

- I. Introduction
 - A. Welcome to part four of How to Be a Grown Up. In this series, we are going through a book in the Bible called James. We are taking it one paragraph at a time.
 - B. But first... our Bible memory verse review:
 1. *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (James 1:2, 3)*
 2. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:17)*
 3. *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:19, 20)*
 - C. When I was little and we had a family party for Thanksgiving or whatever, there wasn't enough room at the table for everybody. So my parents dragged out a folding table, and crammed some chairs around it. Who sat there? The kids. That was the kiddie table. The grown ups feasted on chicken parmesan; the kids pounded down McNuggets with fries and ketchup.
 - D. Good times.
 - E. Here in the Bible, God is drawing that kind of comparison to your spiritual life. The deepest part of you — your personal maturity, your personal health, your personal self-actualization God-style.
 - F. God is saying that when you become a Christian, you become a spiritual baby. Please don't stay a spiritual baby. Grow up. Because you might like McNuggets and fries for now, but I promise you all the good stuff is at the grown up table.
 - G. Be mature.
 - H. Grow up.
 - I. Don't stay in spiritual babyhood forever. That's not okay.
 - J. So that's the main idea.
- II. Previously in James...
 - A. So James has taken that idea and applied it in three directions so far: emotional, moral, and psychological.
 - B. If you want to be a grown up, you have to live by a code of human decency. Or what we are calling the
 - C. Royal Family Honor Code.
 1. EMOTIONAL OWNERSHIP: I take full ownership of my emotional state by the grace and power of God.
 2. MORAL RESPONSIBILITY: I take full responsibility for my moral choices and their consequences, because I have been empowered by God to live in victory over every single temptation.
 3. SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION: I create a life in which my inner world is aligned with my outer world and both are aligned with God's Word.
 - a) And today, we are adding RFCH number 4:
 4. VIRTUE LOVE
 - a) Which we will explain.... So here we go.
 - D. The main verse that defines this place in the Bible is James 2 verse 8:
- III. *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well... (James 2:8)*
 - A. So, the main idea is love. This is the Royal Law. This is the goal.
 - B. So what we need to talk about is how to be good at this thing the Bible calls love. How to grow up in it and be mature in it.
 - C. This is one of the main reasons why you have to push away from the kiddie table.
 - D. Because the kind of love God designed for you isn't for babies or spiritual weaklings. It is for royal, mature, growing men and women of God. And I know our students are here, and I am especially talking to you.
 - E. The world needs you to become strong in the Lord.
 - F. So let's back up to the beginning of the chapter and figure out what love really is. Because the paragraph right before this verse gives us a huge clue about authentic love.
- IV. *My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? (James 2:1-4)*
 - A. So let's stick this thing into your group at school.
 - B. You're hanging out with your BFFs. Two new kids walk in. The first one smells good, great hair, stylish clothes, super cool all around.
 1. You and your friends make room in your clique for this one. Here, have a Dutch Bros.
 - C. The second person shows up, has some kind of scent from Walgreens, and Thrift Shop clothes.
 1. You and your friends basically ignore this person... and don't open your circle to them.
 - a) What is happening?
 - D. What is happening is that you are judging a person's worthiness.
 - E. You are looking at qualities IN THE OTHER PERSON and basing your love on the other person. On qualities in them. Hold that thought.
 - F. The next paragraph sounds confusing, but it's truly awesome.
- V. *Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? (James 2:5-7)*
 - A. Stay with me, because this is how to survive the school lunch room.
 - B. *Has God not chosen...* pause here.
 1. The topic is maturity.
 2. The subtopic is mature love.
 3. In this verse, the one doing the love is God.
 4. And the heart and soul of God's love is CHOICE. *Has not God chosen.*
 - a) Who is it that God has chosen?
 - (1) *The poor of this world.*
 5. In other words, the person you rejected because of qualities in them, God loves because of qualities in himself.
 - a) They smelled bad, so YOU rejected them.
 - b) God's heart was loving, so God loved them.
 - (1) That's a big clue about love right there, we'll come back to it.

