

Love Does Not Brag and Is Not Proudful

The Characteristics of Love

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Normally I am teaching the young couples at Adult Bible Fellowship right now during this particular hour and so I wanted to just take a quick moment to introduce myself and my family. My name is Rob Green and I'm one of the Pastors here and I have the privilege of serving in the counseling ministry and in the seminary. My wife, Stephanie, and I have been married for just over 20 years and our three children all attend Faith Christian School.

As Pastor Viars explained last week, we are doing something a little different over last week and this week and that is he was preaching here last week and then he was taking that same message and going over to Faith West and so today he is actually a first-time visitor at Faith West. Doesn't that sound weird? But it's true. After all of the many hours that he has invested into Faith West, today is actually his first Sunday morning there and while he was here last week, I was preaching this message at Faith West and now we've swapped over here. What we're doing is we're taking our time this year to think about loving our neighbors and at this point of the year, we have decided to focus narrowly on one word and that is the first one: that is loving. What we've been doing is thinking through the characteristics of love in order to help us do that and this morning we're going to have the privilege of thinking about two of them. They are: love does not brag and is not proudful. Love does not brag and is not proudful.

Before we get to any texts yet, I find that when you have such a huge characteristic list like this, it's helpful, at least for me, to think of it in broad picture terms and that is on the positive side: there are a number of ways in which God says, "This is what biblical love looks like. It looks like being patient. It looks like kindness. It looks like rejoicing in the truth." But then there's also several things in which it's not, so biblical not love: is not jealous; it's not bragging; it's not proudful; it's not rude; it's not selfish; it's not easily provoked; it's not a record-keeper of wrongs; and it does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Then after Paul lays out several ideas there, he then summarizes in four simple statements: endures all things, believes all things, hopes and endures.

As Pastor Viars and Pastor Aucoin have explained several of the characteristics to this point, how many of you are already convicted? I'm the first one, in fact, when Pastor Aucoin was preaching two weeks ago, I was sitting right over there and I knew that I was

coming up next and I was thinking to myself, “Brent, I was going to say that.” I’m like, “Stop. Stop. Stop! Like, you’re stealing my thunder!” I was being jealous in a sermon on not being jealous and I hate it when that happens, don’t you? I like to apply biblical truth at least to like Wednesday or Thursday and I hadn’t even gotten out of the sermon yet before I was blowing it.

Well, if you’re like me, this is an incredibly convicting passage and I hope that as you’re sitting here thinking, “Man, there is no way I can do that. There is no way I can love like this. It’s not going to happen.” Maybe part of the reason for that is maybe you’ve never come to the place where you have trusted in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for your salvation so maybe what these passages are helping you think through and what God is doing in your life is helping you see that maybe what you need to do first is to repent of your sin and trust Christ. But if you are a believer, I hope what you’re saying is, “Boy, there is no way I could have done that anyway and so I have to rely on every single day, the ongoing nourishment that comes from Jesus Christ or I will never, ever love like this.” It’s way too much for our own strength.

In preparation for our bragging and proud idea, I’d like you to turn in your Bible to Daniel 4. That is on page 632 of the front section in the Bible in the chair in front of you. Daniel 4, let’s get some context while we’re going to it. This is going to be an idea of bragging. Nebuchadnezzar who is the king of Babylon has had a dream. What he sees is this massive tree and all of the people of the world are coming to the tree in order to receive shade and all of the birds are coming in order to rest and to next in that tree. Then he sees that the tree is chopped down and that dream bothers him. He didn’t just wake up and think, “Oh well, I had a dream. Must’ve ate something too late last night.” He’s bothered by it and so he goes to Daniel and says, “Daniel, I need you to tell me the interpretation of this dream.” We’re going to pick it up in that conversation, Daniel 4, beginning in verse 19,

“19 Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, 'Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.' Belteshazzar replied, 'My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries! 20 The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth 21 and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged - 22 it is you, O king;”

Get it? You’re the tree.

“for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth. 23 In that the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, "Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze

around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him," 24 this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: 25 that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes. 26 And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules. 27 Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity."

Daniel says to the king, "King, do you see what's happening? Your heart has become full of pride and your heart is full of pride and is leading you to the place where God is going to judge you, he's going to discipline you. So my advice to you is to repent now, to turn now, to stop doing evil now and maybe God will withhold that judgment for a time."

