

## Resisting the System: How to Live the Jesus Way

### Part 4: What If Everything You Thought About Love Was a Lie?

Ephesians 5:1–20

**Summary:** If love is the answer, why does the world still feel so broken? Discover how the way of Jesus offers a deeper, truer kind of love that can actually change us.

#### Main Ideas:

We all say love matters—but our world is starving for it.

The system of the world keeps us distracted and confused by counterfeit love

To experience the life we're looking for, we must choose to walk in the love of Jesus.

Real love is sacrificial and unconditional.

At its core, the system's version of love is self-worship.

Jesus' love gives without limit. The system's "love" takes without limit.

Thankfulness dissolves self-worship.

We resist the system by being filled with the Holy Spirit... together

Allowing the Holy Spirit to fill us lets us enjoy God and share a life of love.

Walking in love doesn't always look impressive. But it always looks like Jesus

The world is starving for love. Jesus is sending us to feed it.

#### Invitation:

Pray: Holy Spirit, I give you control. Today, show me how to walk in your love that shines to others.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. When you hear the phrase "all we need is love," what comes to mind? Do you think it's true? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think it's hard for us to believe that sacrificial love can actually make a difference?
3. Read Ephesians 5:15-20. What's do you think is the difference between being "spiritually hyped" and truly being filled with the Holy Spirit?
4. Where in your life do you think the Holy Spirit is inviting you to walk in deeper love this week?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

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#### Transcript:

**WE:** We're all told that LOVE is the most important thing. It's all we need.

So... where is it?

We say love is the answer...

Then why do we still have wars?

Why can't our leaders figure out how to work together for the good of the people?

- Like a humane and thoughtful immigration policy?

Why is every political issue something that has the potential to break friendships?

Why do so many of our marriages fall apart—or quietly go cold?

Why do we keep getting trapped in the same cycles of being hurt... and hurting others?

Where is the love? Why can't we seem to do it?

We all say love matters—but our world is starving for it.

Maybe we don't actually know what real love is.

Maybe we've been brainwashed into thinking something else is love—when it's really just a counterfeit.

There is a system at work in our world—

- At work in our governments and power structures...
- And at work inside our own families, relationships, habits, minds, and desires.

The New Testament writers called it "the world."

It's a system that says...

- "Look out for yourself."
- "Love the people who are like you, who agree with you, who protect your comfort."
- But if someone is a threat? Dehumanize them. Cancel them. Destroy them.
- Win at any cost—even if it takes violence, deceit, or manipulation.

We scroll past inspirational quotes. We repost hashtags. We are told all we need to do is live-laugh-love...

We are sold a vision of love that's actually selfishness in disguise.

"Love means getting what you want... and doing what you want."

But this system hasn't made us more loving.

It's made us more divided, more anxious, more angry—and more alone.

The system of the world keeps us distracted and confused by counterfeit love

But in stark contrast... is the Jesus Way.

Jesus came to wage a revolution against this system... and he invites everyone to join him.

- The King is here, and he is taking his kingdom back through love.
- Love that emanates from God's heart and was seen in action in Jesus' life.
- Love that restores. Love that sacrifices. Love that transforms not just individuals... but communities, entire systems.

But my question still is... What is it?

What does Jesus-shaped love **actually** look like—and how does it change not just us, but the world?

This tension—this love confusion— isn't new.

In the 1st century, there was an ancient city steeped in empire values and religious power...

- A city proud of its economy, its idols, its hierarchy—but starving for real love.
- Ephesus... the Roman Empire's Vegas meets Wall Street meets Capitol Hill.

It was dripping with spiritual confusion, sexual exploitation, and economic injustice:

- Idolatry infiltrated politics and business.
- Adultery, prostitution, and sexual rituals were normalized—even expected for the elite.
- Public entertainment was often an erotic or violent spectacle.
- Slavery was systemic.
- The poor, widows, and foreigners were abandoned while the elite held all the power.

