6-8a
- Practice: Love responds to failure with truth and grace. Truthful and grace-filled love chooses to . . . bear, believe, hope, and endure all things.

Situation #4: How does love respond to _____?

- **Truth:** ⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

- **Practice:** Love ruthlessly refuses to allow temporal “good” things to crowd out the eternal “best” things.

Thesis -
Love is supreme! Love is our _____!

1 Corinthians 13:8a

Contrast -
The best of temporal things (even spiritually beneficial/powerful gifts) are far less important than _____.

1 Corinthians 13:8b

The Reason -
Because they don't last, they're temporal.

1 Corinthians 13:9-10

The Solution -
Grow up!

1 Corinthians 13:11

How?

- Grow up in your _____
- Grow up in your _____
- Grow up in your _____

The Principle:

1 Corinthians 13:12-13

- Cloudy vision leads to _____.
- Clear vision leads to _____.

The Application: “Separate from the World’s Values”

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2 NIV

Discussion / Personal Application Questions:

1. How can our seemingly best of motives actually be unloving in their long-term impact?
2. In what ways have some good activities kept you and/or those you love from the best investment of your life and energy?
3. How do you need to “grow up” in your talking, thinking, and reasoning in order to address misplaced priorities? What might this look like?
4. What’s your next step of faith/obedience to realign your priorities around what matters most and will last forever?