



I Want to Know What Love Is Part 4 – Love is not Envious or Boastful

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We're going to talk about what love is today, continuing in this series. I have a video for you in keeping with our 80s theme. Let's see how quickly you can figure out what this is. Anybody know what this jam is? I don't know about you... This was the mid-80s. I think I was 8 or 9 years old and I remember watching *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*.

What does that do to an 8-year-old's mind who lives in Washington, Iowa, population 7,000? I'm not sure. "Mom and dad, why is our house made of plastic? Siding doesn't seem very rich or famous. Where's my fur coat?" "Here's your Blass jacket." "Are we taking the Audi to school this morning?" "No, get in the Astro van." "Are we going down to the Florida Keys for vacation?" "No, we're going to the Ramada Inn in Des Moines." I would like to welcome you for another episode of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. Welcome to Branson. It's good to be here.

We're going to talk about what love isn't today. We're going to talk about how love does not envy and it does not boast. We're going to jump back in our passage from 1 Corinthians 13 and we're going to read about love. ***4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 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. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.***

So, as we look at what love is, I want to kind of recap where we're at. Paul is writing the Corinthian Church, which happened to be a mess at the time. Corinth was the ancient day version of Las Vegas, Singapore, or Moonbi. It was a party city. At the center of the city, there was a temple of Aphrodite, which housed 1,000 prostitutes. Actually, the Greek word *Corinthian*, *korinthiazomai*, means to act the Corinthian and it became known in the language of the day as "to practice fornication." So that tells you something about where this little church was seated. It was seated in a worldly, party culture. This worldly, party culture had seeped into the church of Corinth to the point where you couldn't tell the difference between Corinthians outside the church and Corinthians inside the church.

It's relevant to us today because we are in a similar culture and we're under a similar attack. Satan's strategies to attack and draw us away from the Lord haven't changed over thousands of years. In fact, when someone gives their heart to the Lord, when they listen to the message of truth, the gospel of their salvation and also having believed, they are sealed in the Lord with the Holy Spirit, which is given as a guarantee of your inheritance of heaven.

At that moment, you slip out of the grasp of Satan and he's got to move to plan B. Here's what plan B was for the Church of Corinth and here's what plan B is for the church of Woodland Hills here in Branson, Missouri: **distract, disarm, and destroy**. So, he moves and his legion of foul spirits move to pull your eyes off the author and perfecter of your faith. And then once you are distracted and you've taken your alliance off of God, then he cuts you off from your power supply – your power supply from heaven that gives you the ability to live victoriously in this life, that allows you to take God's word and wield it as a weapon, to be an evangelist and a discipler. Then once you are disarmed... If he can disarm you, he can destroy you. As a Christian, he can't take away your eternal salvation, but what he can do is make a mess of your life. That's what had happened in the Church of Corinth.

The Robbins family purchased a little country residence. I've been doing a remodel. I've been driving up and down a gravel road every single day in my truck and I've been listening to a lot of country music. One of the songs out there is called "Love Ain't." Adam and Travis talked about what love is. Today, we're going to talk about what love ain't. Love does not envy, and love does not boast. As I started to study this, what I realized, and was kind of surprised by, was that envy and boasting come from a similar, fleshy place in my heart, and they actually have a similar result as they play out in my life.

Let me break it down a little bit further. **Envy and boasting are driven out of a selfish appetite for that which does not belong to us. They are robbers of peace, contentment, and satisfaction.**

Further broken down, **envy is craving the life of another**. So, as we take our eyes off Jesus and we place our eyes on other people around us, we see things of celebrity, the lifestyles of the rich and famous, or whatever it might be that catches our eye and we see something, a dissatisfaction in us with God, and we begin to crave the life of another.

Boasting is constructing the life of another. You may be successful, have a great life, have a beautiful family, have everything you need, but there is an inner insecurity and dissatisfaction with the accolades and the attention or the value that's placed on your life. Then you project or you construct a person to people in hopes of meeting or satisfying those desires.

But when we envy and when we boast, we'll always come back short changed. Sure, there will be a moment of a minimal, fleeting satisfaction, but in that moment, when that satisfaction evaporates, you're left with a stomachache. It's like suffering from dehydration and finally finding your way to the ocean and running in and plunging your face into the water and sucking up as much water as you can. There is an initial satisfaction where moisture fills your mouth and you get a moment of relief. But as you suck down that saltwater, it furthers your dehydration and eventually will kill you. That's how it works when we run to these wells that Satan puts out in front of us.