Verse 28,

"28 All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. 29 Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king reflected"

I'd like to stop there for a second. I want you to think about what's going on here, the picture that is painted by this text. Here's the king walking on his roof looking across the great city of Babylon saying, "Man, that's cool over there. That's cool. Oh, that right there, isn't it gorgeous? Isn't that view awesome? Isn't that wonderful?" He walks over here, "Man, isn't that amazing? Isn't that awesome? Man, what a great and powerful city this is. Isn't it so cool?" Now notice verse 30, so while he's walking,

"30 The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'

"Isn't this all for me? I've done it all. This is all mine." Well,

"31 While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, 32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and

bestows it on whomever He wishes.' 33 Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws. 34 But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' 36 At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me."

As we read verse 37, contrast it with what he said in verse 30 where he describes his great city and how it was for his glory and built by his power. Now, he says,

"37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

You see, what he came to realize, what Daniel was trying to tell him as he was saying, "Look King, there's really only two paths in life: there is the path of humility where you will choose willfully to humble yourself before the mighty hand of God or there is the path of humiliation where God will do it for you."

With that in mind, I'd like you to turn over to 1 Corinthians 13 because, you see, God hates pride. He says, "I am opposed to the proud but I give grace to the humble." In fact, in the New Testament in Philippians 2 it says, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit but with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests but also for the interests of others." Having talked about humility, it says, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus who although he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself taking the form of a bondservant and being made in the likeness of men, begin found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross." Think about it: Colossians 1 reminds us that all of creation was done for Christ and by Christ and by his power. That kind of sounds like Nebuchadnezzar, doesn't it? Except this: he does it in humility. Now he takes on the willing form of a bondservant. He is the Creator. He is the Most High. Nebuchadnezzar thought he was. He thought it was all about him. Seeing what we see is a contrast that could not be any starker. Nebuchadnezzar who has no power, who has no ability, thinks he's all that and Jesus who

actually has it, he is the Creator, he is the one with the strength to do that, humbles himself instead.

1 Corinthians 13. As Pastor Viars explained, the first three verses described the necessity of love that if we do whatever we do without love, we're like a noisy gong, a clanging symbol, we're nothing, what we do profits nothing. Then we find love is patient, verse 4,

“4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant.”

Let's think about: love does not brag. Pastor Aucoin reminded us that love is kind, that is the action of being kind and that notion is true here as well. That is to say that the one who possesses and demonstrates biblical love does not talk about all the wonderful things that they are, the wonderful things that they do and the wonderful things that they plan. Nebuchadnezzar was all about that, “Look what I've build. Look what I have done. This is for my glory, through my ability, because of my power.” I think there's a desire in all of our hearts to want to talk a little bit about us. We just want to talk about us and our culture reinforces that idea. The whole category of self-esteem is like, “Let's just feel as good about ourselves as we possibly can so when I don't want to think about me, why don't you think about me for me?” You see, Garfield, the great theologian, listen to what Garfield says: he's talking to Pooky, “Then about April of '81 or was it '82, my voice changed and I started singing the baritone part. Gee Pooky, I'm tired of talking about me, you talk about me for a while.” He gets it, right? When I'm tired of talking about me, why don't you talk about me? Take over for me for a little bit.

You see, love does not brag means that love does not seek to draw excessive attention to itself. It doesn't seek to talk about itself. I think that penetrates every aspect of our society and if we're honest, it penetrates us too. I found the debate about the plaque at Purdue University a bit interesting. You remember that the donor was asked to provide a statement and he included a word about God and then there arose a big question, “Can there be a statement about God at a public university?” Let us think about that. Here's one of the questions I didn't hear asked: whether there should be a plaque at all? Whether there should be a plaque at all. Maybe it would be appropriate for the left hand to not know what the right hand is doing. Didn't Jesus say that? “But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that your giving will be in secret and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” Why did there have to be a plaque at all? Why does there have to be a name brand at all?

Biblical love doesn't require that everybody acknowledge how wonderful it is. Biblical recognizes that every gracious and perfect gift comes from God. As Brent mentioned, biblical love starts when I die to myself. It starts when I die to myself. You know, in the Corinthian context, Paul was writing to a church that was kind of excited about talking about itself. We find them talking about wisdom and knowledge and who's really the smart people around here and here's what Paul says, who actually was pretty smart, “I'm determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. Do you

want to know what my knowledge is? Do you want to know what my wisdom is? It's all about this: Jesus Christ and him crucified period.”

