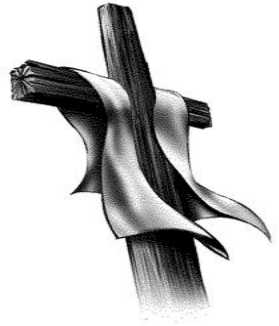


Lesson #1 – Love and Goodness in Ministry

“For the love of Christ compels us...” 2 Corinthians 5:14



The Eyes of the Father: *David on the Street-corner*

You can smell him before you see him. The stench of urine mixes with body odor and vodka to provide ample advance notice as you approach. There David sits on the corner of Park St. and Tremont Ave., “curing” himself, but still trembling as he brings the brown paper bag to his lips. Even in the midnight darkness, the glare of streetlight reveals a man whose gaunt features, moistened by perspiration, betray pre-mature aging, laced with pain and inner scars. He barks obscenity at passers-by. You experience a strange combination of revulsion and curiosity. How did this man become debased to this degree?

You come home later that evening and even though bed-time has long since passed, you check on your two year old child, asleep in her room. You gingerly open the door so as not to disturb. The child’s features have a pinkish hue in the soft night-light. Calming piano lullabies quietly fill the stillness. The child lays in completely trusting innocence – clutching a stuffed friend to provide comfort. The tummy rises and falls in an almost imperceptible cadence. You can hardly believe that this creature is real – that this tiny human being *came from you* in some wonderful, mysterious way. It seems incredible *that you would do anything* for this little person’s well being. How is it possible to care so deeply, so passionately – even violently, for the good of another?

In the sublime silence of the night, God speaks: *“That’s the way I see my David.”*

In ministry, let us see each person through the eyes of the Father.

What motivates you in ministry? *Why do we serve others?*

In the eyes of God, it is not only what we do that matters, but why we do it!

We may overflow with spiritual passion and shine with spectacular spiritual gifts, but if we are not motivated by love and goodness of heart, our ministry will be tainted and evanescent. Insincerity contaminates the flow of the Holy Spirit and erodes trust in those around us. Love, in contrast, invests even our weakest attempts to minister with eternal value. When ministry flows out of genuine love and a heart of goodness and nobility, what we build will stand the test of fire on that awesome and terrible Day of Judgment. Indeed, *love never fails!*



Part I – Love: *The Most Excellent Way*

“The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” (1 John 4:8)

Imagine the power of a ministry motivated by love

- *The children’s Sunday School teacher* who prays, weeps and fasts for “her” kids
- *The usher* who goes the “extra mile” to tend to the needs of a handicapped visitor
- *The deliverance intercessor* who spends days in fasting for the deliverance of a single person from demonic oppression
- *The craftsman* who does a job “*as if it were for his own daughter.*”

“For the love of Christ compels us...” 2 Corinthians 5:14

What does the word “compel” mean for a minister? _____

In “Part I” of this lesson we learn...

- *What love is – and what it is not!*
- *The characteristics of a love-motivated ministry*
- *The difference between the “hireling” and the “good shepherd”*

Let’s do a “heart check”

- Do you serve someone “*as if she were your own daughter... or mother?*”
- Do you feel privileged to make sacrifices for others?
- Do you go the extra mile, or do you settle for the minimum?
- Do you take chances sometimes to help others, or do “play it safe” by taking care of your own needs first?
- Do you sometimes weep for those you serve?
- Are you disinterested in what you do in ministry, or do you have a hidden agenda?
- If you are not properly recognized for what you do, do you cease serving with the same level of intensity?

What is Love?

- *Is it a feeling of warmth in the heart?*
- *Is it physical attraction?*

¡NO!



The Bible re-defines love in light of the cross!

- **Biblical love is not a feeling!** -- We certainly seek to cultivate “brotherly affection” and positive feelings towards others. The Greek word for this kind of affection, “*Fileo*,” appears often in the New Testament, but God’s love (*Agape*) goes much, much deeper!
- **Biblical love is different from physical, romantic attraction** - – *Eros* is the Greek word for that kind of romantic passion which God has ordained to be enjoyed in the marriage relationship. This type of love is celebrated in the *Song of Solomon*. Again, however, “*Agape*” love goes much deeper.

