

Love Counts

Ready:

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."
-1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)

Set

Last weekend's dramatic NCAA Regional Championship games have many of us bursting with anticipation for Saturday night's Final Four match-ups. What started as 64 teams has become four. On Monday night, only one will remain above them all.

What counts most in your life? There are many answers, I suppose, but some rise to the top. In comparison to the NCAA Tournament, some things "make the tournament" in our lives. Usually appearing in the final 64 are things like careers, successes, achievements, health, family and friends. But the Bible says that the sole final champion always will be one thing: love. Take a look at a Bible concordance sometime. Look up the word love and start digging through the results. Read what Jesus and the New Testament writers have to say about it. You'll find that:

1. God is love (1 John 4:16), and He saved us by His love (John 3:16).
2. We'll be recognized as true followers of Christ by our love (John 13:35).
3. All of our finest acts of worship and service are nothing without love (1 Corinthians 13).
4. Love requires action (1 John 3:18).
5. Love sums up all of God's commands to us (Galatians 5:14, Matthew 22:38-40).

I think one of the reasons love is so important is because love is all about relationships. More specifically, love is about putting others first through relationships. That's what Christ ultimately did for us. That's what He asks us to do in return. I conclude with a thought from Joe Ehrman as told through the book, "Seasons of Life."

"Masculinity, first and foremost, ought to be defined in terms of relationships. It ought to be taught in terms of the capacity to love and be loved. If you look over your life at the end of it. . . life wouldn't be measured in terms of success based on what you've acquired or achieved or what you own. The only thing that's really going to matter is the relationships that you had. It's gonna come down to this: What kind of father were you? What kind of husband were you? What kind of coach or teammate were you? What kind of son were you? What kind of brother were you? What kind of friend were you? Success comes in terms of relationships. (p. 36)"

Success equals relationships. Relationships equal giving and receiving love. It will always remain. It's what counts most.

Go

1. Do you care about others more than you care about yourself?
2. How would you describe your relationships? Superficial or deep?
3. What can you do to start establishing deeper relationships based on the love of Christ?

Workout

Matthew 22:34-40
Romans 5:8, 12:10
1 Corinthians 13
Galatians 5:6

Bible Reference:

1 John 4



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