- C. Then he flips it over.
 - D. You dishonor the poor person because you define them as unworthy.
 - E. And you honor the rich person that you say is worthy, but they're not worthy because. in this case (and not all rich people are this way), but in this case, they're not worthy because these rich people happen to be crooks, and they hate Jesus.
 - F. All of which is to say that if this is the kind of machinery that is running your love life, your love is dysfunctional.
 - G. I want you to hear this, because I promise it will save you a lifetime of heartbreak. Our society, our culture, our worldview doesn't have a clue about real love. They have hyper-sexualized it and hyper-romanticized it and defined love upside down and backwards.
 - H. And it produces way more pain and suffering than happiness and satisfaction.
 - I. Okay... so there's all that. We are talking about How to Be a Grown Up, and right now, we are applying that to having a grown up love.
 - J. How exactly does that work?
- VI. Two Kinds of Love
- 1. You may have heard that love is unconditional. In general, yes, love should be unconditional. That means no strings attached, but if you press that statement too far, you end up with a mushy love that has no boundaries, and sometimes hurts more than it helps. So I usually don't usually phrase it that way.
 - 2. I think it's more biblical to talk about Virtue Love and its cousin, Attraction Love.
 - 3. Consider for a moment the simple sentence, "I love you." Three words. I don't want to hurt your brain too much, but this sentence has a subject (I), a verb (love), and a direct object (you).
 - 4. When a person says I love you, the person speaking is the Lover, and the person being spoken to is the Beloved.
 - 5. So, let me talk about Attraction Love first, then Virtue Love.
- VII. What is Love?
- A. Attraction Love: depends on the qualities of the person you are loving.
- 1. Attraction Love. This is the kind of love most people think of when they hear the word love.
 - 2. What is this? Attraction love is is a kind of love based more on qualities in the Beloved than on qualities in the Lover.
 - 3. When it is just attraction love, and you say, "I love you," you are saying I love you because...
 - a) You're pretty, handsome, smart, charming, or rich.
 - b) I love you because you have power, status, and popularity, and that appeals to me.
 - c) I love you because everybody thinks you're cool and popular.
 - d) I love you because we like the same things.
 - e) I love you because you dress pretty and you have good teeth.
 - f) There is something about the other person that makes them attractive, and so you treat them a certain way, and relate to them a certain way.
 - 4. Attraction Love is great; it helps make the world go round.
 - 5. With Attraction Love, you love another person because of who he or she is. You are attracted to the other person because of what's in them.
 - 6. Attraction Love comes in several flavors: Romantic love is a kind of attraction love. Friendship is a kind of attraction love. And marriage is a kind of attraction love. Listen, I am really attracted to my wife. I was the first day I saw her. I was teaching a Bible study at my church in Chicago. This beautiful women comes walking across the back, and I was smitten. My mouth kept talking, but my brain was saying, "Who is this vision of loveliness. I must meet her... where did she come from? Where has she been all my life."
 - 7. Instant attraction.
 - a) So, there are some good things about Attraction Love, and I'm thankful God gave us this kind of love.
 - 8. But there is a problem with Attraction Love.
 - 9. What happens when the other person's qualities go away?
 - a) What happens when the rich guy loses the money that made him so appealing?
 - b) What happens with the brain loses its sharpness?
 - c) What happens when the body grows old and weak?
 - d) What happens when the interests change, and one of you doesn't care about scrapbooking any more?
 - e) What happens when an illness takes the other person's humor away or makes their mind go away? What happens when the thing that attracted you goes away? If all you've got is attraction, what happens to your love then?
 - 10. This is the problem with love in American culture. It is the problem with love in adolescent and young adult culture.
 - 11. Attraction love has zero staying power.
 - 12. I had a friend whose husband said he was no longer attracted to her because her body had changed. They ended up getting a divorce.
 - 13. That is not biblical love.
 - 14. God never made you judge and jury of another person's lovability.
 - a) If your love depends on qualities in the Beloved then most of the people in the world are unlovable to you.
 - (1) How can you love your neighbor as yourself if you think your neighbor is gross?
 - b) If your love depends on qualities in the Beloved, then when people change — and they do — your love goes away.
 - 15. All of which is to stay attraction love is a good love, but it simply isn't enough.
 - 16. That's the beauty of how God made you. Attraction love has a backstop: it is our second love today.
- B. Virtue Love: depends on the qualities of the person doing the loving.
- 1. Let's go back to those three beautiful words, "I love you."
 - 2. Attraction Love depends on qualities in the Beloved (you)...
 - 3. But Virtue Love depends on qualities in the Lover (I).
 - 4. When you love another person with virtue love, it is because of who and what YOU are, not because of who and what the other person is.
 - a) Let that sink in.
 - 5. In the first kind of love, the source of love is outside you, in the other person (attraction love).
 - 6. But in the second kind of love, the source of love is inside you, in your own heart and soul (virtue love).
 - a) This kind of love depends on your character.
 - b) It depends on your maturity.
 - c) It depends on your integrity and your virtue.
 - (1) Even when the other person stops attracting you, you still love them because of that's the kind of person you are.

