

3. Walking in Love

Intro

➤ *The Walk: The Life-Changing Journey of Two Friends* by Michael Card

- Our walk with Christ includes a walk with others. We walk *with* and *toward* other people in love.
- This is so different from our culture's individualized "journey"!

➤ *A conflict of cultural values*

"The immanent, desacralized America may be great for 'kicks,' but it is a world where people get used, and then thrown away." –**Mark Sayers**, *The Road Trip That Changed the World*, 107

- While our commitment to *people* has grown thin—our dedication to the *things* in our lives that we pursue has seemed to take over everything.

"In a superflat culture where nothing matters, we escape into obsessions and hobbies, interests that bear little ultimate consequence... giving weight to things that do not deserve mountains of time and attention. The twenty-first century will be a century marked by conspicuous consumption but also a flagrant misuse of time. With religion off the agenda, our culture finds new avenues of devotion and distraction. Instead of moving us toward relationship and people, the ...culture pushes us toward things. Millions of hours in the twenty-first century will be spent working through DVD TV series, scanning social network sites, gorging on celebrity gossip, downloading music, flipping through home magazines, and playing computer games. Things will take precedence over people. Meaningless activities will overtake our lives. There is nothing wrong with interests and hobbies in their right place, but the twenty-first-century culture will gorge on such activities. The real issues of human existence that have sat front and center of human consciousness have in the superflat, immanent world been shoved aside. They are too heavy to be carried on the road. Instead we buzz across the surface of life, never venturing below the surface."

–**Mark Sayers**, *The Road Trip That Changed the World*, 109-110

Ephesians 5:1-2

Relating in Love

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love" (Eph. 4:1-2)

Humility

- We live in a culture that wants "love" but not humility.

"[Humility] is the recognition that everything we have and are, everything we accomplish is because of the grace of Jesus Christ to us. Every gift we possess was given, not to inflate our self-importance and bolster our ego, but to enable us to minister to others as Christ has ministered to us—as a loving servant." –**Sinclair Ferguson**, *Let's Study Ephesians*, 99

- In order to love, you have to get past your self-importance.

"Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor; act as if you did. ...The worldly man treats certain people kindly because he 'likes' them; the Christian, trying to treat everyone kindly, finds himself liking more and more people as he goes on—including people he could not even have imagined himself liking at the beginning."
–**C.S. Lewis**, *Mere Christianity*, 116-117

Patience

- Patient toward the needs of people—even if you don't find them particularly interesting or enjoyable.
- Learning how to listen...

"'Our age is a dialogue of the deaf,' Bill often said. 'You must develop a lifestyle of listening,' he would say when we were talking about some difficulty I was having with some person or another. Twenty-five years later I have only begun to understand the wisdom of those words. 'The best way to show someone that you love them is to listen to them,' my dear friend told me once on an unforgettable walk we took around the campus. I was agonizing over my future wife, Susan, who at that point was giving me little or no reason for hoping that my affections would ever be returned. Out of my own impatience, I was preparing for a 'showdown' with her, a confrontation that would have surely destroyed the fragile relationship we had. I would talk and talk and talk—and she would listen, I hoped, and agree. 'If you really want to show her you love her,' Bill said with his characteristic intensity, 'listen to her.'"
–**Michael Card**, *The Walk: The Life-Changing Journey of Two Friends*, 67-68

➤ *The "7 Minute Mark" in conversation (Sherry Turkle)*

- The culture of *immediate* effects our relationships...

“Patience means being able to take a long-term view, especially when things go wrong.”
–**Sinclair Ferguson**, *Let’s Study Ephesians*, 99

Forbearing

“...bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
(Eph. 4:2-3)

- Impatience causes you to “move on” when people offend you...

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger” **(Eph. 4:26)**

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
(Eph. 4:31-32)

Serving in Love

Sacrifice

“And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”
(Eph. 5:2)

- The way of Jesus: become a servant of all (Mark 10:42-45).
- “Walk the extra mile.” Be willing to go in a direction that is different than your plans or preferences.

➤ *Washing feet*

Gifting

“But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ...12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” **(Eph. 4:9, 12)**

Words that Give Grace & Build Up

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Eph. 4:15-16)

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” (Eph. 5:29)

- Speaking the truth... *in love*.

Exercising Spiritual Gifts in Love

“Pursue love and earnestly desire spiritual gifts” (1 Cor. 14:1)

- Loving by taking a risk...