

Mother's Day is a **counter-cultural** event.

Choose Love problems:

- *"We have our own definitions."*
- Individualistic & Therapeutic
- Feels like ...

= Generic, emptied of substantial meaning

The result?

Pretty much everyone can say that we are loving without conviction and with self-admiration/righteousness.

Mother's Day is a counter-cultural event.

- Celebrate sacrificial, inconvenient, give the best, enduring LOVE

Ephesians 5:1-2 (CSB)

Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, ²and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.

Who we are	→ <i>dearly loved children</i>
What we do	→ <i>imitators of God</i>
How we do that	→ <i>walk in love ...</i> <i>as Christ loved us and gave ...</i>

1) Love begins with God.

2) Love takes its cues from an event → The Cross

Choose love ...?

- a) The person does not deserve to be loved.
- b) The price to love them is costly & paid willingly
- c) The greatness of the good done for the person when they receive this love is infinite & eternal

Define love:

The **willing self-sacrifice** for the **good** of another that does not require **reciprocation** or that the person being loved is **deserving**

Question:

What in me (or about me) must **die** (be given up) for me to really love?

The great enemy of love: **self-centeredness**

3 People in Every Relationship:

- **Self-Centered Me**
- The **other person**
- The “**dearly loved**” Me

To love better:

- The other person must be/do better?
- I must receive/rest in God’s love?

What must I/we/you/me GIVE UP?

=Categories of Death

1) “Love” (and relational practices) that are **un-disciplined**.

Examples:

- a) The right person myth
- b) Differences are obstacles
- c) We fall in love
- d) Do it my way → TLC

2) **Anger** as a tool and **woundedness** as a driver in relationships.

Culture: Nurse it, voice it, post it, share it, vent it and hold onto it.

- A people incapable of dealing with anger
- A people defined by hurt and pain

2 Corinthians 6:4-5 (NLT)

... We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. ⁵We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (NLT)

... **Christ’s love controls us**. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. ¹⁵ ... those who receive His new life will **no longer live for themselves**. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

Ephesians 4:26; 31-32

Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger ... 31 Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander **be removed** from you, along with all malice. ³² And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, **just as God also** forgave you in Christ.

Getting angry may be justified but staying angry never is!

How do we overcome anger?

→ How did we get to be **dearly loved children** of God??

How do we overcome our woundedness?

→ How much does God love us ...?

3) The reduction of **manhood and womanhood (see *Ephesians 5:21-33*)**

Reduction to physical features and biological functions.

Truth #1:

It takes two distinct & complementary genders to properly reflect the image of God.

Truth #2:

It takes two distinct & complementary genders to properly reflect the story of God.

The enemy attacked not only the clear commands of God but the clear order and pattern of the relationship between man and woman.

Adam is created first yet is insufficient for God's purpose.

Eve is created second to complement Adam and share a unified destiny.

- **Equality of personhood & dignity with distinctions & differences**

The enemy bypasses that order and goes straight to Eve:

- **Emotional appeal over spiritual truth.**
- **Eve acts unilaterally while Adam stands by passively.**

God pursues the now sinful couple.

- **He goes first to Adam.**
 - **MEN: give up **passivity** and take up **responsibility**.**

Men & Responsibility → Initiate ... Go first!

- To speak the Word of God as provision & protection
- To serve the other
- To reconcile (instead of blame, defend, deny)

God pursues the now sinful couple.

- He goes second to Eve
 - Give up: competing, comparing & controlling
 - Take Up: complementing, helping & making better.

4) The minimization of the importance of singleness.

I Corinthians 7:35 (TLB)

I am saying this to help you, not to try to keep you from marrying. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few other things as possible to distract your attention from Him.

3 Ways the Kingdom of God Shines through Singleness:

1) The family of God grows by faith in Christ, not through sex.

2) Relationships in God's family are more permanent and more important than those in legal/biological families.

Matthew 12:48-50

"... Who is my mother and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹Stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Here are My mother and my brothers!" ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

3) Marriage is temporary and will ultimately give way to what it is designed to point to all along: Christ & His Church.

Matthew 22:30

For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage ...

5) Prayers that are for the “**wrong me**”.

Would we pray daily for opportunities to die to ourselves?

Have I received the love of God in Christ?

Am I resting in His love?

Am I reminded of His love?

Am I offering myself to love others as He has loved me?

