



I Want to Know What Love Is

Part 5 – Love is not Proud

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Today, we're in a series called *I Want to Know What Love Is*. We're in Part 5. We're going through 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 as an outline. Adam covered *Love is Patient*. Travis covered *Love is Kind*. Last week, Shay covered *Love Does Not Envy or Boast*. Today, we're looking at *Love is not Proud*.

As I was preparing this week, I kept thinking about teenagers and young adults. I just want to encourage the young people – and I don't think it is an accident at all that you're here this morning – to lean in maybe a little bit more than you normally would on a Sunday because at the beginning of your life, you can be led astray by the world, thinking that to be successful in relationships and to be successful at work and to be successful in all that you do there is this path you need to take.

Today we're going to look at five ways that love should act, but before we get to that, we're going to look at five ways that we tend to live a puffed-up life. We're pursuing the wrong things and the wrong ways, the ways of the world.

Carson and I were just on a flight last week. Carson was in the window seat and I was on the aisle. This guy sat down in the seat next to me and pulled out a thing of wipes. He started wiping down the outside of the tray table and the arms on the seat. He put the tray table down, got another wipe out and wiped down the top surface of the tray table and the arms that hold the tray table. He then wiped down the buckle on the seatbelt. I'm not making this up. Then he handed me one. I said, "Are you going to wipe me down?" I was thinking *Lord, if there was ever a time you could give me a sneeze, now would be a fantastic time. I would love to sneeze and into this elbow.*

As I sat there thinking about it, that's really what we're getting in 1 Corinthians 13. As we're looking at love, Paul is talking to the Church in Corinth and he's saying, "You know what? There's a cleansing that needs to be taking place within the church." Shay mentioned it last week. We're not supposed to look like the world. We're supposed to be in the world, but not of the world. We're supposed to love the people of the world as God loves the people of the world, but the ways of the world, the systems of the world are not what we should be adhering to.

Today, kind of think about what needs to be wiped down in your life. The word we're looking at today is *Love is not Proud*. I want to give it to you from a few other translations though. The NASB says "love is not arrogant." I really like the old King James Version on this one – "Love is not puffed up."

We're going to look at five ways we live a puffed-up life, but then five ways we can take those and ask some good questions that love demands of us, that love asks of each one of us. I like Eugene Peterson in *The Message*. He calls it a "swelled head."

Knowledge – "I'm right"

Today, we're looking at *Love is not Proud*. We're just going to jump right into it and we're going to use several illustrations from 1 Corinthians as Paul is working with the church. The first way that we tend to be puffed up and it's the most obvious – we shared it in Part 1 of the series – is knowledge. What do you do with knowledge? I've talked to many high school students who are a little stressed about college. Some have gotten into the college of their choice and some have not. Some are stressed, frustrated they didn't get into the college of their choice. And I just love encouraging young people who didn't get into the college of their choice or maybe the young people who have chosen not to go to college and go into the trades. I always tell them "I here to tell you that hustle, grit, integrity, and hard work will take you way farther in life than the name on your diploma." So, get after it, get working. Understand though the purpose of knowledge.

The puffed-up person uses knowledge to say, "I'm right and you're wrong." We use knowledge in marriage when we have our opinions and we want to win, so we fight and we bicker and we try to persuade one another and it goes nowhere. We learned this the first week in 1 Corinthians 8:1. Knowledge puffs up. If you use it for yourself to make yourself better, to make yourself stand out among other people, it puffs you. But love builds up.

This is what Paul is dealing with in the church in Corinth. I love his tone. I know when you read 1 Corinthians, you can think it's harsh. He's coming across strong and stern to them, correcting so much bad behavior. I'm going to encourage you, as we go through this series, to give it an even more careful read because I was kind of picking up a little bit of a fatherly tone this week. It even led me to look up the song *Daddy's Hands* on iTunes. Soft and kind when I was crying, but then stern when it needed to be.

Here's what I love. When you get to 1 Corinthians 3, Paul is dealing with this idea of them still being infants. As a dad, as a father, a spiritual father to these new believers, he doesn't have the expectation on them... As young Christians from the moment of their salvation when they are justified, declared righteous, he doesn't have the expectation on them to be mature all at once. That's not placed on them. But what his expectation is – and it's clear as you read it – is you should be growing. You should be moving forward in your faith.