And in the middle of that world, God's people were asking the same questions we are:

- Where's the real love?
- Is it even possible to live differently in a world like this?

So the Apostle Paul wrote them a letter... what we now call Ephesians.

And in it, he doesn't give them a 5-point righteousness checklist... he gives them one invitation.

A radical... alternative to the system of counterfeit love:

- He explains... To experience the life we're looking for, we must choose to walk in the love of Jesus.

But how? That's what Paul unpacks—and it might be more practical, and more disruptive, than you think.

Not JF- Letter written to/for JF's. But I want to show you the life you are invited to enjoy.

**GOD:**

[Self-Sacrificial Love]

**Eph. 5:1-2 (NIV)** *Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God*

Walk in the way of love... How?

By following the example of Jesus.

- Like following footprints in the snow
- Like tracing a picture. Jesus demonstrates it, and we copy it.
- It's what he meant when he said... **John 13:34 (NIV)** *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."*

So, how did Jesus love? What does Jesus' love look like?

### Real love is sacrificial, not self-serving.

- Even though he was God in a body/King of the Universe... Jesus chose to serve... even those who betrayed him.
- Even people who had mistreated him, his family, and his people.
- People who denied and betrayed him... on purpose.
- He loved and served them to his death... never retaliating.

### Real love doesn't come with conditions.

- Jesus loved preemptively.
- He loved before he was loved.
- No one had to earn his love... and no one could lose his love.

### Real love is sacrificial and unconditional.

- It's so much easier to preach it than do it!

To our minds, that almost seems insane!

- How do we win?
- How do we not get walked all over?
- How do we get what we want?

And the world's system thrives on slipping those questions into our minds... so that it can tempt us with an alternative "love"...

- It promises to give us what we want... while still saying we're loving
- But it's counterfeit love

And Paul reveals its ugly underbelly next...

### [What does the counterfeit look like?]

**Eph. 5:3-5 (NIV)** *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

The world's system tells us, "Love is what makes you feel good. Love is getting what you want. And letting everyone else have whatever they want."

But it's not real love... b/c it's based on selfish self-gratification.

- And Paul calls it out by naming it idolatry.
- Replacing God with something that promises ease, power, or control.

### At its core, the system's version of love is self-worship.

Sexual immorality/impurity/greed-

- Not talking about 3 specific extra bad sins.

- Blanket statement for self-gratifying use of people and stuff.
- It's all the same false story: turn people into products, gifts into leverage, love into consumption.

It's all about satisfying me—regardless of what it costs someone else

Turning God's gifts and his people into commodities to be hoarded, used up, and exploited for our fleeting dopamine hits.

Jesus' love gives without limit. The system's "love" takes without limit.

Think about it... If love doesn't cost us, we should ask if it's Jesus' love at all.

And Paul says, "If you are going to resist the system, if you are going to be a community that lives the Jesus way...

- You have to get rid of all this junk.
- You have to stop worshiping the idol of self-gratification.

It might be normal in the world... it might be what we were raised in, it might be what our entire culture is built on... but now (as we saw last week) you are a new humanity... It's time to live and love like it.

So what do we do instead? It's so simple we usually skip over it...

**Eph. 5:3-4 (NIV)** But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. *Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.*

Thankfulness dissolves self-worship.

- When we look at what God has already given us...
- When we choose to be rooted in and enjoy God's love (week 1)...
- We can see the emptiness of the counterfeit love... we don't have to fight and worry about what we want, our way.
- We see that God is taking care of us... that he sees us, knows us, and loves us.
- It reminds us that he is in control and he is good.

And when we are being thankful and enjoying God, it reminds us who we really are...

- Revolutionaries against the system that is intent on destroying us and our neighbors.

What Paul says next, if we let it sink in and really believe it, is truly mind-blowing...

[Live as Light]

**Eph 5:8-10 (NIV)** *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.*

Look at that... not you once had darkness in you, or were dirty. You WERE darkness.

