

A *Coca-Cola* Kind of Love – Enduring Love

Movie Clip Intro

***First slide

A couple weeks ago we started a new series called a Coca-Cola kind of love and we started the series off by talking about the “the real thing.” I told you guys the story of our first condominium and how tiny it was and how we had turned this tiny little room in the back into our coke room. And in it was this tray with this sign on it. And we asked the question, “What kind of love is the ‘real thing?’”

And we talked about the fact that in order to explore what the ‘real’ kind of love is, we had to first explore what wasn’t real. And the best place to find fake things is, of course, Hollywood! (wow that is wrong on so many levels!)

We talked about how Hollywood (and the world) tends to focus on the initial part of a relationship, or the attraction phase. This “love” is based on how the other makes us feel. The trouble we run into with this kind of love is that feelings can change so quickly, and a love based on how someone makes me feel won’t last, because feelings typically follow and are driven by our thinking. What typically happens in relationships based on this concept is that over a small span of time, as we learn more and more about a person, our thinking towards them changes.

He’s no longer that knight in shining armor that we first met. She’s no longer that perfect princess that we first met. And because of this, the expectation that we had towards him or her turns into disappointment and, if not dealt with, eventually leads to resentment, bitterness, and hatred.

In pre-marital counseling we always ask the question, “Why do you want to marry him or her?” If the answer is, “because he/she makes me happy!” then that is a red flag for us to explore.

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This is how people find themselves 3 years into a relationship and no longer “love” the other person. They say that they’ve fallen out of love with their spouse.

So this is the version of love that Hollywood focuses on, but the bible paints a completely different picture of love.

Two weeks ago we looked at 1 Corinthians 13 to find what Godly love looks like. We also found that the standard is so high that it is impossible for us on our own to love this way, and it is only through our abiding in Christ, or our staying connected to Jesus that this love is manifested in our lives.

OK, so this week, we are going to take a look at the enduring quality of love and what makes love last.

Now the New Testament's original language was the Greek language, and sometimes, the translation into English leaves a little to be desired, so it is useful to sometimes look at the original language to get the full meaning of what is being said.

This is useful with a word like love, because our word love means many different things, but the Greek language had several words for love, all of which, unfortunately for us, have been translated to this little 4 letter word.

*** are 4 Greek words that all translate in our English language to love.

These words are

Eros
Storge
Phileo
Agape

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One of these words does not appear in scripture, but it is important to look at all of them in order to explore the kind of love that lasts.

Eros does not appear in scripture, but appears in a lot of ancient Greek writings. It is based on what the other person in the relationship brings to the table for me. How the other person makes me feel, how the other person meets my needs.

Storge is a naturally affectionate emotion commonly found in the bond between parents and children or relatives.

These 2 kinds of love are subject to change very quickly, but are the most sought after in our music, movies, and media.

Phileo is the next level of love and refers to the love shared between life-long friends, husband and wife, family, etc. The New Testament talks about this kind of love, but unless it is empowered by the Holy Spirit, it, too, can wane or fade.

The final Greek word for love is the word agape. We talked last week a lot about agape and it's characteristics as found in 1 Corinthians 13 and, as we talk about a love that endures, this is the only form of love that meets the challenge fully. It is a love that is completely selfless. It does not expect anything in return and gives unconditionally. And it is impossible for mankind to love this way without being supernaturally empowered to do so.

1 Corinthians 13:7 says "Love endures all things..."

The Greek word there is hupomenó - I remain behind, remain under, endure

Endurance is defined as "the power to withstand hardship or stress."

I met and heard the story this past weekend of a pastor who endured 25 years of taking care of an invalid wife who suffered from a condition called Huntington's Chorea while raising 2 daughters.

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This disease manifests itself first in severe depression and mood swings and is often misdiagnosed as severe depression but eventually leads to a complete debilitation and dementia. She eventually died of the disease.

What enables a man in this day and age to remain faithful to a wife that is unable to meet his emotional, physical or spiritual needs?

Hupomeno, endurance, a willingness to selflessly endure until God is finished.

These are available to the husband and wife who follow the biblical principles found in Ephesians 5

***25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

***33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

***In his book “love and respect” Emerson Eggerich noticed through his years of counseling that it was much easier for most men to respect unconditionally and much easier for most women love unconditionally.

He also noticed in the study of scripture that men are never called to respect their wives and women are never called to love their husbands.

***Marriage, from surviving to thriving, Chuck Swindoll.

The married couple who builds on these essentials has a husband who knows his “responsibility is to love his Lord so deeply and accept his [God given call] so completely that he gives himself to his wife without conditions. A marriage surrendered to the Lordship of Christ has a wife who knows her “responsibility to respect her husband so

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much that she gives herself to her husband without hesitations [every part of her life].”

This is only available as we submit ourselves to God in complete surrender. Have you done that yet?

*** Have you experienced the real thing when it comes to love? Or have you settled for the world’s version of it, only to be disappointed over and over again because it doesn’t last.

Close your eyes and bow your heads for a moment.

I am acutely aware of the disappointment of the worlds version of love that is found in this house today and found in the lives of the people listening to the sound of my voice.

If you’ve suffered through the pain of a divorce or the heartache of a broken friendship, much of what I’ve said today may have hit a nerve with you.

Perhaps you have been some cause of some disappointment. And you’re feeling particularly convicted about those actions.

Deuteronomy 31:8

"The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

Dismay - discouragement: the feeling of despair in the face of obstacles

Hebrews 13:1 says, “Let love of the brethren continue.”