I always love when I meet a Christians who isn't growing, and they tell me God is love and "I'm leaning on grace." Don't lean on grace as an excuse not to grow. Yes, lean on grace. Your father in heaven loves you, but he wants you to grow. He wants you to mature. Paul's heart here is "We want you to mature," but the problem is they're not. And their love and being in a culture that prides itself on knowledge, he's saying here's what's happening. You read this in 1 Corinthians 3. "There is jealousy and quarreling among you like you would have with children fighting over toys. You're not building one another up, you're each in this puffed up..."

As we take the Lord's Supper today at the end of the message, you'll see they were even puffed up as they came around the elements of the Lord's Supper. Knowledge says, "I'm right. I need to win. You're wrong and I need to change you. And if I'm going to love you, I need you to start acting in a little different way. You need to drop the attitude." Love says, "I'm going to move in and lean in and care for you and be kind to you and be patient with you, not be envious of you or boasting in front of you. No, I'm going to love you no matter where you're at, not puffing myself up with knowledge."

Affiliation and access – "I'm important"

This next one is kind of interesting. You've heard it said, "It's not what you know; it's who you know." Sometimes we like to get around important people so other people can see we are important. This was happening in the Church in Corinth as well. Paul says this in Romans 12 before we get to what he says in Corinthians: **16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.**

What was happening in the Church in Corinth... We read this in 1 Corinthians 3 - **21 So then, no more boasting about human leaders!** And who you follow and who's better and who's right. It's not what you know, it's knowledge, it's who you know – affiliation and access.

Here's what he tells them in Chapter 1 at the very beginning of this letter. **10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you...** Keep this in your mind as we take the Lord's Supper today because this is what he comes down on them for in 1 Corinthians 11 – the division among you. "And it's even coming out when you gather and at the Lord's Supper, at the table you should be gathering to enjoy this meal together and with me," the Lord is saying to them. **....but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. 11 My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.** "You're still acting in more of an infant mindset when it comes to the faith."

12 What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." "You're picking your leaders, you're affiliating." I think we see this today. In January, I said I finally found that statement of what I can say to someone who says, "I didn't really get a lot out of worship today." We're responding now with, "That's okay; we weren't worshipping you." We got that from Francis Chan.

Do we align with leaders? I think we do, but it's something we want to keep in front of us here at Woodland Hills because some of you came in today and well... Your primary question was, "Are they open?" That's not normally what the question is, but we get this question a lot: "Who's preaching this Sunday?" I just want to remind you that we are not a movie theater. We do post our times, but we seek the Lord out on what we're speaking and who is speaking. You wonder if that is a bad question to ask. I want you to check your heart on this. When people call the church asking who is preaching this Sunday...

It drove Denise crazy for years because I would tell her not to tell them. Denise said once, "What do you want me to tell them?" I said, "Just say, 'get your butt to church.'" She goes, "I'll probably clean that up a little bit," and I go, "Well, you do what you need to do." Some of you get frustrated. You'll text me this or you'll email me this or you'll Facebook me this and you're like, "You never answer." You're doggone tootin' right I won't answer it. Your question pulling into this parking lot should not be who's preaching today. Your question should be, "God, what do you have for me today?"

Last week, I was watching Shay in a public place and cracking up at some of the stuff. I was deeply convicted about my social media behavior. I have decided I brag a lot about fish on social media, and I am going to keep doing that. But every time I posted this week, I asked, "Why am I doing this? Is it helpful?" Did anybody else do that last week? Does anybody else still disagree with Shay? I'm okay with that. You disagree with me, you might as well disagree with the other guys too. I texted him and I said, "It was so well thought out and so well worded." And then I talked to some people who I think kind of got the wrong application from the message and I was able to say, "I don't think that's what he was saying. I think he was going way deeper, past your posting and into the heart."