- (2) Get that? Is that easy? No. It's hard. Sometimes is really hard. The thing that made you love a person goes away — so that means you can explode the relationship, right?
- (3) Wrong.
- (4) But that's how our culture thinks, because our culture only thinks of attraction love.
- (5) It is hard to love a person who is unworthy of love. But that is how God loved you.
- (6) It is hard to love a person who is unworthy of love. That is why you have to grow up.
 - (a) Because...
- d) If you have weak character, you will have weak love.
- e) If you have immature character, you will have immature love.
- f) If you have selfish character, you will have selfish love.
- g) If you have bossy character, you will have bossy love,.
7. Virtue Love can only reflect whatever character you have inside. And that is the point of this section. Be mature. Grow up.
 - a) #1. EMOTIONAL OWNERSHIP.
 - b) #2. MORAL RESPONSIBILITY.
 - c) #3. INTEGRATED SPIRITUALITY.
 - d) #4. VIRTUE LOVE: I love the people around me from the virtue, maturity, and character in my own soul, not because of what they can give me or what I think they're worth.
8. This is the kind of love that says the loving word, extends the loving hand, and does the loving action NO MATTER HOW YOU FEEL.
9. That requires huge maturity, especially when the baby has been crying nonstop, you are sleep deprived, and when the other person doesn't smell good — if you are mature, if you are growing up in the Lord, if you have pushed back from the kiddie table — that is when you can do the kind and merciful thing, even when the other person is unattractive, and you don't feel like it.
10. Virtue love is a choice based on a thousand other choices to grow mature in the Lord.
11. When he Bible tells you to love your neighbor, and when the Bible says the world will know we are Christians by our love, it is talking about Virtue love.
12. So, let's make a chart.
 - a) Attraction Love
 - (1) Based on qualities in the other person.
 - (2) Changeable, undependable
 - (3) Judgmental (you're judge and jury of another's faults)
 - (4) Emotional, sentimental, weak
 - (5) Immature
 - (6) Exclusive, cliquish, insiders
 - (7) No manners
 - (8) Unlike God
 - b) Virtue Love
 - (1) Based on strengths in your own heart.
 - (2) Steady, dependable
 - (3) Merciful (the other person's faults make no difference)
 - (4) Volitional (a choice), determined, strong
 - (5) Mature
 - (6) Inclusive, welcoming, kind
 - (7) Good manners.
 - (8) The Love of God

