



## Week 4 – Lovers of People

*WE TRAIN PEOPLE TO LOVE GOD & THEIR BODIES.*

***Love is the distinguishing mark of Christ-like leaders.***

Leadership based on the love of God represents a vital pillar of leadership. Love in leadership? Echoes of the song “*What’s love got to do, got to do with it?*” come to mind as we approach this subject. What does love have to do with leadership? **Everything.**

Living a God-first, God-only life and operating out of an understanding of our identity in Christ establishes real freedom to love people - *without expectation of return*- and fiercely, *without offense, and for their best*. God’s love always gives, sacrifices, and calls out the best in each person. He calls us to love just as He does. In John 13:34-35, Jesus gave this command during the Last Supper: “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*” **His command to love is filled with His divine ability to do so.**

Before we examine leadership that flows from love, we must first define love. The love of Christ—and the example He set—does not merely coexist with, tolerate, or use people to accomplish purposes. Love, as primarily defined in scripture, is a “*purposeful commitment to sacrificial action for another.*”<sup>1</sup> In the Bible, love is inextricably linked to obedience and sacrifice. Love is grace AND truth; love is others before self; love is people over accomplishment. God’s love is “*the action of totally being committed to the well-being of others without regard for their worthiness even unto death.*”<sup>2</sup> Jesus demonstrated this kind of love every moment of His life. The world does not need more talent; many leaders accomplish great things, yet do not love. Love eternally marks those around us and brings heaven to earth. This -loving as Jesus Himself loved - is the leadership we desire and pursue.

### ***Leading as those who are loved***

“*We love because He first loved us.*”<sup>1</sup> 1 John 4:19 Last week, our focus was on identity and the importance of living and leading as a son or daughter of God. We no longer live as orphans; we are free to lead from a place of identity, truth, and freedom. Understanding our identity lays a foundation for leadership that freely loves others. The Christ-like love of a leader brings the atmosphere of heaven to earth and determines how vision, mission, and core values work out. Our lives raise or lower the bar for where we will take those we lead. We cannot lead where we have not gone. We cannot give what we do not have. We cannot live out Christ-like love in leadership if we have not first personally received His sweet, passionate,

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://bible-truth.org/msg38.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://bible-truth.org/msg38.html>



intimate love. When we understand and receive the love of God for us, we are empowered to love freely.

*"Freely you have received, freely give."* Matthew 10:8

### **Leadership compelled by Love**

*"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died."* (2 Cor. 5:14)

Christ-like leadership is COMPELLED by love. Webster defines "compelled" as *to drive or urge with force, or irresistibly; to force; to constrain; to necessitate, either by physical or moral force.*<sup>3</sup>

Leadership driven, constrained, and urged on by the love of God is **sustainable**. God's heart sustains our actions in the long run. Leadership is frequently fraught with difficulty and full of potential hurts, disappointments, and even betrayal. With our hearts grounded in love, the rude, selfish, and uncaring can be filtered through God's heart. **His love sustains ours.**

The Greek word for *compels* in 2 Corinthians 5:14 means this: *to hold together any whole, lest it falls to pieces; hold together with constraint; to press on every side; urge, impel, constrain.*<sup>4</sup> The vision and heart of love hold us together; love sustains and motivates us. Love purifies our hearts and our leadership. Love received becomes love poured out - it flows from the heart of one who has experienced the love of the Father. Daily receiving God's love equips us to love everyone we meet, beginning with those in our own homes. Love is not earned and freely given because love has been freely received.

In 1 Peter 5:2, the Apostle Peter exhorts the church leaders to shepherd the flock God entrusts to them, not because they must but because they are willing. *"When you shepherd the flock God has given you, watch over them **not because you have to but because you want to**. For this is how God would want it not because you're being compensated somehow but because you are eager to watch over them."*<sup>5</sup> Love enables leadership to be a **get-to** when difficult times and even more difficult people arrive. Love makes a heart willing.

**"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

**John 13:34-35 (emphasis added)**

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.webster-dictionary.org/definition/compel>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4912&t=KJV>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+5%3A2&version=VOICE>



God desires that HIS love be so BIG, so compelling in us, that loving the unlovable becomes possible; loving others becomes like our very breath. **This** is how the world will know we are His – **by our love**. We cannot overlook the importance of LOVE in life and leadership.

### ***Love-based leadership in action***

How does the love of God work itself out in our leadership? Here are some tangible ways that God's love transforms leadership.

