

LOVE

Theme: Love 5

Discipleship groups purpose: Each member being transformed into the image of the Son.

Key Truth: Love does not brag.

Key Scripture: *1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,*

Read: Love doesn't brag because love doesn't need to brag. Love doesn't need to prove itself to anyone or justify itself to anyone. Love knows it is love, whether it is received or understood as love or not.

The word brag is the Greek word "perpereuomai" which means: a self display, employing rhetorical embellishments in extolling one's self excessively.

Love doesn't need or look for the approval of man and it certainly doesn't need man to recognise it as love, for it to love man. Love doesn't say "did you see what I did?". Love doesn't say "look at me, look at me, look at me", like Kath does, from the Australian TV show Kath and Kim.

When Jesus was crucified by His own people and the Romans, he uttered words of forgiveness, rather than words about what He was doing for them. He didn't turn around and say, "Don't you know what I am doing for you? Don't you know the enormous sacrifice I am making so you can know eternal life and eternity with My Father?". He turned His affection and attention to His Father and said, "Father forgive them." Love moves in the complete opposite direction to lust that brags and draws attention to itself.

We see in the below passage Paul and Barnabas pointing the focus back to God and away from themselves, after healing a man who was lame.

Acts 14:8-15 At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well, said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and began to walk.

When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us." And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.

Paul and Barnabas could have bragged about what they just did. The people are giving them praise and high esteem for what has just happened. They could easily buy into and receive the praise of man and say "yes, look at us", but they don't. Love doesn't brag, but points people to itself - God.

Questions:

1. Why doesn't love brag?
2. Why does love not need any recognition from man to love man?
3. To brag is to draw attention to one's self. Why is this a dangerous position to entertain?
4. What key truths can we learn from the passage of Acts 14 above?