I'm just here to tell you it doesn't matter who is standing up here and delivering. I want to encourage you as you pull into the parking lot, don't be aligning with leaders and who your favorite is. I'm going to brag on my mom for just a second. Tomorrow morning, my mom will share this message on Facebook. What I love about it is she shares the message on Facebook every single week no matter who's up here. You're like, "Of course she should share her son." There are times I think she is more excited about the other speakers up here. I don't remember how the conversation went, but years ago when we started the teaching team, I just told her, "One of the great things you all can do for me is to 100% support the teaching team. Get behind them with everything." I'm grateful, Mom, that you have. Dad still asks me, "Are you preaching this Sunday," but that's just proud papa.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says it this way as Paul was wanting to talk to them about the ministers that were over them. **"...boasting about ministers was a self-center spirit."** It was pride. I have to be really honest with you. Another large mega church pastor fell two weeks ago. He founded the church and his elders fired him. Do you know what they fired for? The bottom line was arrogance and pride. Can we be guarded on that here at this church? Can we be grateful for how God is using everybody at this church? And make sure that we are in tune with this, that we don't align with leaders.

I think this affiliation and alliance thing is happening even within politics. We have to be careful. I'm telling all my friends who have access to the Whitehouse and with President Trump. I'm like, "Don't allow your access to, for one second, keep you from being a minister of the gospel of Jesus. When he says or does something that is contrary to this scripture, may you speak boldly to him because I believe God has brought you before the king. You may say something to president Trump that's part of you calling and it may mean you never get invited back again. Speak up my brother. Don't allow pride of your affiliation and your access and those you're aligning with to puff you up."

Authority – “I’m in charge”

When you’re puffed up with authority, the word we would use is *authoritarian*. I was told very early in ministry that I lean authoritarian, not authoritative. It was a wake up call for me to say, “Okay well what does that mean?” That means that you’re making the decisions, you’re in charge, you’re deciding it, and everybody just has to fall in line. You need to be authoritative. I asked the counselor... I was in counseling at this point. He said, “You need everybody to have input. You may have to make a final decision, but don’t shut everybody out.”

This week, Amy was studying Clay Scroggins who’ll be speaking here again this summer. He said, “Don’t be that leader that practices (what he calls) the “Poop and poop.” What that means is you’ve gotten into a meeting and the group decided something and everybody leaves and they start making plans and executing what was decided in the meeting, but then a week later, you, as the leader, come in and you swoop in and poop over it all. We’ll edit that out in the next service. I thought it was a great illustration. That’s clean. Dave Ramsey uses far harsher language than that. Clay says don’t be that type of leader, but this is that person that just rules with an iron fist. “I’m in charge.”

At the Lord’s Supper... When you read in Luke 22, the disciples start doing this right here. “Who’s going to be awesomer in the Kingdom? Who’s going to be the greatest? You’re going to need some awesome managers, Lord. You can’t handle all of us. You need a couple of close ones. Who are the close ones going to be? Who is the greatest?”

24 A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. 25 Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them... That’s authoritarian. “I’m in charge. Do what I say. Shut up and get in line.” And I’m here to tell you it’s getting pastors fired all over the country. It’s getting leaders fired all over the country. ...and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. They want to be the ones that get blessed. 26 But you are not to be like that. You know I share this passage quite a bit. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.

The illustration that first popped in my mind was this guy right here. Not Robin Williams, but Patch Adams. I loved this movie. He’s just doing crazy stuff to love on people. Whenever I read Bob Goth, he reminds me of Patch Adams. Just crazy ways of loving on people. If you’ve watched that movie, he tries to recruit the other doctors to help him. One of them ends up kind of being his girlfriend in the movie. But then the other guy was his roommate.

So, he’s trying to recruit them, and they can’t do it. They find themselves struggling to do it. Why? One even says, “I want the white coat. I want to be known as a doctor.” What does Patch say? He even gets up in front of the whole panel of doctors at the end and everyone behind him and he goes, “I don’t understand. We’re supposed to help people.”

It’s not about the coat. It’s not about the title. It’s not about the position that you find yourself in. It’s not about the esteem that you’re looking for in the position. It’s about putting on a clown nose and doing whatever you have to do to help people.

They start accusing him of not being a doctor. He goes, “Well, if a doctor is helping people, I’m helping people. That’s what I want to do.” But so many people – those who were studying to become doctors – were just so puffed up with the idea of being a doctor, of having the white coat, it blinded them from serving others.