- **Because we are loved, we are free to believe the best of people.** Love allows us to see past rough edges and differences in personalities and see the gift and grace of God in each person. Each person has been created in the image of God, and this determines that EVERY person is endowed with worth. There is gold in every person; it may be hard to find, but if we dig, seek the Father's heart, and call out the greatness of God in those around us, they will rise to meet it. Be a gold digger. *Relentlessly search for the goodness that God has deposited in each person.*

*"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly since love covers a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8*

- **Because we are loved, we can be unoffendable.** In life and leadership, myriads of opportunities for offense will present themselves. *Offense is one of the enemy's chief weapons to destroy relationships.* When we become offended by one another, we cannot love well. Offense creates a fence in our relationships that, if unchecked, grows to bitterness. *Gracious assumptions - Assume the best about those around you.* Determine before the Lord to seek His heart for people. When (not if) you encounter a person who grates on you, rejoice. Seek the Lord on how to see what He sees in that person. Think Buddy the Elf. 😊 Be unoffendable.

**"Loving leadership has one intention: to elevate and fill yourself and others."**

**Megan McDonough**

- **Confront yourself before anyone else.** The prayer "*Show me ME!*" becomes a cry to see clearly, and to be motivated by love instead of hurt, offense, or previous experience. It is asking the Father to reveal what is going on in our own hearts before we approach others about their hearts. In marriage, in leadership, in every relationship, this prayer and the heart of humility behind it set a leader up for freedom and love. Instead of looking to the other person(s) first, examine your heart before the Lord. Allow Him to realign your heart and show you where you might be wrong. This prayer brings freedom and allows the Holy Spirit to keep your own heart in the right place. From this place, you can approach another person rightly.



*"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." Matt. 7:3-5*

- **In love, reconcile.** Love compels us to work on restoring relationships. God's heart is always for reconciliation, and He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Out of love, we do our part, as much as it depends on us, reconcile. (2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Rom. 12:18)
- **Before you whip them, weep over them.** In Luke 19, Jesus approaches Jerusalem in His triumphal entry. He stops before the city and weeps over it. His heart is broken over their rejection of the truth and refusal to receive Him due to their false expectations of the coming Messiah. Immediately following this, Jesus enters the temple and, with holy anger and a hand-made whip, clears out all those who had defiled the temple of God. As leaders, before we correct and confront, we must stop and gain the Father's heart and perspective on the person and situation. Effective leadership loves and corrects.
- **Because we are loved, we can and must be bold in grace and truth.** True love requires a fierce hatred of sin and all that destroys those God loves. When Jesus cleared the temple, He fiercely opposed all that defiled His Father's house and those He came to rescue. As leaders in His church, we must not be afraid to stand up for truth against the enemy's lies in our culture. Imagine watching someone dearly loved running toward a cliff they do not see; love steps in boldly with truth ("Hey, stop! You are running toward death!") and with grace ("I love you and don't want you to be hurt!"). We will never please everyone, and as we stand up for truth in grace, we will sometimes face persecution. Jesus Himself walked perfectly in grace and truth, and people opposed Him, eventually killing Him. We walk in love and seek to please God alone. (Galatians 1:10, Heb. 1:9) A person's response to grace and truth is not our responsibility; love is.
- **Leadership motivated by love creates a standard for the treatment of others.** This love declares that part-time volunteers should be treated with the same respect and dignity as the CEO. Because we are all created in the image of God, every person is worthy of value, dignity, and respect. Be aware of those you tend to deem less than or even unconsciously treat without dignity and respect. This, as with all leadership, begins first in our own homes. Our spouses and our children, or our roommates and close friends, should be the ones who can most quickly testify to the love of God in our lives.



- **Loving the least of these.** The heart of the Father is for those who are marginalized, overlooked, and cast out. Will we love these and lead them to the heart of their Creator? Handicapped, homeless, victims of sex trafficking, widows, orphans, the unborn – God’s heart is for the redemption of EVERY person. (Micah 6:8) May our leadership be marked by the heart of the Father, poured out for justice and mercy.

### **Culture of Love**

God designed our lives to be lived in the context of community. Leading by love instead of information creates a culture of COMMUNITY. Truth and grace-based communities allow people to be who they are now while calling them up to greater character and actions. Love is not simply accepting everyone where they are; Jesus never left anyone the same. An encounter with Jesus and His love changes us and brings freedom. God-first, Christ-like leadership compels us to live and love in the same way Jesus lived. Having hard conversations, confronting ungodly behaviors with God’s heart, and leading in holiness are part of leadership and require our hearts to be rooted in love. As we receive God’s love for us personally, and then learn to love as God does, our words and lives will love and lead in truth and grace.