Definition: *Love is shown perfectly in God’s willingness to give His son to die on the cross for undeserving sinners. Love is disinterested service and self sacrifice for the well being others. It is a decision, by faith, to seek the good of others without expecting anything in return.*

The qualities of a love-motivated ministry

1. **Love serves others**
2. **Love sacrifices itself for others**
3. **Love promotes harmony among the brothers**
4. **Love is disinterested – seeking the good of others without seeking personal gain**

1. Love serves others

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. ¹³ “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. John 13:12-15

A Servant’s Heart is...

1. Humble

- Sheds privileges
- Takes the lowest place



2. Cheerful

- Serves especially the “least of these” as if he were a king... an “angel in disguise,” as if they were Jesus himself!
- Feels privileged to serve
 - with a smile
 - attentively

3. Faithful

- Following through on commitments
- Actions that speak louder than words
- Simple, “small” acts of love rather than vacuous bravado



4. Daring

- Extravagant – even imprudent – goes the “extra mile”
- Takes chances
- Does not make excuses

Mention an example of someone you know who ministers with this kind of “servant’s heart.”
How do they demonstrate love through their service?

Person: _____

Specific examples of their ethic of “servant love”: _____

2. Love sacrifices itself for others

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.
John 15:13

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

¹⁷ *But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.* Philippians 2:17

²⁴ *Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.*
Colossians 1:24



What does the Apostle Paul mean, in your opinion, when he says, “*I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions..?*”

Mention three specific sacrifices that “come with the territory” in your particular area of ministry.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. Love promotes harmony among the believers – 1 Corinthians 13

We often read 1 Corinthians 13 in weddings, but this chapter was originally written in the context of Christian ministry!! The believers in that city moved with anointing, but lacked love.

According to 1 Corinthians 13, it is possible to be in Christian ministry and still...

- Envy others
- Seek to feed one’s own narcissistic ego
- Become annoyed easily with others
- Harbor resentment
- Deal with others harshly and without tact
- Live a double life, indulging unrighteousness
- Be impatient
- Give up easily
- Be negative and cynical

In contrast, according to 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, a love motivated ministry is...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



4. Love is disinterested – The hireling v the good shepherd

The hireling serves in ministry for personal gain and not genuine love for others.

¹¹ *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. John 10:11-12*

Heart check: It’s not just being money-hungry. What are your motivations in ministry?

- Money?
- Recognition and fame?
- Self worth?
- Power over others?
- Prestige in a group?
- Personal validation? (The “need to be needed”)

The “hireling” ministers for ulterior motives

¹ *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. 1 Cor. 13:1-3*

According to these verses, what are some potential gifts or ministries which can possibly be exercised *with power, but without love*?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Sincere love seeks the well being of the other and not personal gain

.... Serves others as if they were “loved ones”! (Children, mother, father...etc.)

Consider these sentiments expressed by the Apostle Paul about those he served in ministry.

²⁴ *However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace. Acts 20:24*

“³ ... I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. ⁴ I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds. 2 Cor. 7:3-4

¹⁹ My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, Galatians 4:19

¹⁹ For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy. 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

The disinterested love of the Apostle Paul’s ministry shines through the verses noted above. Mention some specific ways this love is described in the above verses.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

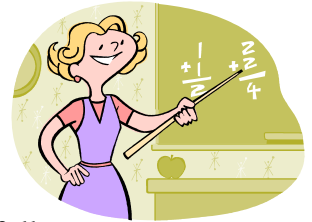
Example: Loving Laura the Sunday School Teacher

Sister Laura does not just “teach Sunday School.” She dedicates herself, heart and soul, to minister to the children in her class as if they were her own kids. She makes an effort to learn the names of each one, remembering their likes and dislikes, as well as the idiosyncrasies of each one. She takes time to get to know their parents. She prays for each child by name every night before going to bed. Sometimes during the night the Holy Spirit wakes her with an urgency to pray for one or another of these, “her” kids.



