

Love: The Qualitative Difference (1)

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As we reemerge as a church, the challenge before us is to be qualitatively better or different than we were before the shut-down. The opportunity is before us and the decision is ours. But in doing so we need to clearly define what “qualitative difference” means. It is much easier to decide what we are going to DO differently than what we are going to BE differently. Quality is about BEING, not just DOING. If you are different then you will do things differently.

Here is the gold standard of quality for the kingdom:

We need to unleash and channel the love we have.

Read Mark 12: 28-34

- Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength
- Love your neighbor as yourself

This is what God taught us to DO because God is Love. (1 John 4:16) But,

just like God, before we can love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and love our neighbor as ourselves we have to BE love. Put your name in the blank: _____ is Love.

We must let love lead us to a new way of doing things.

In the midst of the Corinthian church’s many problems including division, sexual immorality, lawsuits, quarrels, drunkenness, doctrinal heresies, lack of concern for another’s conscience, rudeness, excluding one another, boasting about one’s spiritual gifts, et...Paul’s message was “Do everything in love.” (1 Cor.16:14)

We are not Corinth.

The quality of that church had been compromised. It had been contaminated. It had been distorted. Quality Control inspected this church and condemned it as below company standards. Paul came back in as a master builder (1 Cor.3:10) and began reconstruction to bring it back up to CODE.

Love has built this church and love can fill it.

The centerpiece of His message to them was Love. “Now I will show you the MOST EXCELLENT WAY.” (1 Cor.12:31)

Read 1 Cor.13

But in order to understand what this means we must understand that love touches every aspect of what we do as individuals and as a church. The two questions we must learn to ask about every thought, every word, and every deed is:

We must sharpen our love to become more effective.

- How does this thought, word, or deed show God I love Him with all my heart, soul, mind and strength?
- How does this thought, word, or deed show my neighbor that I love them as I love myself?

These are the quality controls of the kingdom. These are the divine measurements of the kingdom. However, if we don't know how to read the measuring tape, we will not come up with the proper measurements.

Over the next few weeks I hope to define the way LOVE qualitatively changes how we live-how we think, speak, and act in this world. Love is our new language. It is our new lifestyle. It is our new culture. It is our new frame of reference. It is our new standard. It is what we expect of ourselves and of one another. We are accountable to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves-according to what God teaches us in His word.

I call you today to this path-this new quality of beginning for Central. Let's make John 13:35 our commitment: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

We want our culture to flourish-to spill over and to penetrate deeply our relationships in and out of the church.