



LIVE

Week 3
Love Deeper

LIKE YOU WERE

DYING

TM

What will Last?

1 Corinthians 13:13

“There are three things that will endure — faith, hope, and love — and the greatest of these is love.” (NLT)



When time is running out, the main things suddenly become the main things. The unnecessary falls away. If you knew you were looking forward to eternity with God, you would want to spend your last days focusing on that which would translate from this life to the next. When you think of it, the things that last make up a pretty short list.

When asked to name the greatest commandment in the law, Jesus replied:

Matthew 22:37-40

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (NIV)

What an amazing truth! There are two things, and only two, we experience now that will carry on into eternity: our relationship with God and our relationship with one another. Both relationships are held together with love. That is all. Love, as the Bible defines it, is truly the greatest thing in the world. Love is the closest thing we have in understanding the heart of God.

1 Corinthians 13 defines love for us. We have heard these verses at most of the weddings we have attended, and it was for good reason. To understand these verses is to un-



Notes—Week 3 Love Deeper

derstand love.

“Love is patient and kind.” Patience gives people time to change. It gives them the benefit of the doubt. When I am impatient with my children, it’s because I am thinking of myself first. I have my own agenda and they are messing it up. This is why kindness is right on the heels of patience: it takes kindness to overrule the desire to act on your impatience. By being kind, I am appreciating the value of those around me, and taking their good into consideration.

“Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude.” All these ugly things spring from self. Love does not take its own needs into account, mainly because it has no needs; it is all about giving. Love extends outward toward others, never inward towards self, because it does not **“demand its own way.”**

“Love is not irritable, and keeps no records of when it has been wronged.” This is not allowing others to walk all over you. It is merely saying, “Yes, you wronged me—yes, that hurt—but I am choosing not to hold it against you. In fact, if you bring it up again, I will not know what you are talking about.”

“Love is never glad about injustice but rejoices when the truth wins out.” Love is impartial and seeks what is right and just for everyone. Love knows what is right and does it, even if there is a price to be paid by speaking the truth.

Love never gives up, but endures through every circumstance..” Love Like You Were Dying... just keeps on going...and going....and going!



Love in any Language

“Je t’aime”

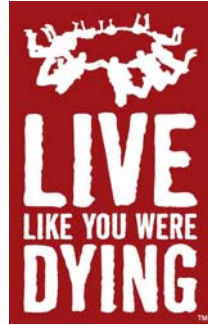
“Ich liebe dich”

“Ti amo”

“Mimi nakupenda”

“Techihhila”

“Nanun tongshinun sarang hamnida”



Recognize any of these? They all say the same thing in French, German, Italian, Swahili, Sioux, and Korean. They are the most important words you would want to speak if you were going to speak sweeter and you had a limited amount of time to do it. You know what they are. They are the words, “I love You” - the most important words in any language, and yet, sometimes, the hardest to say.

Not that we are eavesdropping on people at Christ’s Church, but whenever I hear people talking to family members on the phone the usual way they say goodbye is with, “I love you.” It’s standard procedure. If we were “Living Like We were Dying” we would probably say that same thing to many of the people we talk to on the phone. Why would we want to shortchange anyone from this expression of love?

Have you ever been around someone that was encouraging to you during a needed time in your life? We walk away glad that we ran into that person but never really telling them how much we appreciate them. “Hey, a couple months ago I was talking to you at the grocery store and I wanted to let you know how much that meant to me. I just wanted to let you know how much your friendship means to me.” I know that sounds kind of dorky. It’s kind of like

6. Make a list of the things the Samaritan did to show his love.

7. Who are you noticing that needs to be shown love? What are some ways we can be a “Good Samaritan” in their life?

8. If you only had days to live, who would need to hear “I love you” from your lips? Would it be “risky?” What are some of the barriers that you would need to go over? Time? Awkwardness? Fear of Rejection? Past Hurt?

Live It Out

What are some ways your group could go “over the top” with extravagant love? Who in your church or community could be blessed with generous love?



HomeTeam Study—Week —Love Deeper

Before the Video

1. How many songs can you come up with that have the word, “Love” in the title?

Watch Video

Talk it Over

1. What is the most extravagant expression of love you’ve ever received?
2. Can you think of a Biblical example where extravagant love was expressed?
3. **Read** Titus 3:4-7

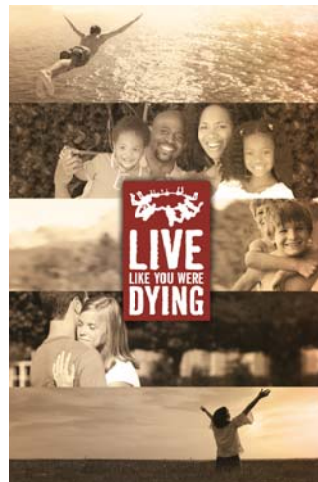
How has the love of God changed you?

Have someone PRAY and praise God for His deep extravagant love for us.

4. **READ** Galatians 5:14

How do we love self? How can we apply this to our neighbor?

5. “An expert in the law asked Jesus how do we love our neighbor?” **Read** the answer in Luke 10:30-37



speaking a foreign language. God knows that we need to be gently pushed towards this language. He wants us to express our heart to others.

Romans 12:9-11

“Don't just pretend that you love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Stand on the side of the good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.” (NLT)

The Apostle Paul challenges us to love with genuine affection in both our words and actions, otherwise we are just annoying.

1 Corinthians 13:1

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

Some may be quick to point out that love only spoken falls short of love acted out, but neither one of these should be taken at the expense of the other. We all need verbal reaffirmation of love. You can't just know that you are loved by someone. We all need to hear it. We all need to see it. We all need to feel it.

