

Avoiding love failure?"

1 Corinthians 13: 4-8a NASB

“Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails . . .”

I recently asked a bank officer how much interest her bank paid on passbook savings accounts.

She said very seriously,

“You’d better sit down before I tell you.”

Then she advised: **“You might as well spend and enjoy it now; that money won’t earn anything”**

Not many years ago, experts counseled:

“You need to save for a rainy day.”

Not only is the value of money shrinking, values keep changing.

Consider what the banker told me in light of the old proverb: “A fool and his money soon part.”

Is a sea of fools attempting to drown everyone?

I claim no money or values expertise.

I know this, however:



The life-experiences the Lord has allowed me definitely convince me of two truths:

A) We can absolutely trust God’s Word in Scripture.

B) Jesus perfectly lived and taught God’s love.

I hope to let you know what God’s word says and try to persuade you to follow Jesus, not me.

The Lord wants us to think about love and the worth of things.

This love section began:

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 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 have not love, I am nothing,” ((1 Corinthians 13:1-3 NIV).

Why do these verses mention languages, speaking ability, solving mysteries, superior knowledge, and faith?

The Corinthians treasured these qualities because most people prize them.

Newscasters and the people they interview tend to be attractive folks with titles and the “gift of gab.”

When you are in front of the camera, you’d better speak fast without any pauses. **If you don’t, one of those famous “hard breaks” will cut you off.**

**The interviewee doesn't need to make any sense.
He/she must have a title, look attractive and
authoritative, and talk fast into the camera.
Society values IQ, education, and speaking ability.**

**We should support educating people.
But we shouldn't favor any person or group.
We also must correctly define love.
The world shudders in crisis mode right now
because too many folks choose to follow so-called
"smart, intelligent" people who lack love.**

**A) Can you define genuine love?
Love isn't just a kindly feeling.
Real love maintains certain values.
In 1986, Norma worked as the office manager
of Laurel Elementary School in LA.
We both drove old Chevys.
The cars were so old, the local Chevrolet
dealer wouldn't even repair them.
The service manager told me that our
cars were older than his mechanics.
We needed at least one dependable vehicle
so we bought a new sub-compact Plymouth.
Barely a week after we bought the car, as Norma
drove to a school function, someone switched
lanes into that new Plymouth Horizon.**

**Norma suffered slight injuries and the car
sustained some minor damage.**

She immediately drove home.

I confess that I was initially more
concerned about the car's
condition than Norma's.

**I'd preached many sermons
on love, researched the terms involved, and
counselled people on the subject.**

Yet my love was on the shoddy side, wasn't it?

**Let me share another example.
A woman who lived near the Hollywood church
building once complained to me that her only
daughter just got married and was moving back
east with her husband.**

She thought that very unloving on the part of her
only child.

**"She can always find another husband," she
said, "but she's got only one mother."**

**For how many parents, might she have spoken?
What is real love and what is the source of love?
How do we avoid love failure?**

**In the late 1970s, I dropped off our daughters at
Hollywood High School on my way to work.**



Similar to our Horizon.

Steph and Janice got out at Sunset and Highland, then I made a right on Sunset, drove east to Vine Street and then went south to the church building.

For several mornings in a row, as I turned on Sunset, I found myself behind a young man driving new pickup.

A young woman sat close to him, almost as if they were bonded.

Within a few blocks, he'd stop in front of a bank on Sunset, where she evidently worked.

They kissed passionately, she got out, and went to the bank entrance.

Many mornings, I found myself following the same pickup and watching the identical loving ritual.

One beautiful morning, I saw the pickup, the young man driving it, and the same young woman.

She wasn't close to the fellow.

She sat as far away as possible.

I saw no goodbye kiss.

Though I continued taking the girls at the same time, I don't recall seeing the pickup again.

On the basis of what I saw, do you suppose that couple's love failed?

Want a sample of Jesus' perfect teaching on love?



“An expert in the law tested him (Jesus) with this question: ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied: **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment . . . the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”**

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.””¹

Love starts with loving God above everything else and loving your neighbor as you love yourself.

Those definitions lead us to conclude that the more we learn about the collapse of the Florida building, we ask if love failure occurred there.

Did some architects, contractors, politicians, building managers, and inspectors love money more than they loved their neighbors?