There are no lone rangers in the Kingdom of God. As a part of the body of Christ, every person is vital. Who each person is – in gifting and personality – plays a key part in God’s kingdom. Love enables us to unite, link arms, and love the world. Jesus said that the world would know we are His disciples by our LOVE. Not by our amazing words, our supernatural gifting, or even by how well we lead. Love is God’s standard for His leaders.

Revelation Wellness has a culture marked by love and a gracious community. Everyone who encounters any aspect of RW will be touched by the Father’s heart. We are His hands, His feet, and His heart in our world. Leaders set the standard by their influence and actions. May our standard be the life and love of Jesus. Go live this out in every area you have influence, for the glory of God!

*Everyone will know you as My followers **if** you demonstrate your love to others. John 13:35*

*This is my **commandment**: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. John 15:12*



## Training Exercise—Day #1 Heart Check

You cannot give what you do not have. Have you received His love personally?

*"We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister."* 1 John 4:19-21

As you meditate on this verse, being with Him, ask the Holy Spirit to show you God's heart FOR YOU. Ask Him to reveal the depths, widths, heights, and breadth of how He loves YOU.

Pray this over yourself - "I am the one Jesus loves."

Do you find it difficult to receive His great love?

How will your life (and leadership) change as you live and lead as His beloved one?

### Heart Check

When you encounter a difficult person or situation, what is the first response of your heart? Irritation? Fear? Anger? Begin to talk to the Father about your heart. Confess any sin and ask Him to give you His own great heart.

(There is NO room for condemnation. Until the day we die and meet our Jesus face-to-face, our lives must be marked by seeking, confession, repentance, and growth in God's love. He loves YOU. Let His love draw your heart closer to His.)

*"The love for equals is a human thing-of friend for friend, brother for brother.  
It is to love what is loving and lovely. The world smiles.*

*The love for the less fortunate is a beautiful thing-  
the love for those who suffer, for those who are poor, the sick, the failures, the unlovely.  
This is compassion, and it touches the heart of the world.*

*The love for the more fortunate is a rare thing-to love those who succeed where we fail, to  
rejoice without envy with those who rejoice, the love of the poor for the rich, of the black  
man for the white man.  
The world is always bewildered by its saints.*



*And then there is the love for the enemy-  
love for the one who does not love you but mocks, threatens, and inflicts pain.  
The tortured's love for the torturer. This is God's love. It conquers the world."  
Frederick Buechner The Magnificent Defeat*

**Connect with your swim buddy. Share your experience, what you learned, and what challenged you.**

Go deeper - how is your soul? What is your current struggle?



## Training Exercise—Day #2 Love defined

1 Corinthians 13 further provides clear action points of the Father's love and is the basis of what we seek to model our leadership after. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a below.

*"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

*And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

*If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned but have not love, I gain nothing.*

*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;*

*it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.  
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.  
Love never ends." ESV*

Read these verses. Read the words OUT LOUD. Reread them in another translation. Answer these questions –

What does this passage show me about God and how He values love? What does this passage show me about the importance of love? What does love have to do with leadership?

In verses 4-8, reread the verses and insert your name in the place of "love." *Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where He wants to grow your love.*

What PRACTICAL action will you take today to love? Who will you love today based on what the Lord has shown you?

"I will \_\_\_\_\_"

**Connect with your swim buddy. Share your experience, what you learned, and what challenged you.**



### Training Exercise—Day #3 Get-to Leadership

Leadership motivated by love becomes our GET TO, not our HAVE TO.

*"When you shepherd the flock God has given you, watch over them not because you have to but because you want to. For this is how God would want it not because you're being compensated somehow but because you are eager to watch over them. Don't lead them as if you were a dictator, but lead your flock by example; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will be crowned with honor that will shine brightly forever." 1 Peter 5:2-4 Voice*

Which relationship currently challenges you most? How does God want to transform your heart in that relationship and for that person?

What are your heart's motives in seeking leadership growth?

Which one of the Action points listed in our reading challenges you the most? What is the Father asking you to do in response to this?

"I will \_\_\_\_\_"

The subject of "Love" may seem unrelated to "leadership." Yet the actions and heart attitudes we consistently do, think, and act on determine every area of our lives. To lead like Christ and to love like the Father, our hearts must be transformed.

Let us live as those who are loved and lead out of the delight of our Father's never-stopping, unbreakable, always, and forever love.

**Connect with your Swim buddy—share what the Lord showed you in this week's journey. Pray for their struggles and celebrate their victories. Be transparent with one another.**