The church was struggling with spiritual gifts because they wanted to have the showy ones so that way everyone could acknowledge just how great they were. “Mercy helps? Forget that, man, who wants to do that kind of stuff? Like making a meal for somebody, taking it over to their house, that's not very exciting. That's not very showy. Man, I want to stand up and preach, that's what I want to do so that way everybody can see just how awesome I really am.” Well, there are divisions. Remember those divisions? There were some who were like, “I'm of Paul. I'm of Apollos. I'm with Cephas.” Then there was this other crew, they're like, wham, “I'm of Jesus.” Do you remember them? All of them, all of them were about themselves and they were braggers.

As I was studying, I couldn't help but remember a little video that I think perfectly exemplifies the notion of bragging and I want you to notice that the beginning of this little video is going to be a little phrase I want you to latch onto and then at the end, there is another one that I want you to latch onto that is the perfect picture of bragging.

“I'm actually kind of quiet off-stage, a lot of people don't realize that. I was at a dinner party recently, a bunch of people that I don't know, one guy talking plenty for everybody. 'Me, myself, and myself and me, me, me. I couldn't tell this one about I because I was talking about myself and then me. Me! Me! Me!!!' Beware the Me Monster.

“So, I tried to jump in with a little story, I don't want to just sit there the whole night. Right when I'm done with my story, this guy goes, 'That ain't nothing.' Well, I didn't mean to waste everybody's time telling my nothing story. Here, let Marco Polo speak. He's back with tales of adventure. 'That story ain't nothing.'

“Maybe it wasn't because I made the mistake of trying to tell a story about having only two wisdom teeth pulled and I learned a lesson: don't ever try to tell a two wisdom tooth story because you ain't going nowhere, the four wisdom teeth people are going to parachute in and cut you off at the pass. 'Halt! Halt with your two wisdom tooth tale!' You will never complete one, trust me. I'm trying to tell my story, 'You know, I had some wisdom teeth pulled. I had two,' 'I had four pulled.' 'Oh, okay.' 'No five.' 'No nine. I had nine wisdom teeth pulled. All of mine were impacted. They were all coming upside down. The roots were wrapped around my tongue, coming out my nose. They were tusks. I was a warthog. No anesthesia. They pulled them out with pliers. I was eating corn-on-the-cob that afternoon.' Pin the blue ribbon upon his chest. That knocks the socks off of my wisdom tooth tale.

“Why do people need to top other people? I've never understood it and I see it all the time. Obviously people get something out of it, at best, people

wait for your lips to stop... 'You see, you, me. Do you see the difference? Do you see that?' Now I do."

Did you catch them? Number 1 was the Me Monster, huh? Beware of the Me Monster. And then the last one coming right at the end, "There's you and then there's me." Did you see that? Do you see that: there's you and then me and do you see the difference? I think that penetrates a lot of lives. Let me give some examples of that. It happens in the workplace: who gets the credit for something? Who is responsible for a job well done? "Well, you know, you were a part of the project but my name's on the patent." Well, excuse me. "Well, yeah, you did an okay job but I did a great job." Okay. You see, there's you and then there's me.

It can enter even our small groups. It can enter our Adult Bible Fellowships where what we do is we go so that people will talk about us. We're hanging out, having a little time of conversation and somebody starts talking about something and then, "Okay, that's cool. There's you but, see, there's me. There's you over here, that's good but then there's me." Sometimes people only go when they need something, after all, if you might need something, I don't need to be there for that because there's you but there's me.

What about in our parenting? We can one-up our kids, can't we? Our kids are whining about walking 100 feet across the parking lot and we're like, "Yeah, well, in my day we had to walk three miles uphill in both directions. Do you know what else? Quite frankly, I had to get up at 5 a.m. just to be there on time. None of this wimpy be at school at 9 o'clock in the morning thing. Like, what in the world is up with that? I mean, back when men were men it was 7 a.m." Then here's what we do: we ask why we have little Me Monsters. We taught them to be Me Monsters because in our everyday conversations it was, "There's you and then there's me. There's you and then there's me." After a while they kind of got tired of that and so they wanted to start playing that game. "There's you but see there's me over here."