Love failures often precede disasters.

Love failure also creates personal conflicts.

Many of us feel so neglected and unloved, we have difficulty loving as Jesus taught.

We need people to love us, and accept us in our weak moments, and to take pity on us.

It helps us all to know there are folks who understand us, sympathize with us, and support us.

¹ Matthew 22: 35-40 NIV

Unless we feel that someone understands us and loves us, life greatly challenges us.

Yet some of us never break out the helpless mode.

We expect people to understand us.

But we're so busy looking for sympathy we don't extend love to other people.

We often see ourselves as victims, but rarely caretakers of others.



In the 60s and 70s, I read several books by Swiss physician and author Paul Tournier.

Tournier became popular worldwide for his work in pastoral counseling.

Dr. Tournier significantly impacted spiritual and psychosocial aspects of patient care.

Some called him the twentieth century's most famous Christian physician.

Tournier observed this impressive factor:

“What *people* hunger for most is to be loved. Herein lies the deepest source of their self-assertive behavior which sets them over against each other. This is the tragic paradox in our human situation. If we carefully observe the tritest of marriage disputes, we discover that the parties who obstinately fight on and want, at any price, to obtain the other's giving

in, is really seeking in such surrender a sign of the other's love.”²

That explains why so many people seeking love, go about it in such unlovely, odd ways.

To really pass the love test we need the kind of love that serves others.

You and I can help change things for the better by cheerfully aiding one another.

Want an example of the effects when we serve?

Bernard Haring was a Christian doctor whom the Germans drafted in WW II.

He came to realize that good, generous people can transform environments.

In May 1942, Haring was in a battle against the allies that resulted in terrible fighting. He lost five of his medical helpers in that battle.

Haring suffered serious wounds.

They sent Bernard Haring back to Germany on a hospital train.

Most of the men on the train, he said, were shallow rather coarse soldiers of an SS unit.

² *To Resist or to Surrender*, p 26, born May 12, 1898, Geneva, Switzerland.

In spite of their wounds, these soldiers already dreamed of playing around with the pretty nurses and other girls whom they expected to find in the military hospital.

When they arrived in Dillingen, Bavaria, however, they were greatly disappointed.

They discovered that all the nurses in the big ward they were to occupy were nuns.

“Yet very soon” he wrote, the whole atmosphere changed radically, because every one of the thirty soldiers, including the SS men, admired and loved the nuns, especially the head nurse.

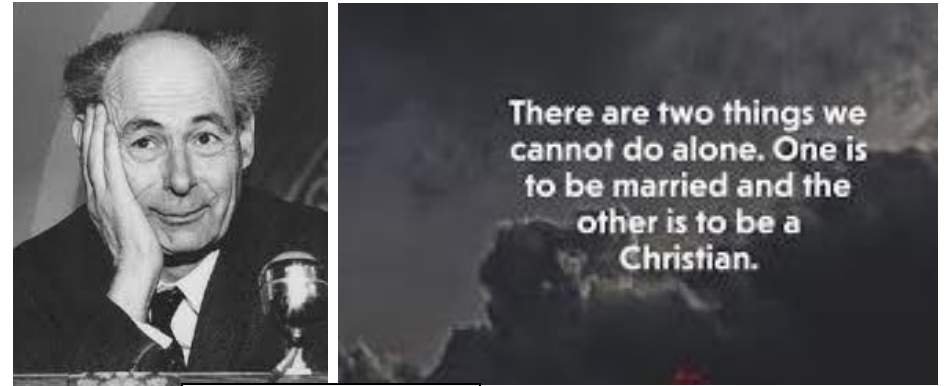
If anyone used obscene language or cursed, as soon as he became aware of it, he would apologize or say, **“I hope sister did not hear you.”**

“Courtesy grew, mutual help and encouragement grew, the whole microcosmic room changed. And the sisters continued with their loving service as if nothing remarkable were happening, as if they had known along how much goodness was in these men.”³

I pray that all of us want to be Jesus’ style loving change agents.

**A) We need additional definitions of God’s love.
B) More important, we must know love’s source.**

Next week, God willing, we’ll look at these basics.



Dr. Paul Tournier

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is— his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Romans 12:2 NIV

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³ *Embattled Witness*, Bernard Haring, pp 38, 39