Young people, get your degrees, get your job. I’m one guy who loves hard work. I love the fact that you’re going to go out and be successful. I’m pushing this on my kids daily. My daughter started a job in town yesterday and I’m excited. And the law is keeping her from working more than like three hours a day. Ridiculous laws we have out there, protecting our children from hard labor. It drives me insane. We need to change those laws. There are farmers in here. Could you imagine telling your dad, “If I’m starting at 4:00, I’m done at 7:00. You’re getting me up at 4:00 to milk these cows. I’m done at breakfast.” No, you’re not. You’re done when the sun goes... That’s a whole other... I don’t know. That’s not even there. I didn’t even plan on saying any of that.

Do all of that, but in your chase to set up your life and to provide for a family, don’t forget about Patch Adams. Help people. I’m here to tell you that if you will love people and help people, I promise you you’ll be more successful. I believe that. I know you’ve met a lot of arrogant jerks along the way who are super successful. As Jesus told his disciples, don’t be like that.

Possessions – “I’m successful”

Shay kind of mentioned this when he was talking about Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous. I have to be honest with you. I used to watch Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous and it wasn’t until he showed that clip that I’m like *man that is old*. I forgot how old that was. But I watch that new show. Every now and then it will pop on HGTV. It’s called My Lottery Dream Home. I don’t know about you, but they moving into these massive houses. I guess I don’t struggle in this area. I struggle in a lot of other areas, but not this one. I look at those houses and I don’t want them. To me... I’m moving into Treasure Lake down here. I’m moving into the trailerhood. Gary Smalley used to say this all the time. “Every square foot you own owns you.” These people are moving out of 1,400 square foot homes and moving into 14,000 square foot palaces. They’re never going to see each other. And they’re going to be vacuuming or hiring people... They’re going to hear the sound of vacuuming and mowing. I don’t want that, but we live in a culture that acquires stuff and it will show people that “I’m successful. I drive this car... Buick, Cadillac. I have this house. I wear these clothes. It’ll just put out there the idea that I’m a successful person.”

Paul told Timothy this in 1 Timothy 6, ***17 Command those... Warn people who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth... which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.***

Friends – “I’m popular”

Young people, lean in on this one because again, “If I hang out with the right people and enough people and I have the cool group and I have the cool friends at lunch and I’m sitting at the cool table, it’ll let people know I’m popular.” Just let the Holy Spirit call you by name right now on that. If who you’re hanging out with is giving you your worth, if you’re looking for value, you’re becoming puffed up.

Possessions do it, authority does it, alignment does it, knowledge does it, but so can your friends. And you can begin to think because of who you're hanging out with, people will think you're awesome.

In Proverbs 18, we receive this warning: ***24 One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*** I love this part of poetry because what it's really saying is... When it says there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother... and you know this. When hard times hit you, this large group of friends won't be there. The people you're hanging out with that you think are cool and giving you the badge of honor and popularity and all of that in your school, when you fall, they're not going to be there.

My dear friend who was pastoring a church of 7,000 people in Phoenix, this happened five years ago. He fell morally. Guess what? Very few people were around him. He maxed out friends on Facebook, had a large church, and when it came to working through the struggles in his life, there was just a handful of people.

I just want to remind you, young people, something someone taught me years ago. You only need six people to carry your casket. Think through who they are. Some of you are going, "I'm getting cremated." Well, whatever. You'll only need one or two. I think the illustration still works. Don't become arrogant or puffed up with the group. Maybe this is an old term. My kids will tell me at lunch all the things I need to get hipper on. We used to call them clicks. That's the cool group. That's the band group. That's the jocks. That's the druggies. There's Ted in the yearbook group. What was great about being in the yearbook group is you were friends with everybody because they all wanted to be in the year book. Except the drug dealers during transactions; they didn't want any of that. Just be careful not to lean into your friends as your badge. We're going to see how you can leverage that in just a moment.

Why is this important to talk about? If you're not careful, this is going to take you down a road of arrogance and living a puffed-up life and you're going to find yourself then becoming arrogant about sin. Watch what he says in 1 Corinthians 5. ***1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife.*** This isn't a man sleeping with his mother. It's a step-mother, which was against the law. The pagans would even look at that and go, "Nasty, don't do that!" ***2 And you are proud!*** You're sinning and you're puffed up with this.

There are really four ways we approach sin.

There is one who sins and tries to hide it. They don't want anybody to know about. Some of you are in that right now with addiction. Some of you are in that right now with relationships your spouse doesn't know about. You're in that right now with the way you're handling money at your company or at your work or school or organization, wherever it is, and you're just trying to hide it. I'm just here to tell you it'll catch up to you.

