

# Quality Faith: Love

Today I'm wrapping up the series on Quality Faith. The reason I call it Quality Faith is because we all have faith but it's not always good faith.

Sometimes we have faith that things will go wrong in our life and that things will not get better, this if faith...but it's faith in the devil.

Sometimes we have faith in people or organizations or employers and that kind of faith can be good or bad. However people fail at some point, they let you down.

So the most important faith we can have is faith in Jesus Christ. Faith that He is good, that He provided a way for you to be saved, and if you have made that decision you can have faith that He is coming back for you!

Faith is simply believing in something or someone, AND having confidence or trust in them. So when we have faith in Jesus, we have confidence and trust in Him.

## **Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)**

11 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith isn't about what you see around you. It's the hope of something better. The hope for change or improvement.

When we talk about Quality Faith, we are talking about faith that is better or superior than all other beliefs. Superior Faith, Quality Faith! It's faith in Jesus!

## **2 Peter 1:2-4 (NKJV)**

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The part I keep highlighting is verse 3, His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

## **John 10:10 (NKJV)**

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

He came so that we may have life! He has given us all things that pertain to life, there is no need to look elsewhere!

Peter goes on to tell us the things that we must add to our faith, the very things that God has given to us to life this full, abundant life.

## **2 Peter 1:5-7 (NKJV)**

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

All of these qualities are to be added to faith in Jesus before they can have any effect or value.

I'll use this saying again, "good ol boys don't go to heaven" It's not about being good because there is none good but God. It's about faith in Jesus, belief, confidence, trust in Him is the beginning of a relationship with Him and that is what is required to go to heaven!

Faith is first.

Add to faith, virtue (moral excellence, accepting the bible as the standard for life)

Add to virtue, knowledge (this is a knowledge of the truth of the bible, the truth will set you free)

Add to knowledge, self-control (it is a fruit of the Spirit, it requires submission to His will)

Add to self-control, perseverance (fight the good fight, run the race, not giving in or giving up)

Add to perseverance, godliness (esteem God highly, have respect and honor for Him)

Add to godliness, brotherly kindness (love other believers as family, we are joint heirs!)

Add to brotherly kindness, love

I know we just spent last week talking about love. You might be all "loved out" (I hope not) but you can take that up with the Holy Spirit who inspired Peter to write this.....

We use one word in the English language for love....love. We love chocolate, we love our car, we love our child, we love our spouse, we love this church, we love God. It's why that word gets thrown around in relationships so carelessly.

It's why people tell others that they love them prematurely when they often don't even know what they mean. It's partially due to our simple, lazy language!

In the basic Greek there are four words for love:

- philos – friendship or brotherly love (this is what we covered last week)
- storge – parental love
- eros – romantic love or passion
- agape – it is the love demonstrated by your behavior towards another. It is a committed and chosen love. It is a consuming passion for the well-being of others. This love keeps on loving

even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable, and unworthy. It is unconditional love.

The biggest difference between the first three and agape is that you often exercise the first three kinds of love based on what the other party does for you, or what you receive, the benefits of the relationship. So we show that love based on how WE feel, what it does for US.

Agape on the other hand is a sacrificial kind of love, it exists for the benefit of the one being loved!

Emotions are neutral. We feel what we feel. Emotions are neither good or bad. When Jesus commanded us to love one another He used the word agape. This means that agape love is not an emotion but a choice. I could tell you right now to be happy but you can't just turn happiness on and off because it is an emotion. The love that Jesus is talking about here is this deepest level of agape love. We are commanded to love one another sacrificially.

Sacrificial love means that we love others even when it costs us. It means we love even people who are different than us or the unlovely. It is choosing to give yourself to another person in a grace filled relationship and friendship.

Agape is not shown because of the worth of the object. Agape originates in it's God-given nature.

#### **1 John 4:8**

8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

John is not saying that God is only love or that love is God but it means that God is continuously giving of Himself to others seeking their benefit. God's love is the ultimate source of love that Christians display.

The reason John can make a statement like "He who does not love does not know God" is because if you do not show love, this unconditional agape love, then you haven't been changed by the gospel message.

Jesus gave Himself so that we may be saved and have eternal life!

His love is not based on our worthiness but on His worthiness

He knows that sometimes we are not very lovable, but He loves us anyway

His love for us does not benefit Him, it benefits us!

When you truly understand, not just in your head but in your heart, that Jesus died for you while you were an undeserving sinner, he showed this unconditional love. You wouldn't be able to help but extend that same unconditional love to others!

Agape love is God love, perfect love. That is what we are to add, the unfailing love that the Father in heaven shows us.....we are to extend that same love to everyone.

### **Matthew 22:36-40**

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

First and foremost....love the Lord your God. But not just love Him, love Him with all your heart. Why with all your heart? Can't you use part of that heart to love others?

