

Freestyle

I Need Love | Chad Bruegman | 5.27.18
LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

What are you looking forward to most this summer?

SHARE

Welcome to our teaching series, *FreeStyle*.

Have you ever said something and immediately regretted it? Maybe it was a hurtful joke, a malicious comment, or just a cheap shot. It happens to all of us.

In Matthew 12:34, Jesus gives us some great insight into why we do this, he says “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” The things we say are a natural overflow of what is going on in the depths of our being. So, if you want to know how healthy your heart is, observe all the words you say today.

When we are spending all of our time and energy building people up and speaking life into the world, it is a good sign of a healthy heart.

So, for the next few weeks, we are going to let Shawn and Chad speak about whatever is on their hearts! We are going to let them freestyle and see what happens!

Read John 13:34-35

The Apostle John is an essential figure in Scripture. He was one of the twelve guys who walked with Jesus and then he played an integral part in starting the early church! However, as the disciples continued the work of Jesus, they were all killed. One by one, all of them were martyred for the message they were preaching. All of them, except John. John lived to be an old man, full of wisdom and life experience.

Towards the end of his long life, he sat down to write his Gospel and several letters to local churches. Since these letters came from such an inspired wise sage, we should learn absolutely everything we can from them.

So, what does this man who walked with Jesus and then spent several decades carrying his message to the world have to say? Let's read a few verses.

- The message you heard from the very beginning is this: we must love one another. (1 John 3:11)
- And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (John 13:34)
- My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action. (1 John 3:18)
- My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. (John 15:12)

By the end of his life, John had seen, done, and learned so much. And his conclusion was simple: We are loved, so we also need to love one another!

What are your initial thoughts when you read these verses John wrote thousands of years ago? Are you a person marked by love? Is that how your peers would describe you? Why or why not?

We all have different spheres of influence. Our family, our job, our classroom, our friends, etc. Take a few moments to identify three of your major spheres of influence. In each sphere, give yourself a letter grade of how well you are loving. Share the grades with the group. What are some ways you can improve the lower grades this week?

GROW

Read 1 Corinthians 13

1 Corinthians 13 is considered one of the great love passages in Scripture. You may be familiar with this passage as it is often read in weddings, but its message is not just for marriage, it applies directly to every aspect of our lives.

The Apostle Paul is writing to the church in Corinth, to remind them (and us) to love the way Christ loved us. He chose to love us with a love that our human minds will not be able to fully grasp until we see Christ face to face. When we begin to understand the depth and width of Christ's love for us, we will start to see others the way Christ sees them.

If our words and actions are not rooted and grounded in love, it doesn't matter how smart we are, everything we say and do is just noise. Paul says it this way, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy...clanging cymbal." When we proclaim the truth of God, but aren't filled with love, nobody hears it. They simply hear noise. When we try to address issues with people, but have selfish motives, it never works out for the betterment of their soul or ours. All they hear is the noisy clanging of a cymbal.

What if we went to people with the agenda of Christ's love? What if we were filled with the grace and compassion of our Father instead of our empty agendas and self-seeking motives? In order to live free and love others, we must understand this love Paul is talking about. This love is patient, it is kind, it does not envy or boast. It is not proud. This love does not dishonor others. It is not self-seeking or easily angered. It does not keep record of wrongs. It doesn't delight in evil. Instead, it rejoices with truth. It always protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.

1 Corinthians 13 is a very weighty description of love. Since we have heard it so many times, it is easy to skip right over it. So instead, take a few moments to address each of those descriptive words as a group. For example, what does it mean that love is patient? What does it look like for love to be kind? Why does love not boast?

M O V E

Read 1 John 4:7-12

John doesn't write this letter to encourage us to fill the seats of a church building and then call it good until the next week. This is an invitation to experience the love of Christ and then to go and pour out this love on others.

The gift of being in a Life Group together is that we have the opportunity to live out this command to love one another deeply. Loving one another is not a suggestion, it is a commandment. It is the love that exemplifies Christ who says to us, "I will never leave you...I'm for you." Love costs us something. It costs us time, finances, resources, hard conversations...the list goes on and on. And if at the end of the day we find ourselves not sacrificing for one another, the question we may need to ask ourselves is, are we truly loving well?

We all have relationships that are easier than others. But having authentic love for one another requires us to love sacrificially. It means we don't shy away from the messiness of the relationship, but instead remember that we are also messy, and commit to embracing the good, the bad, and the ugly with each other.

Fortunately, we have a great example of this in Jesus, who is living proof that God did not hesitate to jump into the messiness of life with us. He took the form of a man and walked with us, feeling all the weight that comes with being human (Hebrews 4:15). So as Christ followers, we are invited into this same life. We must allow the love of Christ within us to compel our love for one another. When we do, His love will pour out of us and we will be the vessels He uses to make Heaven more crowded!

Encouragement is an incredible gift. It is one of the best ways to bring light to the dark places of our souls. Use these next few moments to encourage one another. Spend a few minutes building up each person in the group and reminding them all the ways God is using them!

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

TO GO

"Love cares more about who's hurting than those who's watching."
-Bob Goff