ATTRACTION LOVE (as an Operating System)	VIRTUE LOVE (as an Operating System)
Based on qualities in the other person	Based on strengths in yourself
Changeable, undependable	Steady, dependable
Judgmental (you judge another's faults)	Merciful (another's faults make no difference)
Emotional, sentimental, weak	Volitional (a choice), determined, strong
Immature	Mature
Easy	Hard
Exclusive, cliquish, insider status	Inclusive, welcoming, open to all
Makes others uncertain (hot or not?)	Makes others at ease (a noble acceptance)
Manners don't matter	Good manners at all times, courteous
Unlike God	The Love of God
JUDGMENT	MERCY

13. All of which helps us make sense of the last two sections of our paragraph.

- C. *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality [attraction love only], you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. (James 2:8-11)*

1. You shall love your neighbor according to the measure of your SELF (meaning what's inside of you), and not their worthiness (meaning what's inside of you them). Virtue love.
2. This is the law of God, here called the Royal Law. James is making the case for Virtue love. He's not writing off Attraction love. He's just showing that it's not enough.
3. In fact, he says, that if you give yourself an excuse to dismiss a person and judge them unworthy of love — even if you don't hate them, but just exclude them — you are breaking God's royal law.
4. And that makes you out of bounds (transgressor).
5. The section ends with these cryptic words:

- D. *So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (James 2:12, 13)*

1. Here you go.
2. So here is the Royal Family Honor Code — aka the Perfect Law of Liberty. This is the standard. How do you measure up?
3. God is asking how you measure up to the Royal Family Honor Code. How mature are you? How much have you grown in the Lord? Grown up in the Bible? How much of your thinking has been healed and corrected by the Bible and God's Spirit? How much of your feeling has been healed and corrected by God's Word and God's Spirit? How much has the biblical operating system called grace — how much of it has been uploaded into your psyche?
 - a) It shows in your words.
 - b) It shows in your actions.
 - c) It shows especially when you feel stressed.
- (1) Because if you want to live in the first column, watch out. The same judgment you send out into the world is coming back at you.
4. That's the idea here.
5. If you make no allowances for others, then you will find no allowances made for you.
6. Without virtue love, life becomes a never ending battle to try to measure up.
7. Which is to say: If your words and actions are critical and judgmental of other people, then your life, your world, and your God will FEEL critical and judgmental of you.
8. The paragraph ends: *mercy triumphs over judgement*. Virtue love trash talks Attraction love every single time.

VIII. So, before we review our Bible verses... I can't end without 2 FAQ's about love.

- A. 1. Can it be love if I don't feel anything?
1. Virtue love ranges from DETACHED CORDIALITY to INTIMATE AFFECTION.
 2. You need to recognize that there is a RANGE of feelings and actions that are totally legit when it comes to love.
 - a) Detached friendliness — Friendship — Intense Intimacy
 3. Biblical love has a range of intensity, and it is totally okay to love some people at the low end of the range. Always with good manners. Always with human decency and respect. But friendship is optional. You don't owe that to anybody.
- B. 2. Do I have to love someone who hurt me?
1. This can be a painfully difficult problem for so many of us. You may be stuck in a world where somebody hurt you.
 2. And you read that God tells you to love them? Really? They belong in jail!
 3. *But Jesus said to love your enemies (Luke 6:35).*
 4. This is a painfully difficult verse. This is hard to do. It is the toughest test of your mature VIRTUE LOVE. There are people who have hurt me, even in this church. I have prayed bad things for them, actually — just being honest, but there are times when God wakes me up and whispers, pray for them. We argue for a while, and I give in and pray for them. Love your enemies.
 5. Yes, God expects you to love the people who have hurt you, BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN YOU HAVE TO BE FRIENDS WITH THEM.
 - a) It does not mean you have to spend time with them, or
 - b) Share your secrets with them, or
 - c) Trust them.
 6. Yes, you have the right to place
 - a) anywhere on this range where you feel comfortable. Create whatever distance you need to feel safe, and then practice detached cordiality. That is virtue love too.

IX. Bible Memory Verses

- A. *My brethren, count it all joy when... (James 1:2, 3)*
- B. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from... (James 1:17)*
- C. *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to... (James 1:19, 20)*
- D. *So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. (James 2:12)*