Laura refuses to “wing it.” She prepares each lesson with care, thoroughness and excellence, as if it were to be delivered before a congregation of hundreds in the main sanctuary. She arrives early on Sunday mornings to set up the chairs and anoint each one with oil, praying that the children will feel happy and peaceful as they enter this welcoming, ordered physical space. The kids call her “Aunty Laura” because they know she loves them. She sets clear limits, applying discipline appropriately and consistently. She never fails to “show up,” regardless of the weather, knowing that “her kids” are counting on her to be there.

One day, when Laura heard that one of her students had suffered abuse in school, she cried sincerely and called the home to express support for the parents. She does not receive a penny for her service, and the vast majority of the church has no awareness of who she is or what she does. But she continues, fully dedicated, out of love.



How do we observe love in practical ways through Laura's ministry?

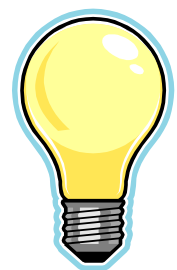
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Think of your own ministry. Mention five ways you can express love in practical ways in your own ministry context.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Part II: Goodness – Ministering in the Light

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1:7



In Part II of this lesson we learn

- *What “goodness” is and what it is not.*
- *What it means to live “above reproach”*
- *What it means to have a moral backbone – or moral compass*
- *Negative examples of ministry that lacks this quality*
- *The key to goodness: Transparency*

Goodness = Integrity (not “being nice!”)

Definition: Goodness means living sincerely with integrity; being honest, and doing the right thing, even when it “hurts.”

1. “Goodness” means living a life that is “beyond reproach; “walking in the light.”

- Having sincere motives
- Being transparent
- Cultivating holiness in the day to day affairs of life

2. “Goodness” means having moral backbone... doing the right thing, even when it hurts.

- Fulfilling a promise, even when it’s difficult
- Confessing a mistake or sin, in spite of the embarrassment involved
- Refusing to participate in “questionable” shortcuts, even if it results in financial loss

3. “Goodness” means refusing to sweep things under the carpet, such as

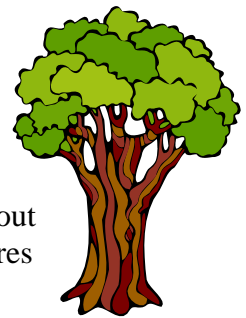
- The *cell leader* who keeps some of the offering for himself
- The *evangelist* who flirts with women in the destinations he visits
- The *pastor* who avoids preaching certain Biblical texts so as not to offend the sensibilities of certain members
- The *deacon* who turns a blind eye when he knows of some sort of corruption
- The *cell leader* who does not challenge a flagrant sin in his co-leader’s life, so as not to offend and lose him



Example of a “good” Deacon: Bob

“He will be like a tree planted by the streams of water....” Psalm 1

Bob serves as the president of the Deacon board. Some lust after such positions of authority in the church in order to feel superior or important, but not Bob. His schedule is already overburdened by family and professional responsibilities, and he would rather not serve in any kind of prominent position. But he knows that the church needs his leadership, so Bob accepted this position out of a sense of duty to serve his church and the kingdom of God. He sincerely desires that his pastors prosper in their ministry and that the church grow both in number and spiritual depth.



Bob lives above reproach, and his lifestyle represents the values of the kingdom with integrity and consistency. He is faithful to his wife, and has breakfast with two close brothers in Christ on a weekly basis to share about their lives and confess any struggles they may be experiencing. These friendships allow them to be truly open with one another, finding help and support in making wise decisions and pursuing a life of purity. Women in his workplace and at church know that he is a committed family man who avoids inappropriate flirtation.

As a deacon, he is committed to seek the best interests of the kingdom, no matter what. At one time it came to his attention that a member of the church staff, a personal friend of Bob's, was misappropriating the funds of the church. In spite of their personal connection, Bob took the necessary action to discipline this brother and rectify the situation. He lost a friend as a result, but in spite of this reality, chose to fulfill his responsibility without bias or personal prejudice.