There is the one who sins and repents. They can repent of the puffed up, arrogant pride towards sin.

There is one who sins and doesn't even think twice about it. They become calloused to sin.

There is the one who sins and brags about it. In this text though, Paul is talking about the person who sins and brags about it. In Proverbs 28, we read, *Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*

Christ has called you to leverage your energy, gifts, talents, resources, associations, and position to build others up. We're going to look at how to leverage those five we just talked about that puff us up. We're going to see how you can leverage those and to give you new questions to begin asking, as you use knowledge and affiliations and authority and your possessions and your friends. Leverage all of it, not for you to puff yourself up, but to help others and to build others up.

Knowledge – This week, I want you asking the question: “How can I help you?” I love doing this at restaurants, stores. I have a face that screams middle management. You've heard me say this. I'll go in there and just walk up to someone and say, “Hey, how can I help you?” With the knowledge you have, someone this week could use some help. If you can't help them or you don't have the knowledge to help them work through something, let's leverage your affiliation and access.

Affiliation and access – “Who do I know that can help you? Do I know someone that can be of help to you? I want to connect you to that person.”

Authority – If you find yourself in a position of authority, ask the question: “What do you need from me to be successful? I want to help you succeed here in what you do. Do you need budget?” Maybe some just need permission. Maybe they don't feel they have the authority to carry out their job at work. Maybe they need training or education or something. Ask “What do you need from me?” Go in to those who you lead and say, “What do you need from me to be successful?”

Possessions – “What can I give to meet your needs?” Not what can I have to make myself look better, to build myself up. “What do you need?” Today you have that opportunity in the mercy offering as you leave here in a moment. We take a mercy offering that goes to meet the physical needs of those in our church family. We encourage you to drop a gift in the box out there on your way out.

Friends – Young people... We talked about this at dinner last night as a family. I asked my 13 and 15-year-old, “Help me understand how you can even leverage your friends to love someone this week, that you can build someone else up rather than yourself.” So, with friends this week, I want you to find that person at school and ask them, “Do you want to join us?” “Why don't you come sit with us?” Would you do me a favor this week, young people? I want you to find an outcast. I want you to find someone who says, “I've never been in that group.” I would even encourage it here at Organic. This week, let's not have a home school group, a public school group, a Christian school group. Let's just have one group. “Do you want to join us?”

Can you imagine? What a statement to hear a 16-year-old this week at Branson High or Reeds Spring or wherever, look at kid and go, "Come over here and join us." Maybe your friends will knee you under the table or kick you, going, "What are you doing?" We're building others up. Love is not arrogant. It is not puffed up. It doesn't have a swelled head. It invites others in.

I'm going to invite you to pray with me. We are going to take the Lord's Supper today and I'm going to encourage you to get your elements ready. As you pray, I'm going to go to 1 Corinthians 11 and read you this: ***20 So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, 21 for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk.*** "Even with this community meal that we're supposed to be taking that's supposed to unite us, some of you are even just being selfish and prideful and puffed up and you're going ahead and misusing this meal." ***22 Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!*** "This is another area that you need mature in" is what he is saying.

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you... I'm going to invite you to take the Lord's Supper today in a worthy manner. If you are believer, this is for you and you can prepare the bread and the wine. This is juice in the cup, representing the wine. If you are not a believer, we would not have you to drink judgment on yourself today. We ask you to abstain from this part of the service. I'm going to give you moment as we close today to just pray, confessing sin. Areas where you're puffed up and arrogant, confess that before the Lord today.

Lord Jesus, we take this supper today, remembering the death, the blood that was shed for us, for we are grateful.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Would you stand as we pray? I want to invite you to participate in the mercy offering and be generous on your way out. Thank you for making today a special time. Thank you for joining us on livestream today. Be safe out there.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we pray today for those who are watching online, for those who are here with us today, that we would be a church that is one. Not aligned around one leader or another. Not in jealousy or in quarreling. Not allowing possessions or alignment or friendships or authority or knowledge to puff us up, but to leverage all of this that you have given each one of us to love others and to build others up. May that be the heart of each one of us leaving here today.

We're grateful for how you have blessed this church. Continue to use Woodland Hills in this community. It is in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.