Throughout this series, I think we're going to go back to something that Jesus said. The religious leaders went to Jesus, trying to stump him, trying to trick him. They asked him, "Jesus, what's the greatest commandment?" He responded, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and the second is like it that you love your neighbor as yourself."

The Corinthian Church's love had become tainted because the separation wall between church and their culture had fallen down and you couldn't tell the difference between the two in so many ways. One of those ways is the love they had for each other. There was infighting, fornication, incest; it was an absolute mess. So, Paul is circling back around, and he is correcting them. "Let me remind you of how we go about loving each other."

When Jesus silenced his critics, there was a really important component to how we love each other. It says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." You see, envy and boasting are a subtle self-hatred. In other words, you're looking at your heart and you're not satisfied with who you are, the value you feel in your life, the way that you believe you're perceived by others. You have a misconception of how God feels about you and his attention towards your life. We can't love people well without having a healthy love of ourselves. When we are envious and boasting, we taint our ability to love because we're minimizing who we are in God's eyes.

Envy and boasting implies that God has saved his best stories for others. The worship team put up Hebrews 12: 2 that Jesus Christ is the author and perfecter of your faith. When we envy and boast, there is a presumption that God doesn't write great stories for everybody, that some people, the people who are on Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous, or the people that I look up to, or want to be like... He writes a great story for them, but the story he has written for me is lame and boring. I want to remind you today, church, that God does not write boring stories; we do. **We're tricked into thinking that God is withholding, uninvolved, stingy, uninterested, and he loves others more than he loves us.**

I think the celebrity thing is something that we need to think about. In the 80s, when I was growing up, for entertainment value, we would run to Forbes, People, Sports Illustrated, Playboy, Maxime, Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous, and we would look at a very small percentage of our population. You couldn't help but want a little bit of something they had. You just can't help it. It doesn't matter how old you are. In the 90s, MTV released a series that kind of changed or introduced a new genre into television. It was a show called The Real World. The Real World essentially chose a handful of college students and put them in a house and filmed their lives. It was the introduction of reality television, which is a huge part of what we consume on a daily basis, from an entertainment standpoint, now.

Reality television established this hope. "Maybe I have a chance, maybe my odds are better of being a celebrity and receiving that notoriety and encouragement and love and attention." Then with the 2000s, when Mark Zuckerberg published Facebook on a college campus, there was a revolution where you and I now can experience celebrity on social media. When I make a post that goes out to all of my fans, everybody who's watching me, I get to receive glory like approval, conversation. In fact, you can even be stalked. Man, does it feel good to be Facebook stalked; you're truly living the life of a celebrity.

That's where we're living. We're living in an unprecedented culture where you and I can experience celebrity, and that is a dangerous allure. I want to talk pretty critically about social media. I want to kind of tell you right off that bat that I believe that there are redemptive components to social media. Like those funny cat videos? We need to get those out there. People need to see them. But we're going to err on the side of being critical in hopes of the Holy Spirit kind of opening our eyes. I believe in the social

media realm, we're very much like the Corinthian Church where the walls between the world and the church have fallen and there is very little difference between the two. We're living the same lifestyle.

I want to ask you some critical questions. Here's another thing I would say before we jump in. I believe that there isn't a one size fits all approach to social media. I just think that the Holy Spirit has to guide each of us and tell us what we want our involvement to be. Now, if you just turned to your wife and said, "Martha, I told you the innerwebs were the devil," this is probably not going to be that relevant for you, so it's nap time. But for those of us who are engaged in social media on a daily basis, it is relevant, and I want to encourage to ask God how he wants you to interact here.

I've kind of come up with this scale of where you could fall in regard to a Christian using social media. Far on the very conservative side you've got the Amish, then one step in, you have the Mennonites, then you have the home-schooling Baptists, and then you have premillennial, fundamentalist, King James only Baptists, and then you have some other denominations, and then all the way over here on the other side you have churches who have a pastor with tight pants and black rimmed glasses on the east or west coast. So, we have the whole realm of possibilities here. The Robbins family have actually fallen into the liberal Mennonite category. That's just who we roll with, okay? You heard it here first. You need to decide for your family how you are going to approach it.

