



## Walking with God 3 WALKING IN LOVE



**Galatians 5:6** → *The only thing that counts is FAITH expressing itself through LOVE.*

- \* Not how religious you are, what denominational code you subscribe to, your image or position ... It is faith in you producing an outpouring of unconditional, sacrificial, unshakeable love. This is what must characterise our walk. This is what they must see in us. This is the fruit we must grow.

**OUR CALL (Ephesians 5:1-2):** LOVE is God's WAY: It's WHO He is; WHAT He does, by NATURE ... His code / AGENDA (1 John 4:16-17).

- \* If we want to SEE GOD AT WORK, we must WALK IN LOVE.
- \* To UNDERSTAND ways of love, read about JESUS.

→ *Everything Jesus did, He did out of pure, perfect love. Think of some of the more controversial moments of Jesus' ministry. What do they teach us about love? e.g. The woman caught in adultery, Zacchaeus up the tree, turning over the tables in the temple, His conversation with the rich, young ruler. Do we love like that? Have we bought into any subtle distortions. e.g. Is there a difference between 'kind' and 'nice'? Jesus was always kind. Was He always 'nice'?*

→ *Read and discuss Ephesians 5:1-2 as written in the Message.*

Love is a NON-NEGOTIABLE for Christ-followers.

- \* Love OPENS DOORS for us → Opportunities to serve, shower blessing + see unprecedented breakthrough.
  - \* Love CLOSES DOORS for us → There are things that are just INCOMPATIBLE with the God-kind of love = GOSSIP, CRITICAL JUDGMENT, DESTRUCTIVE WORDS.
- *How dangerous and damaging are those things? Who do they hurt and why? What other things belong on the list? How does walking in love protect us?*

VICTORY in life comes to those who WALK IN LOVE

- \* How do we overcome EVIL? = GOOD
- \* How do we disarm HATE = LOVE
- \* How do we walk in PEACE? = LOVE
- \* How do we NURTURE children? = LOVE
- \* How do we FEED relationship? = GIVE
- \* How do we keep our HEARTS PURE = WALK IN LOVE

Love is an UNSTOPPABLE FORCE and we're called to UNLEASH it as a WEAPON.

- \* The WORD in ACTION is our SWORD (Rom 12:17-21, Parable of Good Samaritan)
  - \* Love SOWS SEED + breaks down WALLS supernaturally, in ways we cannot control or explain.
- *A simple hug often beats impassioned arguments, reasoned logic, even Bible-thumping. Discuss.*

→ *Do you have any stories to share about how love overcame the odds, healed broken relationships, changed circumstances or broke-through?*

→ *Love isn't feeling / emotional response, but act of faith + obedience + grace. Discuss.*

### **WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO DO? = Ephesians 4:29-32**

GRIEVING Holy Spirit (v30) → Every step OUT of LOVE is a MOVEMENT AWAY from God ... It grieves Him ... He withdraws His hand ... Threatens our closeness. Until we repent (James 4:8)

1. Do not let any UNWHOLESOME TALK come out of your mouth (v29).
  - \* So much of what we SOW is through WORDS.
  - \* SIN is damaging to INTIMACY + WEAKENS our WALK.
2. GET RID of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, every form of malice (v31).
  - \* What's INSIDE of you will eventually COME OUT (Matt 12:34) ... so 'get rid' of it = TAKE IT TO THE LORD.
3. Be KIND, COMPASSIONATE, FORGIVING (v32)
  - \* PRIORITISE kindness ... RECOGNISE + RESPOND to compassion ... Practice HABITUAL forgiveness.

→ *If walking in love is one way to walk, are there other ways? Fear? Selfishness? Anger?*

→ *In the light of this (particularly point 2), why is it so important for us to be constantly on our knees in worship, repentance, consecration?*

→ *How can we change what's inside of us, so we can change what comes out of us?*

### **SUMMARY**

There's a RESTRAINING that comes out of strong, mature character.

There's a RELEASING that comes from gratitude, revelation, relationship.

→ *Are you attentive to that restraining/releasing? How can we become more attentive?*

**THE HOW? → ACID TEST:** How would you behave if JESUS was in the ROOM with you?

What would you do or not do? Say or not say? Would it hold you back. We are carriers of the very presence and essence of Jesus. Where we go, He goes.

→ *How does His presence change everything? How do we tap into the love that fills our hearts (Rom 5:5)? How do we yield increasingly to His enabling grace?*

**THE NEWS:** He IS in the room with you (Heb 13:5, Matt 28:20).

- \* Acknowledge His PRESENCE
  - \* Sense His HEARTBEAT
  - \* Follow His TUGS + NUDGES
  - \* Yield to His LOVE + COMPASSION flowing through you (Rom 5:5)
- *Of which of these are you most aware? How can we become more sensitive?*

**OPPORTUNITY** = Produce an IRRESISTIBLE CULTURE (Jn 13:35)

→ *Are we known for our love? When the world thinks of the church, what's the first word that comes to mind? What should it be? How can we make sure that it is? How do we 'work that culture till it defines us?'*