What about in our marriage? Sometimes we try to convince our spouse just how good they have it so what we'll do is in a very overt way, we start comparing salaries and we're like, "Do you know, hon? If we were living at the place that you provided for, this is the spot we would live right here. I mean, we would have to snuggle all day long because this would be the size of our house. But see, what I've provided is all of this and so you need to be like really thankful to be married to someone like me because, you see, there's you and then there's me."

Sometimes it's a little more subtle. I remember one time Stephanie was gone and so I decided what I was going to do was that I was going to clean the house. It's all well and good but when she got home, I wasn't just satisfied with cleaning the house because I loved Jesus, I was like, "Did you notice how clean the house is?" "Yeah, I noticed." "No, did you notice how clean the house is? Like, did you notice that?" I'm expecting a reward here because I cleaned the house. You see there's me, I need you to give some attention to me.

Sometimes it happens with kids in school. “How did you do on the final?” “Well, I got an 86.” “That's great, man. You know, I took that class three years ago. I got 97.” “Oh, well, okay, great job.” You see, it penetrates everywhere because we're not so excited to let things stand with the you part, we need to talk about the me part and whenever we start talking about the me part, that needs to sound better. You see, there's you and then there's me.

Biblical love doesn't do that. It doesn't parade itself around. It doesn't seek credit either from its own or from the words of others. In the words of Pastor Aucoin who stole my thunder, not that I'm jealous or anything: you can have biblical love because Jesus has your back. You can put yourself out there because it is Jesus who fills you, it is Jesus who protects you, it is Jesus who comforts you.

The text goes on: not only is love patient and kind and not jealous, love does not brag and is not arrogant. It's not arrogant or prideful. At a first glance, there seems to be very little difference between bragging and pride and indeed there is tremendous overlap but pride or arrogance is the overarching or more general word where bragging was simply one expression. So bragging is the verbal representation of a heart of pride but pride is an attitude of the heart that considers itself pretty good. I think what the Lord is doing here is helping us recognize the fact that we don't have to be a person who just brags and brags and brags and brags to be a person who is full of pride. There is both the bragging expression of pride but there's also other sorts of pride that can come out and what Jesus says and wants it to be clear, is he wants all of it gone: it's not part of biblical love. It's not just the bragging part, it's also the inner conviction of the heart.

This term is used very rarely except in 1 Corinthians and in 1 Corinthians the church is considered proud or arrogant and here's a number of places where that happens. In chapter 4:6 it says, “Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.” The very next verse says, “Look, everything you have comes from God anyway. Everything comes from God so stop thinking about you're all that and a bag of chips. You're not. You have what you have because God gave it to you.” 1 Corinthians 4:18, just a few verses later, “Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power.” Because the kingdom of God is demonstrated not in empty talk but by the power of God and here they were getting all wound up, all excited, “Paul's this. Paul's that. He's not going to show up, you know, because he talks a big talk but he doesn't have anything to back it up,” and he's like, “Yeah, we'll see. We'll see.” Because here's what happens: it's the power of God, not just empty talk. Some people are pretty good at talking but it needs to be backed up by action and that's what Paul says.

1 Corinthians 5, “It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned.” You see, the picture was, “Oh yeah, that's okay. We just want to love him. We want to care about him. We

want to love him so we just want to come alongside and, you know, care for him in this process.” Paul says, “You didn’t love him a bit. If you’d of loved him, then you would have explained to him that this is wrong, he needs to repent right here, right now and if he doesn’t, he has to be removed.”

He also reminds them, “Concerning things sacrificed to idols we know that all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant but love edifies.” In other words, what happens here is the church has been asking a question like, “What about this eating meat business?” and Paul spends a significant amount of time simply explaining this: that there really aren’t idols in the world anyways so there really isn’t such a thing as meat sacrificed to idols so you don’t have to worry about it, but not everybody has that knowledge. Not everyone knows that and so do you care about your brother or sister who may be struggling with that whole idea? And do you care enough to say that I would willingly, happily forgo one of the things that I could do because I care so much about my brother or sister? And he says they didn’t because they were arrogant, they were full of pride. They didn’t give a rip about others.

That brings us to the meaning of this term, what does this really look like? Love is not prideful means that one does not have an exaggerated view of themselves. He doesn’t have an exaggerated view of himself. It’s not just the amount of talk that he does, it’s what’s inside his heart. God explains that biblical love is simply not characterized either by bragging nor is it characterized by the heart of pride and it’s so easy to become a Me Monster, isn’t it? It’s so easy to have the view in our heart that, “Well, there’s you and then there’s me.”