Once in a Deacon's meeting the financial committee discovered a mistake in the budget plan. When Bob realized that he had been responsible for this error, he admitted it immediately and took responsibility for any consequences. The entire team recognized that Bob had acted in good faith, and forgave the mistake. What is more, their respect for him grew as a result of his transparency and honesty.

Bob is a man who exemplifies "goodness" and integrity.

Mention some specific ways we can observe goodness in Bob's life and ministry.

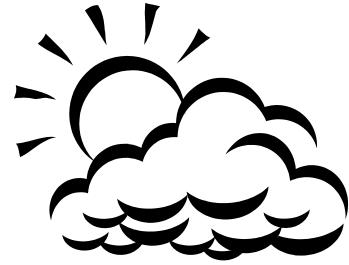
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Heart Check – Does your ministry reflect goodness?

- Would your spouse, children (or roommates) say that you are same person at home as you are in church?
- What motivates you in ministry? Do you seek some sort of personal benefit?
- Do you sincerely desire the good of others, or do you put on a loving face?
- Do you tell frequent "white lies?"
- Do you avoid certain topics of Christian faith and holiness in order not to offend?
- Do you lead a "double life," practicing certain sins in secret which you have never confessed to anyone?
- Do you behave appropriately and discreetly with members of the opposite sex?
- Do you sometimes point out the failings of others in order to boost your own status?
- Do people easily trust you as a sincere and honest person?
- Do you sometimes preach one thing, and do another?
- Do you excuse certain "questionable" practices, because "that's the way things work?"
- Do you confess your sins and struggles to a trusted Christian friend regularly?



Transparency: *The Key to Goodness*



A “good” minister is not perfect, but honest and sincere

¹ *Blessed is the one
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.*

² *Blessed is the one
whose sin the LORD does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit. Psalm 32:1-2*

⁴⁷ *When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.” John 1:47*

In your opinion, what does the phrase, “*in whom there is no deceit*” mean?

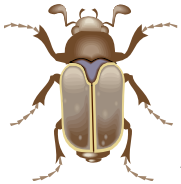
In order to be transparent, one must confess struggles to another person. What are the qualities of a person who would be appropriate to trust with a personal confession.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____.

Goodness thrives in light – “Open the window!”

If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1:6-7

Cock-roaches and rats thrive in darkness



Do you have someone in your life with whom you can share your personal struggles? Who?

“No hidden agenda” – Paul’s “M.O.” (way of operating)

² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God. 2 Cor. 4:2

What does it mean to have a “hidden agenda” in ministry, in your opinion?

Psalm 15 – The good man

*¹ LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?
Who may live on your holy mountain?*

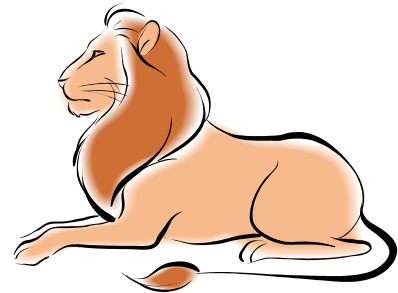
*² The one whose walk is blameless,
who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from their heart;*

*³ whose tongue utters no slander,
who does no wrong to a neighbor,
and casts no slur on others;*

*⁴ who despises a vile person
but honors those who fear the LORD;
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,
and does not change their mind;*

*⁵ who lends money to the poor without interest;
who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.*

*Whoever does these things
will never be shaken.*



According to this Psalm 15, note some qualities or practices of the “good man.”

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Review Questions

Define “love.” _____

_____.

What do you say to the cell leader who refuses to minister to a particular brother because he does not “like” him?

_____.

Mention four qualities of a love-motivated ministry.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Mention some qualities of the servant-hearted love.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Think of a person whom you have observed that ministers with love. Who is it? Describe the specific ways that his or her service demonstrates this quality.

_____.

Define “goodness.” _____

Mention four elements of a life that is “above reproach.”

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Mention some specific ways that goodness requires moral backbone – moral courage.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Mention some negative examples – in which ministry or service can lack goodness.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

What does it mean to “walk in the light” and why is it so important?

_____.