

**LOVE BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN OTHERS**  
**1 Corinthians 13:4**

**Relationship Sermon Series**

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How many of you have ever taken some music lessons? How about swimming lessons, golf lessons, dance lessons, cooking lessons, tennis, public speaking, scuba diving lessons? It is a reality that our society believes in continuing education. The Community Education catalogues are always filled with stuff to learn.

And yet while these lessons are good there are lessons most of us have never had any formal training in. And that is in relationships. We all need lessons on relationships. We all need lessons on loving. That's why we will be focusing on this these next few Sundays and why Messiah is hosting a Relationship Retreat on February 9—we all need help in this area.

1 Corinthians 13:4 says, *"Love is kind."* What does it mean to be kind? Kindness is love in action. The Phillips version of the Bible says, *"Love looks for a way of being constructive."* Love looks for a way of improving someone's life. It builds people up.

This morning we will focus on how to be a people builder. Romans 15:2 says, *"Let us do what is good for (our neighbor.) Let us build them up."* Now this message is for everyone, for all of us have people around we'd like to build up. Yet how can I bring out the best in others?

The first thing is to give them a personal challenge. Ephesians 4:1 says, *"So I am asking you to live a life worthy of what God chose for you."* Paul is urging/challenging people to make their life count. He is saying to be all that God made you to be. Why?...because we all need a dream that calls forth the best in us.

For twelve years in the early days the Green Bay Packers won only 30% of their games. By 1958 they were 1-10. They were a terrible team. But then along came a guy named Vince Lombardi. He was a people builder. During the next 9-years they had nine winning seasons and walked away with five national championships including the first two Super Bowls. He built up people.

We all know there is more to life than just living it for yourself—for me, myself and I. All of us need someone who can inspire us to be what we could be. Yet how do we know what God wants us to be? He says we need to look at our strengths. God wants us to look at the gifts, talents and competencies he's created in us.

And that, I believe, is one of the goals of Messiah. Our church's mission is life development. We are here to help be people builders; to help people discover and develop what God made them to be. That's what this Relationship Seminar is all about and why during Lent this year we will focus on *"The Purpose Driven Life."* We need a church of people builders. Rather than criticizing the worst in others we need a place that challenges and helps to bring out the best.

I want all of you to think about how much time you spend thinking about encouraging and challenging others; drawing out the strengths in others? Peter Drucker said, “We need to build on people’s strengths and make their weaknesses irrelevant.” If you’re going to be a people builder give them a personal dream or challenge.

The second way we bring out the best in others is to give them complete confidence. We all need confidence. When someone believes in you it brings out the best in you. It gives you courage. Jesus did this with the disciple Peter. Peter’s name “Petros” meant pebble. Jesus said, “Pebble, you’re going to be a rock. I’m going to give you a new name.” His name was Simon bar Jonah which meant, “Son of John.” Now it was “Rock—Rock Johnson.”

Now when Jesus said this to Peter he was anything but a rock. He was Mr. Impulsive. He was Mr. Put-my-foot-in-my-mouth. Jesus said you’re going to be a rock. You know, my friends, whenever you label someone you reinforce what they are: lazy, unorganized, rabble-rouser. But don’t tell people what they are, tell them what they could be. Build them up.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 says, “*Therefore encourage one another and build up each other.*” This is talking about the power of affirmation. If you’re going to be a people builder you’ve got to be good at encouragement. Ken Blanchard who wrote “*The One Minute Manager,*” said, “Catch people doing something right and tell them.”

So how do you give encouragement? Well it needs to be real and honest, not some kind of phony manipulation. It needs to be regular. Give it all the time to everyone. It also needs to be recognizable. In other words the more specific you are in encouraging people, the more impact it has. Tell them exactly what they did well.

Now Dads, when was the last time you wrote a specific note of encouragement to your children about a strength they have? When was the last time, husbands/wives, you wrote a love note to your spouse? When was the last time you wrote a note of encouragement to a teacher doing a good job? When was the last time you told a friend how much you appreciate them?

The third way we bring out the best in others is we give them honest counsel. There is no learning without feedback. We all need honest feedback. Since none of us are perfect our perceptions often become skewed so we need people to say, “You’re off base.” We need people to lay it on the line and help correct us.

Proverbs 27:17 says, “*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.*” A real friend will tell you when you are making a mistake. A real friend will level with you. They care enough to correct, confront. Even when it is painful they will tell you the truth.

Correction, of course, is very powerful, dangerous stuff. Correction done the right way builds people up but correction done the wrong way can scar a person for life. What is the difference between the right and wrong way to correct? It’s really your attitude in correcting. If all you’re going to do is simply point out someone’s faults, don’t do it.

The purpose has to be not to condemn, but to correct. It is meant to help them change a behavior. You need to ask yourself, “What is my motive in this? Am I correcting for my benefit or for their benefit? A lot of times we want to correct people just because we are selfish and jealous, and we don’t like something. A true friend corrects for their benefit.

How do you do it for the right motive? Ephesians 4:15 says, “*Speak the truth in love.*” That’s the attitude. Love means giving the person what they need, not what we think they deserve. The motive is not to condemn or tear down, but to correct. You speak the truth in love.

And the fourth and final way we bring out the best in others is to give them full credit. If you want to be a people builder praise the growth and changes you see in their lives. I saw a sign one time in a person’s office, “God can do great things through the person who doesn’t care who gets the credit.”

How do you do that? How quickly do I share the credit? Usually we like to share the blame for things with others, but we like to keep the credit when things go well. God says the mark of maturity is to accept the blame ourselves and to share the credit with others.

When you look at these four things on how to be a people builder—give them a personal challenge, complete confidence, honest counsel and full credit—that’s a lot of work. Yes, you won’t always feel like doing it. Kindness always costs. Most of all it costs unselfishness in being a people builder. Usually we’re so caught up in our own things that we don’t have time to build anyone else up. It costs to be kind.

So how do you, my friend, rate as a people builder? How many people do you know would say you do this for them? I want to challenge you today to make this a primary objective of your life: I will commit my life to being a people builder; I’m going to dedicate my life to actively looking for constructive ways to build people up.

Imagine the impact our church family at Messiah could have if we would all commit to being people builders. Imagine if everyone we come in contact with we’re going to try to bring the best out in; if we’re going to try to help them to develop what God created them to be. That’s the purpose of our church—to be a life development center in God’s love.

My friends kind people are happy people, fulfilled people. Unkind people are miserable. People who think only of themselves and what they like are miserable. It’s people who give their lives away, who seek the best for others, who really enjoy life. As God loves you with an everlasting love, and as he always seeks to bring the best out in you, may your love bring out the best in others...and always be kind.