

FIT: Faith Improvement Training

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Pastor Carl Toti
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Colossians 1:1-8 (NLT)

¹ This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy. ² We are writing to God's holy people in the city of Colosse, who are faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. May God our Father give you grace and peace. ³ We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, ⁵ which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News. ⁶ This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace. ⁷ You learned about the Good News from Epaphras, our beloved co-worker. He is Christ's faithful servant, and he is helping us on your behalf. ⁸ He has told us about the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you.

THREE LAWS OF LOVE

1. GOD'S LOVE

1 John 4:8 (NLT)

But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

"All [God's] activity is loving activity. If He creates, He creates in love; if He rules, He rules in love; if He judges, He judges in love. All that He does is the expression of His nature, is—to love." – C.H. Dodd

2. SELF-LOVE

Leviticus 19:18 (NLT)

"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD."

"The ethical standard regarding self-love is an inverted golden rule: if we would feel ethically uncomfortable asking another to do a particular act, then we ought not consent to do it for others. Christian self-love does not condone abuse or servility. Biblical self-love embraces holiness, justice and righteousness, it produces healthy reciprocal relationships."

The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity: An A-To-Z Guide To Following Christ in Every Aspect of Life.

Matthew 16:24 (NKJV)

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

3. LOVING OTHERS

Colossians 1:8 (NLT)

He has told us about the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you.

“The love which the New Testament enjoins involves a consuming passion for the well-being of others, and this love has its wellspring in God.” – F.F. Bruce

TWO TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS: Spiritual Relationships vs. Carnal Relationships. One is based on fear the other truth.

1 John 4:18 (NKJV)

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

If you have experienced a break-up, ask yourself these three questions.

“How did I contribute to this break up?”

“How can your new found freedom benefit you moving forward?”

“What new identity can now emerge that was previously was ignored, hidden or neglected due to a fear-based love?”

THREE TYPES OF COUPLES by Dr. John Gottman

The first mode is attack-defend. One partner makes a verbal attack, the other defends himself or herself. Such verbal sparring wears out a relationship: These couples stay married an average of 5.2 years.

Then there’s the silent-dead couples. “You’ve seen them in a restaurant; they sit there for an hour and say nothing,” Gottman says. The silent treatment adds a few more years to a marriage. These couples raise their children then split up, an average of 16.6 years after their stint at the altar.

Then there are the couples who stay married, couples Gottman finds so awesome that he has no catchy moniker for them. “These are people who can laugh and be affectionate” even in the heat of an argument, Gottman explains. “They are amazing people.”

To date, this is Gottman’s strongest finding -- that humor and affection keep couples together. Alas, he calls the finding useless. “You can’t admonish people to be affectionate,” he says.

--Lisa Bertagnoli, “Relating author gives lessons from the ‘love lab.’” Chicago Tribune, August 22, 2001.