Let me ask you this question. I think it's an important one. I want you to think about the posts that you've made recently or in the past. I want you to ask yourself, "Why did I post that?" "What was I hoping to get out of it?" "Why did I stop and post a picture of my wife and I on a date?" "What was the purpose?" "Why am I posting pictures of my kids in the bathtub?" "Why did I post 'I need some coffee...'" What are you after? Why did you post that?

If I think about my social media friends, there's probably like 2% that are truly close family and friends. So, why would I post that? I think when we post, what we're looking for is validation, celebrity, some human interaction, to be affirmed, to look good, to show off. I think the list goes on and on, but the question is, "Why did I post that?" I think if we're honest, there is some level of narcissism involved with social media. It's a slippery slope.

Going back to *Christmas Notes*, the series that we did in December, we looked at Luke 2. One of the verses has really stuck out to me and I've been thinking about it a lot. I think it has some interesting implications here. It was Mary when she was seeing all these things happen with her son. It says, **Mary treasured up these things in her heart.** I think that such a powerful, potent statement.

In our home, we take a lot of what we call "heart pictures." When there's no phone or camera available and something precious happens, we take a heart picture. I think there is some value in that. In taking heart pictures and taking the gifts that God has given us and treasuring them close to our chest without an audience, I think it is pure hearted.

Scrolling can stir up envy and posting can be boasting. I was looking and asking for a synonym for envy that rhymes with scrolling. That would be really nice. I have received a text message that says "trolling." I don't know if that works or not. Let's make it work. Scrolling can stir up trolling and posting

can be boasting. So, as you're scrolling through your phone, here will be the temptations that you're going to have to come face to face with. As you're scrolling, you're going to see other people's houses. You're going to look at Pinterest and you're going to think, *I don't like my bathroom anymore*. I hate Pinterest. And everything is so easy on Pinterest. Don't get me started.

Then you see somebody else's marriage and they're fit and trim and their teeth are white. Every picture looks great. And you look at other people's families and all their kids are out of diapers, they don't suck their thumbs, what a dream, right? Or you look at my new car that I just posted. The list just goes on and on, but every single scroll you're faced with has the temptation to be envious of what other people have. When you do that, you're turning your eyes off all the gifts that God has given you.

The other side of it is posting can be boasting. I like that one because it naturally rhymes. Ask yourself, "Why am I posting this? Is there some unmet need emotionally that I'm trying to get a fix on when I post this?" If there is, don't post it because you're going to go somewhere else for satisfaction that can only be met by God. I don't want to dismiss the feelings behind that. There are legitimate desires and emotions, but as long as we keep going back to this well, we're going to remain thirsty.

Jesus had this encounter with this woman at the well. He made an amazing statement to enter into a spiritual conversation. He said this in John 4, ***"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again..."*** I don't mean to take this out of context at all. He was getting into an eternal conversation where she would have an eternal thirst that would be met.

One of the quotes that Joe White's been saying, and I don't know if it belongs to him or if he stole it from somebody else, but the statement is this and I really like it. "You don't have to wait to get to heaven to act like you're going there." This is living a life of satisfaction. We know that when we get to heaven, all of those needs will be eternally met. Sin, mourning, pain, crying, grief, being down on ourselves, is all washed away, once and for all, and you inherit a kingdom. God has treasures built into your life today. And if you live with an eternal perspective, you can experience that satisfaction. He said, "Thy will be done, thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven." He wants to give that to us today.

Here's what John Piper says. Rearmed: "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him." When we slip and fall or perhaps our eyes are open to some temptation we've been giving way to... So, when you have that temptation to press "publish" because there is an unmet need, you stop right there and run to the Lord in God's word. You'll find satisfaction in him and as a result, God is glorified, and you become dangerous again in this fight.

A lot of times, when we look at people's lives, we take a superficial glance. Just as an example, I've got a buddy here named Jon Jenkins. He and Heather have been members of our church forever. He's funny, played rugby, he's really good at his job, he's an awesome dad. I look at his life and I could get envious very easily because he's an awesome guy. Here's the key. God didn't build me to live the life of Jon Jenkins. He built me to live the life of Shay Robbins. That's where my most satisfaction is going to come from.

If I got under the hood and I actually got what Jon Jenkins' life is, here's what I might find. I might find that he's a vegan, he loves algebra and fuel-efficient vehicles, he's a big cat guy, and his favorite show is called The Midwife. I'd find myself in a nightmare. I'm just busting his chops. The point is that God designed you specifically for the gifts that he wants to sow in your life.