But now you have a completely new IDENTITY... You ARE the light in the Lord.

Like a dirty light bulb (the one under the hood of your stove). The more the gunk is cleaned out, the more it does what it was created to do... shine.

And as we shine, we can discover what pleases the Lord... how to copy, trace his love in our lives and community more and more.

But how does this actually happen? This is what sets the Jesus Way apart from just trying to do better...

[Walk by the Spirit]

**Eph. 5:15-20 (NIV)**

*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

See... we can't just try harder to walk in love. The kind of love that resists the system and makes a difference has to flow from someone else.

We resist the system by being filled with the Holy Spirit... together

The moment we choose to pledge allegiance to Jesus as our King, God himself, The Holy Spirit, enters our hearts/minds/essence.

- To begin transforming us more and more into who Jesus would be if he were living our lives.

The Holy Spirit doesn't just help you do better.

He empowers us, together, to live like Jesus—because his presence lives inside of us.

That's what being filled is:

- Not hype.
- Not an emotional high.
- Not a mystery.

It's not something that just happens to you. It's a choice. It's allowing the Holy Spirit to change you.

To be filled with the Spirit means to be daily directed by God's love instead of our own instincts.

It's a surrendered life that says:

"My desires aren't steering anymore. I'm not the driver. The Spirit is."

A Spirit-filled life is a love-filled life.

Be filled/controlled by the Spirit → Like a hand in a glove

- The HS is the hand and we are the glove

- The glove can do nothing without being filled by the hand
- But once it is it can be very useful and get some amazing things done.

Spirit-filled love isn't louder—it's steadier.

- It listens longer.
- It looks people in the eye.
- It apologizes first.
- It serves quietly.
- And somehow, even when it's exhausted, it keeps showing up. Because it knows it's not running on its own supply.

Allowing the Holy Spirit to fill us lets us enjoy God and share a life of love.

That's how we walk in love, all day, every day.

**YOU:** So... what if love wasn't just an emotion or an ideology—but the air we breathe?

What if every conversation—every interruption, every smirk we gave, every text—was a chance to walk in real, sacrificial love?

Let me ask some personal questions...

- Where in your life are you seeing the system win?
- Where are you stuck in self-worship disguised as love?
- And—where is the Holy Spirit inviting you into a deeper walk in love?

This week, I want to invite you to try one thing... just one thing every morning.

I'm going to do it too... ask me next week if I did it.

In the morning, when you wake up/shower/eat breakfast/drive to work/whatever...

Pray: Holy Spirit, I give you control. Today, show me how to walk in your love that shines to others.

Have the courage to do what he shows you... And see what happens.

And maybe you haven't taken the first step yet... pledging your life to Jesus as your king.

- If you're ready, tell him. Pledge allegiance
- And the HS will come into your life and begin transforming you as you allow him.

**WE:** Imagine a community filled with this kind of love...

- Where we sacrifice for each other.
- Call each other into truth.
- Carry each other's wounds.
- And train our kids—not for the system—but for the kingdom.

We've all tried it the system's way. And all we've gotten for it is anger, broken relationships, polarization, and pain.

It's time to rebel and embrace the Jesus Way. The way of true love transformed, filled, and guided by the HS.

Walking in love doesn't always look impressive. But it always looks like Jesus

This is what I've been discovering.

- I feel the pressure to post and react to everything I see on SM
- I feel the need to make a big stand and do something great to fix the problems I see
- But more often than not... I feel the Spirit say... Just love what I gave you. Serve the people I put in your path..
- To love my wife, friends, my church, neighbors, and enemies like Jesus.
- It's simple, but if we all did it... the world would change... dramatically.

This world doesn't need louder Christians.

It needs people so filled by the Spirit, so rooted in gratefulness, that Jesus-shaped love spills into every living thing around them.

When the world asks, "Where is the love?" Jesus empowers us to answer, "Here I am."

The world is starving for love. Jesus is sending us to feed it.