

Issue 26 - Love Is Not Reactive

Messy story of the week

James didn't wake up planning to be sharp.

But by mid-morning, the tone in the house had shifted. A comment from Linda landed sideways. A reminder felt like criticism. Before he realized it, his responses were clipped, defensive, and just a little louder than necessary.

Later, he replayed the moments in his head. He could see where things escalated, but in the moment, his reactions felt justified. Necessary, even. If he didn't push back, wouldn't he just get steamrolled?

What unsettled him wasn't that conflict happened. It was the familiar feeling that followed: distance, tension, and the quiet awareness that whatever he was protecting, love hadn't grown stronger because of it.

Faithful God, then and now

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud."

— 1 Corinthians 13:4

When Paul describes love as patient and kind, he isn't talking about temperament or emotional ease. He is describing a strength that resists being ruled by impulse.

The Corinthian church was full of passion, conviction, and strong opinions. What they lacked was restraint. God's response was not to shame their intensity, but to redirect it. Love, Paul insists, does not demand immediate expression. It makes room for wisdom.

The same God who patiently shepherded a reactive group of people still invites us to pause, to listen, and to let love lead rather than emotion.

What we can learn

- Reactivity often feels honest, but it isn't always loving
 - Patience is an act of strength, not passivity
 - Kindness sometimes means delaying our response
 - Love restrains itself before it expresses itself
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Behind the curtain

In coaching, I often see people who believe they are “just being real,” when in fact they are being ruled by their nervous system. Reactivity is rarely about cruelty. It is usually about self-protection.

Learning to pause does not mean suppressing truth. It means allowing love to shape *how* truth is delivered, so it has a chance to be heard.

Faith step for the week

Practice delaying your response in moments of tension. Ask God for the courage to choose love over immediacy.

Bible verse

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.”
— 1 Corinthians 13:4

2-minute practice

When you feel triggered today, pause and take five slow breaths before responding. Let your body settle before your words move forward.

Prayer

Faithful God,
You see how quickly our hearts rise to defend and protect.
Teach us the strength of patience and the courage of kindness.
Help us respond in ways that build rather than break.
Amen.

Coming next

Next week, we'll name a harder truth: sometimes love requires the ending of patterns that once kept us safe, and the courage to let something die so something new can grow.