I think we’re really at a place where we understand a couple of things about this passage. The first is that biblical love doesn’t brag, it doesn’t speak excessively of itself and that biblical love is not prideful, it doesn’t think excessively of itself. I think we also understand that Jesus loves us and keeps us safely in a relationship with him so that we’re free to give this kind of love that’s described here. So, it is possible by the nourishing work of Christ that we can live this way. Trying to do it on our own, it will never happen, it’s impossible but if we are constantly nourished by the vine, that is through Christ, then we can exhibit this kind of love.

That really leaves us with an important question that we need to tackle and that is: well, if pride is so deceitful and it comes in our hearts in so many different ways, then how do you kill pride and put humility in its place? How do you kill pride and put humility in its place? I’d like us to think about that notion and the material that I’m going to present here comes from one of my friends, Stuart Scott, who wrote a book called “From Pride to Humility.” In it, it describes several things that prideful people do or how they think. Then it also describes the opposite of that, how humble people think and how do they act. I think that will be instructive for us as we think about true biblical love.

Here are some demonstrations of pride. The first is that prideful people are not very thankful, after all, they deserve it, don’t they? They deserve the good things anyway and so, of course, they don’t have to give thanks because they deserve all of the good things

that they actually get. And when there's something that comes in their direction that they don't like, they find it annoying, disturbing and even unfair because they're full of pride.

Prideful people have outbursts of anger because, "Around here there's really only one way and that's mine. There's really only one schedule and that's mine. There's only one set of expectations and that's mine. So, if you mess with my way, you mess with my schedule, you mess with my expectations, then you will feel my wrath." That's pride and people who are full of pride have outbursts of anger.

Prideful people are perfectionistic. That doesn't mean we can't strive for excellence but perfectionistic people think that their work, their stuff and their accomplishments have to be perfect because, after all, they're worthy of it. They're worthy of it. That is the only thing that satisfies them.

Prideful people hate accountability. They hate accountability. They don't want to listen to anyone. They don't want to be under anyone's authority. They think they're entirely self-sufficient and so they don't want accountability. "Forget that. Being accountable for my responses and my actions? Are you kidding me? I don't need accountability. Why? Because I do it all right anyway." That's a person who is full of pride.

Prideful people are consumed with what others might think of them. Being man-pleasers or on the other hand, man-fearers. Praise is addicting to them and so they become very self-righteous about how wonderful they are and how, well, not so wonderful others are. Or when they get criticized, they launch into self-pity because, "It feels like everybody is coming down on me." It's like a big load of bricks, "Oh, I can't handle it." You see, those are expressions of pride. And they cannot imagine someone actually asking them to take a step of growth in anything and when they do, they get upset, they eliminate relationships, they stop hanging out with those people anymore because, "You're like, messing with me." They don't want to be part and in some cases they leave churches. There are many instances where someone encourages someone with a pamphlet on how to raise your child and they're like, "Well, fine. I already know how to raise my children and we're out of here and we're going to go some place where people will let me do whatever I want." That's pride. It's a heart of pride.

Prideful people are defensive. They're defensive. You can't really teach them something, they're defensive. They have an answer to everything. Our counseling ministry has had the privilege of serving many occasional ministers over the years, sometimes mission agencies have asked and I've had the privilege of working with Doc and a couple of those and, boy, whenever I have one of those, I immediately go into fear and trepidation mode. Because on the one hand, I want to help, I want to serve, I want to be a part of seeing them restored back to fruitful ministry. On the other hand, I'm concerned about defensiveness because, you know, we've had people who we say, "Hey, could you turn your Bible to X passage," and they're like, "Why are you going to that one for? There's a whole lot better one over here." Excuse me, why don't we just go to your passage then? Or, "Why don't you talk about the literary structure of Numbers as a precursor to our discussion, after all, it has very significant importance into the text that we're about ready

to look at? I realize the text says that, I've taught that to 100,000 other people." You see, it's just defensiveness and what that is: it's pride. It says, "You can't teach me anything because I know it already."