Mix up the way you tell someone, “I love you.” Say it in the middle of someone’s sentence or while shopping with them or watching a ball game. Telling someone you love them in unexpected ways reveals your heart to them.

“Ich liebe dich!”



Letters to Elie

The box was large and hidden in the corner of the storage room. After Elie had gone to be with the Lord, her son was helping his father clean out some things. The box was filled with postcards. As Elie's son began to read the cards, tears formed in his eyes. They were poems of love from a man to a woman...poems from his father to his mother.



When he took the box down to his father, Bill was as surprised as his son to see what was in the box. Bill had never known that Elie saved every one of the poems he had written her for the past 60 years. Tears began to flow from his eyes as he thought about the love that he had for his bride.

Proverbs 5:18

“Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth.” (NLT)

“Loving Deeper” can be expressed in so many ways. Expressing our love to our spouse is only limited by our imagination.

Husbands, remember the love that you had for your wife the day you were married— how beautiful she was? Happy wives have husbands who keep seeing them as beautiful. The fountain in our community can be a reminder of the ***“fountain of blessings”*** that can be poured out on the ones we love.

For those of us who are not married keep the story of Bill and Elie as a reminder of the love we can show others.

Peter says to “love deeply.” Loving each other deeply is the connection we make with those around us. Just as prayer takes time and is intentional, so is loving others deeply.

“Loving deeply” in Peter’s language meant “to be stretched” or “to be strained.” It is used of a runner who is moving at maximum output with taut muscles straining and stretching to the limit. This kind of love requires a Christian to put another’s good ahead of their own desires in spite of being treated unkindly, ungraciously, or even with hostility. This is the kind of love that covers over a multitude of sins.

When time is short, you want to set things straight with love. The worst thing that can happen is to die and leave life with unresolved hatred in your heart towards somebody. Love will allow you to take the first step with someone even if the trouble didn’t begin with you.

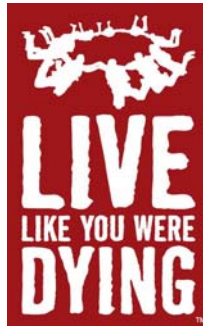
In order to “walk the walk” and not just “talk the talk”, we begin by talking to God about a person we need to love. When He brings someone to mind it will be a stretch to love them deeply. There will be barriers in our mind to prevent us from loving them the way God does. Jesus and Peter, for that matter, didn’t even let the cross prevent them from loving those who wronged them. Can you get around your barriers?



Overcoming Love

1 Peter 4:7-8

“The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” (NIV)



Peter was a great example of someone who lived like he was dying. Here is what he said about it:

1. Be ready to pray
2. Love deeper
3. Love in such a way as to overcome the barriers to love.

Sounds kind of like the song that Mark Nottingham and the kids sang a couple of weeks ago. Peter would have loved that song if they sang it in the first century. It has all the elements of the verse above.

For Peter, living like he was dying began with prayer. If you knew the end was near, prayer would seem like a natural thing. We would want to talk with God as much as possible. Being a Christian allows you to live eternally with God in heaven. If we are going to be talking to God while in heaven, why not start early? God is eternal and so are our prayers.

Bill began sharing his love for Elie because he was in World War II. He had to live each day as if it was his last day. He continued to live like that after the war. He never stopped expressing his love to his beautiful wife.

God does the same thing with us. He does not allow a day to go by without reminding us how much He loves us, if we will only look for it each day..

Psalm 42:8

“By day the LORD directs his love , at night his song is with me — .”

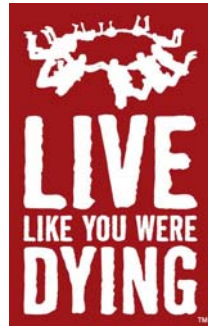
Sidenote: If you would like to hear the “rest of the story” of Bill and Elie, come to the next Retired and Rambling pot-luck, May 4th. Bill will be our guest speaker. His family and friends convinced him to publish these love poems in a book entitled, *“For the Love of Elie.”*

Oh, and don’t forget to keep reading from the book that God wrote about you. It’s full of love letters!



Risky Love

She would go to church if she felt like she would be accepted, but her sense of shame keeps her back. She's gotten as close as the parking lot, but cannot gather enough courage to get out of her car. How will she explain this aborted trip to her kids? She doesn't know, but she decides that will be easier than explaining to the people who ask, *"Did your husband come with you today?"* She is an unwed mother with 2 children from 2 different fathers.



The last time she was close to church people was when a friend invited her to a women's conference. The conference was great but the talk in between sessions were about husbands. Most of the women complained about things they thought their husbands were lacking. They failed to see how much this was hurting the single mom. They didn't intend to hurt her, they were just caught up in their own similarities of life. The conference didn't produce any friendships for her so once again she was alone in her struggle.

Unfortunately, this scene plays out in all too many churches. People are not planning how they can be insensitive, they just find it hard to relate to people who are not like them. Jesus knew this and he tried to change the way we love.

Matthew 5:46-47

"If you love only those who love you, what good is that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that." (NLT)

Ouch! Jesus wants us to be different than a Kiwanis club or a community group. Those groups love each other. They serve each other. God wants His church to go outside their comfort level in order to be sensitive and loving to people unlike them.

Many people who might come to a church don't because they feel guilty about not having anything to offer, at least not right away. Some of them are single parents. Some have lost their job. Some struggle with bad habits. Or, maybe they are just emotionally drained. They don't know the Bible and they feel guilty because they cannot "measure up" to their perception or misperception of the Lord's church. The initial challenge is to help them know they are welcome.

Judges 19:20-21

"You are welcome at my house," the old man said. "Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square." So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink. (NIV)

Aren't you glad that God didn't wait for you to stop sinning before He died for you? That is the way God loves.

Loving people the way God does is risky. Will you take the risk?

