

# Live Who You Are

Series: The Art of Loving

March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

Ephesians 4:1-3 (NLT) Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.<sup>2</sup> Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.<sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

Ephesians 5:1-2 (NLT) Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. <sup>2</sup> Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

Ephesians 5:8-9 (NLT) For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So, live as people of light! <sup>9</sup> For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

**Introduction:** In our series The Art of Loving, we have learned that we cannot love as God loves until we understand how God has loved us.

One of the greatest expressions of God's love is that He did not leave us in darkness.

## The Gospel Changes our Identity

Scripture tells us that he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. (Colossians 1:13)

We were not just improved; we were rescued and transferred.

- Darkness was our home.
- Sin was our nature.
- Self was our ruler.

When the gospel, the message that Jesus died and rose again to forgive our sins and give us new life, truly impacts a life, real change takes place.

When we encounter Christ, when we turn to Him in faith, trusting Him to forgive us and lead our lives we:

- Live differently
- Love differently
- See differently

A person who once held grudges learns to forgive. Someone who lived only for themselves begins to care for others. Harsh words become words that heal. This is what transformation looks like.

Surrendering one's life to Christ is not simply about following a new set of rules. It is about a change of heart produced by the grace and power of the Spirit of God who renews our way of thinking and living.

Ephesians 4:21-23 (NLT) Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, <sup>22</sup> throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. <sup>23</sup> Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.

Because of God's great love, our sins have been forgiven, our hearts have been transformed, and we have been filled with His Spirit. However, this doesn't mean that we automatically love and live like Jesus, there is still a part of us that is constantly at odds with the Spirit that we must learn to throw off.

Becoming a Christian is not about adding Jesus to our lives; it is about abandoning our old life and finding true life in Him. It begins when we embrace our new identity in Christ, forgiven, accepted by God, and made new and live from that identity.

### **Our Identity Shapes how we Live**

Ephesians 4:1 (NLT) ...lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.

God calls us to live lives that reflect the reality that His saving grace has rescued us, changed us, and transformed us.

(AMP) ...live a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called [that is, to live a life that exhibits godly character, moral courage, personal integrity, and mature behavior - a life that expresses gratitude to God for your salvation].

To live a life worthy of the call is to live a life that matches our new identity in Christ.

Our new identity in Christ changes everything: loved people love, forgiven people forgive, and people who have received mercy show mercy.

When we understand God's love toward us, we begin to love others.

Ephesians 5:1-3 (NLT) Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. <sup>2</sup> Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

### **What does this love look like?**

Ephesians 4:2-3 (NLT) Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.<sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

John 13:35 (AMP) By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you have love and unselfish concern for one another.

One of the clearest signs that we understand and have experienced God's love is how we treat one another.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (NLT) Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud<sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.

These qualities are not self-produced; they are the outflow of being loved and led by the Spirit of God.

## **The Spirit Transforms Us to Love**

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT) But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Love is not a technique to be mastered; it grows from a heart that has been transformed by the Spirit of God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (Living Bible) But we Christians have no veil over our faces; we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him.

The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in helping become more like Jesus, what the bible calls sanctification. He leads and guides us, teaches and instructs us, and lovingly convicts and affirms us as children of God.

Yet this growth requires our response, listening to the Spirit's guidance through Scripture and the conviction in our heart. As we yield to the Holy Spirit's work, He continues to transform us into the likeness of Jesus. We start to live and love like Him.

Ephesians 4:21-24 (NLT) Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him,<sup>22</sup> throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.<sup>23</sup> Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.<sup>24</sup> Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

Ephesians 4:28-32 (NLT) If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.<sup>29</sup> Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those

who hear them. <sup>30</sup> And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

<sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. <sup>32</sup> Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Notice how Paul exhorts us to respond to the Spirit and live lives that reflect our faith, and then immediately brings us back to the source of that life, the love of God demonstrated through forgiveness in Christ.

People who understand how much they have been forgiven learn to forgive. People who understand how deeply they have been loved by God begin to love as He has loved. People who know their new identity in Christ start to live from that identity.

Love is the ultimate evidence that we truly belong to God's kingdom.

Ephesians 5:8-9 (NLT) For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So, live as people of light! <sup>9</sup> For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

**Conclusion:** A loving life is a shining life. And a shining life points people to Christ.

When the gospel truly impacts our life: We walk differently. We love differently. We live differently. We become a reflection of the light whose source is Christ.

The Art of Loving begins here: We cannot love as God loves until we understand how God has loved us. And it begins when we come to Christ and receive the love and forgiveness He offers.