The heart is the center of spiritual life. The heart is the inmost part of your spiritual life. God is to be loved with all of you heart because He and He alone is to be the center of your spiritual life. You don't give Him part of it, you give Him all of it! You can't serve two masters!

The heart is also the seat of our affections and passions. You can determine where your affections actually lie by what occupies your time, what motivates your actions, and what shapes your dreams.

### **Matthew 6:21**

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

What you treasure will show you where your heart is. What do you fear losing more than anything? Is it money, people, or life? Or is it Jesus?

Look at Job, he had everything taken from him, except God, which was the one and only thing he needed to persevere!

Jesus is on the throne in heaven today but is He on the throne of your heart? Is He your treasure and at the center of your life?

Next you are to love Him with all of your soul.

The soul literally is the part of us that defines who we are. The biblical definition for soul means life, personality, the inner self and our identity. It's where we make our decisions and choices that ultimately decide our lifestyle and behavior.

To love God with all of your soul, you make godly choices by obeying His Word!

**John 14:15**

15 “If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Those who love Christ prove their devotion by their obedience. Although it might seem like it on the surface, this is not an impossible task or request that Jesus gives us. He knows we have a sinful nature and we can't fully, perfectly keep His commandments.

BUT right after this statement is when He reveals that He will send the Holy Spirit to be our helper!

You can't keep His commandments, at least not on your own.....but with the guidance of the Holy Spirit....you can!

You also love the Lord with all your soul by pursuing a life of humility. It takes humility to say you need Jesus. It takes humility to submit to the Holy Spirit. It is in the place of humility that our soul can express our love to the Lord.

Jesus taught us how to love from a place of humility, taking on the form of man and serving people even leading to death.

**Mark 10:45**

45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Humility is a requirement for obedience.

**Psalms 25:9**

9 The humble He guides in justice,  
And the humble He teaches His way.

If Jesus is the center of your spiritual life and the center of your affections, a lifestyle of humility and godliness is born and you love God with all your soul!

Third Jesus said to love Him with all your mind.

When we come to Christ we are made new.

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

If all things have become new, then that includes your mind. A renewed mind is critical in loving Jesus.

When our mind is renewed, our perspective changes. Our perspective of Jesus, our perspective of others, our perspective of life, sin, death, eternity, etc....the list goes on.

### **John 1:5**

5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

That light is Jesus and until He renews your mind....you don't even understand it. You don't understand the consequences of sin and you don't understand the love of Christ. Our mind must be renewed so that we can fully love God. We can believe in our hearts and question with our mind. Sometimes it takes the mind time to catch up with the heart.

When our mind is renewed we grow in knowledge of the truth. This is why it is so important and necessary to read the bible. Jesus is the Word. You want to fill your mind with Christ.

A. W. Tozer said, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

We also use our minds to remember His faithfulness, patience, kindness, peace, and love. When we remember these things, the promises of His Word, we can love Him with all our mind.

### **1 Corinthians 2:16**

16 For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

A renewed mind is the mind of Christ! Thinking as He would think. Meditating on the things of eternity, being Kingdom minded.

You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. Then, you love your neighbor as yourself.

Whereas the brotherly love was love that you show to brothers and sisters in Christ, loving other believers as though they are family. Loving your neighbor applies to everyone.

Neighbor means - any other person, or any other man irrespective of nation or religion with whom we live or whom we chance to meet.

Love every other person on this earth as yourself. Remember this is agape love, it is not emotion but a choice. You choose to love in spite of their worthiness. Because just the same, Christ loves us not because of our worthiness but because of His.

## **1 Peter 4:8**

8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

Fervent is to be stretched out or strained. Our love is to stretch out to the limit for one another. This kind of love requires a believer to put another person's spiritual good ahead of their own desires.

Where this kind of love exists offenses are quickly overlooked and forgotten. This kind of love forgives. This kind of love is shown even when you have been treated unfairly.

A traveler fell into a deep pit and couldn't get out. Several persons came along and saw him struggling in the pit. The sensitive person said, "I feel for you down there." The reflective person said, "It's logical that someone would fall into the pit." The aesthetic person said, "I can give you ideas on how to decorate your pit." The judgmental person said, "Only bad people fall into the pits." The curious person said, "How in the world did you get down into that pit." The perfectionist said, "I believe you deserve to be in that pit." The self-pitying person said, "That's nothing - you should have seen my pit." The optimist said, "Cheer up! Things could be worse." The pessimist said, "Be prepared! Things will get worse." Jesus, seeing the man, took him by the hand and lifted him out of the miserable pit. As Christian we are called to do the same thing.

The best description of this love that we are to have is in 1 Corinthians 13.

## **1 Corinthians 13:1-8**

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails.

## **ASK JASON TO COME**

The love of God demands a change in our lives. We love one another out of the love we have received through Jesus.

1 John 3:1a

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!

Galatians 4

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

A love for self and stuff will always suffocate a love for God and others.