

A *Coca-Cola* Kind of Love

Movie Clip Intro

Right now our ushers are going to be passing out some Cokes with some peanuts. Feel free to help yourselves. If you don't like coke then you don't have to take any.

When Laurie and I were first married, we bought a small condo in Hampton. To give you an idea of how small it was, our entire condominium could fit into the space the chairs you are sitting in presently occupy. It had a total living area of 737 square feet with a small balcony that overlooked the back of the other condos in the area. We were on the 2nd floor, which meant we heard all the noise of the bass of the stereo downstairs and the bed springs of the couple living upstairs.

But it was OUR place and Laurie went to work decorating it, as only she could. I tried my first wallpapering job in our "kitchen." Because we didn't have a lot of money in those days, I bought almost exactly the square footage of wallpaper I'd need to cover the section of wall I wanted to cover.

We had a second bedroom in the back of the condo which we used as a den. I setup my stereo cabinet and put our TV in that room. A 13" RCA pull knob color tube that my parents had bought me for my room 10 years earlier. Cable had come on the market about 5 years prior, so we had Warner Cables 45 channel push button box. Just to give you an idea of how crazy we were, on January 31, 1988 we hosted a family superbowl party and watched the Washington Redskins come from behind to defeat the Denver Broncos 42-10 on our 13" RCA tube. You haven't lived until you cram 16 young adults into a room smaller than our cloud room with nothing to sit on but a 40 year old day bed and the floor watching a football game on a 13" screen!!

Well that room became known as our coca-cola room because of all of the coke memorabilia we had collected and received as gifts over the course of getting married.

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And we only went for the classic coke stuff, none of that new coke that they tried to pass off on us way back in 1985.

One of my personal favorite coke placards was the one you see on the screen that was titled "The Real Thing."

So as we talked through this next series of sermons, we wanted to focus on what "Real" love looked like. How do you know when you have "the real thing?" How do you know you have that coca-cola kind of love?

If you follow hollywood's definition, love is a feeling, a look, a catch-your-breath moment that, if it's real, lasts a life time.

So, Hollywood typically focuses on the beginning of almost all of the relationships portrayed, because it's at the beginning part of ALL relationships where all the excitement of the unknown is found.

I remember kissing Laurie for the first time out in front of the house that I lived in in 1985. I remember the electric jolt that went through my entire being! I also remember Laurie taking a while to get in the car afterwards.

But all of us, if we've been in a relationship have experienced the excitement of the beginning of the relationship.

The problem with that focus is, there can only be one beginning, one first kiss, one first anything. Once it's over, you can't go back.

It's no wonder that most celebrity marriages don't last very long.

So Hollywood's focus on love is like this cup of peanuts. A good start, but you really want to get to the main course of the meal.

I've also heard it said that love is a decision. That true and lasting love involves simply deciding to make it happen. It's simply a matter

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of the intellect taking emotions out of the equation. You've seen these couples in a restaurant. They typically look like this. (make the face). I've interviewed countless couples in their 60's and 70's and very few of them said that the way they lasted so long is that they just decided to do it.

I'm convinced that "the real thing" or a coca-cola kind of love is found, not somewhere between these 2, but instead, in the very One who created it in the first place.

Let's take a look at what the bible says about "real" love. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 13

It's important to realize what was going on contextually in this writing from Paul because it relates very clearly to where we are today as a society.

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Patient

I suffer long, have patience, am forbearing, perseverance.

Kind

I am kind (full of service to others), gentle.

Not Jealous

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(a) intrans: I am jealous, (b) trans: I am jealous of, with acc. of a person; I am eager for, am eager to possess, with acc. of a thing.

Does not brag

I boast, vaunt myself.

Is not arrogant

I inflate, puff up; pass: I am puffed up, arrogant, proud.

Does not act unbecoming

I act improperly, am unseemly, behave unbecomingly (or even dishonorably); perhaps: I consider (something) unseemly.

Does not seek it's own

Self focused, always getting its own way

Is not provoked

I arouse anger, provoke, irritate.

Does not keep an account of wrongs

I reckon, count, charge with; reason, decide, conclude; think, suppose.

Does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth

Bears all things

I cover, conceal, ward off, bear with, endures patiently.

Now I don't know about you but I lost this whole train at patience!

How do I get this kind of love in my life?

Galatians 5:22 says that a fruit or byproduct of the Spirit of God is Love.

In other words you will never be able to love like this on your own, but you can allow God to love through you by His Spirit.

This is the only way you and I will see "the real thing" in our lives.