Prideful people will not serve unless you beg them. You see, the prideful person doesn't just look for opportunities to serve, they're like, "Ask me again." The first time you ask me, "Well, I'll pray about it." The second time you ask me, "Well, I'll pray harder about it." The third time you ask me, "I'll pray even harder about it." Then right about the time where you are ready to be in despair, like totally discouraged about whatever ministry opportunity you're trying to get help for, they say, "Ask me one more time." That way, "I can be your rescuer. I can be your savior. Ask me one more time. Show me just how dependent you are on me so that way I feel good about all of my service."

Prideful people don't pray because they really don't need God's help. I mean, after all, isn't prayer saying to the Lord that we don't know what to do? We don't have enough strength? We don't have enough ability? We don't have all of this covered on our own so, Lord, we're asking for your help? You see, pride says you don't need any of that. You've got all that covered. You're good.

I stopped at 8 just because I couldn't take anymore conviction. There's more, there's like 35 of them but I just couldn't handle that much conviction in one moment. So, let's talk about some demonstrations of humility. What does it look like on the other side.

There's thankfulness. You know, Jesus died. Jesus died. Jesus died. I mean, sometimes you have to tell yourself that a lot, over and over and over again to see the significance of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and that without it we would have no hope of eternal life.

There's regular and constant prayer because humble people know where their strength comes from and they recognize that if the Lord wanted to do a Nebuchadnezzar to us, he is fully capable of doing that. If he wanted us to walk in humiliation, he could. You see, humble people just say, "I know I don't have enough strength. I know I don't have enough skills. I know I don't have enough wisdom. I need your help, Lord, and I'm asking you to do your work first of all in my heart and in the heart of others."

They are actively serving others including those who have nothing to offer in return. You see, they are willing to serve simply because they want to serve Jesus and they don't have to have the rescuer or the savior mentality to the service.

They have a learner's attitude. They recognize that every time the word of God is opened, there is something there for them. There is some area of growth, some way in which they need to take a step and so they're coming asking the Lord for help every single time.

They pursue integrity. They don't just wait for people to catch them in their sin, they pursue integrity. There are oftentimes where people have a little part of their life that is just hidden over here, nobody knows about it, just kind of their own little thing and it's

not until that's exposed that they will even begin to admit it and yet, what the humble person does is pursues integrity, doesn't want any of those little areas floating in their life.

They encourage others because humble people, they don't go, "There's you and then there's me," they say, "There's you and then me." Pride is so pervasive I can't even say it right. It just doesn't make sense, does it? But that's where we need the strength of Christ to constantly come alongside so that the emphasis can be on the you rather than on the me.

I hope as you're thinking through 1 Corinthians 13 you're saying, "You know, man, I have some growth to take because I don't love like this. I just don't love like this." I think what Pastor Aucoin outlined as steps to go forward applies in every single one of these characterizations so I'd like to repeat them. The first thing is to recognize your pride and your bragging is inconsistent with biblical love. You see, as long as you remain steadfast that it really isn't that big of a deal, as long as you remain steadfast that it's not really all that pervasive in your life, there is no change. You have to recognize it first. Then you have to repent for a heart that is prideful. You actually have to repent. You have to see that as wrong and turn away from it pursuing humility instead. Repent for a heart that is prideful. You can repent because Jesus will never leave you or forsake you and he stands ready to forgive you. It's one of the most beautiful passages, 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He stands ready to forgive so we don't have to worry about that. We don't have to think, "Oh no, I'm going to the Lord." He stands ready to forgive. Then we apply the heart of humility instead of the heart of pride because we recognize that love does not brag and is not arrogant.

Let's stand together for prayer.

Father, we'd like to thank you for your word. We want to thank you for most importantly the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We want you that it is through him that we can have a heart of humility. Lord, I pray first for individuals in this room who may not be able to do this kind of love because they have never yet repented of their sin and trusted Christ so, Lord, I pray that you would bring conviction, give within them a heart of repentance and belief. Lord, for those who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior, I pray that you would help them to see the significance of a daily personal meaningful walk with Christ as the only means of loving like this and we simply won't love the way you want us to unless we are constantly nourished and encouraged from our relationship with you. I pray as well, Lord, and thank you for the Scriptures and how they come alive and thank you for the passage about Nebuchadnezzar that reminds us that you are able to humble anyone who chooses to walk in pride and so would you please help us to walk the path of humility instead of walking the path of humiliation. We ask, Lord, for your help in Jesus' name. Amen.