I believe that as believers that want to walk with Jesus and experience love and give love, we've got to go on a treasure hunt every single day. I believe that what we'll find will stir up our affection for our King.

Early in the Book of 1 Corinthians, Paul writes in Chapter 2: 9. He's speaking eternally, and he reminds them. ***"What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"—the things God has prepared for those who love him...*** And then he's going to move from eternal, but he wants to talk about what we have access to today. ***10 these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.*** So, with that gift of the Holy Spirit that we have if we ride the way of the Holy Spirit, we can go on a treasure hunt to discover things that God has chosen to bless us with every single day. Instead of digging into Jon Jenkins' life or a celebrity's life, I want to challenge us to dig into our life because God doesn't write bad stories. The person to your left or your right or over in Hollywood or New York, nobody is more important to God. He loves all of his children with a whole heart.

When we have a misconception of who God is... So, say perhaps that you've been falling into this trap and you've been boasting, or you've been caught up in envy for what others have, we need to recalibrate our perspective of who God is. That's why God gave us the scriptures. So, we run to the scriptures and as we go throughout all of scripture, we can build a belief statement for who God the Father truly is in our life.

I pulled out a bunch of verses and they are literally just the tip of the iceberg. I'm not even going to read through all of them, but I just want to hit on the qualities of God that are revealed in his scripture and then I want to challenge you. When this is posted this afternoon, go back tomorrow morning and write down these scriptures and spend time reminding yourself of God's character and how he loves you as a heavenly father.

God is a Loving God

Psalms 103 - ***13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him...*** God is compassion.

1 John 3 - ***1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*** He has adopted us as sons and daughters. You guys are of royal lineage.

Matthew 6: - ***6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*** He's a rewarder of those who seek him in secret.

John 14 - ***“Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”*** He is shelter to us and he will make our home with us. He is close and intimate to us.

Luke 12 - ***32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”*** There is an inheritance in heaven that is waiting for us.

Matthew 10 - ***29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. 30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*** That’s a level of love and affection and attention to detail that no parent can claim in this room.

James 1 - ***17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*** He is unchanging and he is the source of all good things. Y’all hear that? Every good thing in your life comes from God. You didn’t produce it, it doesn’t come from your spouse, it didn’t fall out of the apple tree; it comes from God. He is the source and he wants to give you good things.

John 12 - ***26 “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”*** He honors followers of Jesus. God wants to honor you.

Mark 11 - ***25 “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”*** He is a forgiving God.

Are we going to mess up, church? We are. That’s a question in the Robbins home all the time. Are we going to mess up? Yes! When we take ownership of it, he is quick and swift to forgive us of our sins.

Today, running out of here, I want to encourage us all as a church to go on a treasure hunt. As I look at my treasure and I begin to write down all of the things that God has blessed me with... These are just a couple little things. Right now, I’m working on a remodel and I’m absolute loving it. I’ve got a 20-year-old truck that’s the greatest truck in the world. I’ve got chickens, and yesterday, a dog chased them all off and I realized how much I loved them. I love lifting heavy things until I almost puke every day. I love it. And I love my family. Last night, we only cleaned up puke three times. Life is good, right? You might not love that. That’s because it wasn’t written for you; it was written for me. Praise God.

Let me read this scripture to you. 1 John 2 - ***15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*** It’s time for the world to be the world and the church to be the church. ***16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.***

Satan’s goal is to rob you of abundant life. His goal is realized when we take our eyes off the treasure of Christ and the gifts from God the Father through envy and boasting.

Today, as you walk out of here, we're going to go on a treasure hunt together. We've got these cards they will be at each one of the exits. I want you to grab one. I want to encourage you to look at those scriptures, to do a study of who God the Father is, and then ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to the treasures that he's placed in your life. I just want you to write them down. It's kind of like a gratitude list. There are probably 20 lines here and that ought to just get you going. My hope is that God would reawaken us to his generosity and the beauty and all of the awesomeness that's he's build into our lives specifically for us.

Lord Jesus, I want to pray for the building up of this body of Christ. I want to pray that your Spirit and the power of your Word and the love of you as a Father, God, that today you would help us along our way.

I want to pray, God, that you would convict us that we might not get tripped up in being boastful and envious. I want to pray that you open our eyes to the treasures that you built into our life. I want to pray that you give us an appetite for that and that we would search by way of your Holy Spirit for all of the good and perfect gifts that have come from above.

It's in Jesus' name we pray... Amen.