

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

MASTERING THE MOST IMPORTANT THING A MAN CAN DO | FATHER'S DAY AT TRADERS POINT CAM HUXFORD | JUNE 16, 2024

Aaron Brockett

Well, I am thrilled to introduce to you our guest speaker for today. You know, I've always been told that there are three stages of a man's life. There is the warrior phase, the king phase, and the sage phase.

And I knew that I wanted to have a sage come and speak to us today across all of our campuses. The first guy who came to my mind was Pastor Cam Huxford. Cam has been serving as the lead pastor of Compassion Christian Church. It will be 40 years this August. Isn't that incredible? We can go ahead and just honor that 40 year run in the same place, same church.

I met Cam shortly after I got to Traders Point. We were at some sort of a gathering of pastors. I kind of admired him from afar. And the first time we got a chance to meet in person he began to ask me a bunch of questions. And he was like, "You know, Aaron, do you know what you are doing?" I was like, "No, I don't. I don't know what I'm doing. And I need you."

So, he kind of took me under his wing and for the last 15 or 16 years he and his wife, Sarah, have just encourage and poured into Lindsay and me.

Cam has taken me on a Harley Davidson motor cycle ride on the freeways of Miami, just about killed me. I had to pretend the whole time that I wasn't afraid. And I was very afraid. He's taking me quail hunting. He's had me down to his place before. And he has just spoken words of encouragement and admonishment, correction, and love in my life. I would not be the kind of man and the pastor that I am without the influence of Cam in my life.

I'm thrilled that he is going to be up here today just to bring a word of sage wisdom and counsel on Father's Day. Could we please, at all of our locations, put our hands together and give a warm, Traders Point welcome to my pastor, Cam Huxford.

Cam Huxford

Oh, man. Okay. Who's thankful that the Lord led Pastor Aaron here to Traders Point Christian Church? Come on. Wow.



It's so good to be with y'all today. I love Pastor Aaron. I love Lindsay. I love their family. They are great leaders. I'm so thankful for them. I've heard so many great things about this church. There is a buzz about this church in our little tribe of churches.

I remember one time when I was with Aaron, I said, "Dude, I really would like to preach at your church." And he was like, "I'd like for you to, but you're just not ready."
"Okay, well what do I need to do?"

"You need to tighten up."

"Alright."

So, I went home and tightened up. Got the church rolling a little bit. Came back, "What do you think?" He was like, "Man, it's doing good but you're just not ready."

And then I went back and tried to get everything done. A couple of years later I called him up and I said, "Dude, I want to preach at Traders Point. I've heard all about it. I will come and preach for free!" He was like, "Now, you're ready."

Oh my goodness. I have admired this church. Howard Brammer and Martha were really good friends of mine. And I'm so thankful for what Aaron has done here as your pastor. I just feel honored to be able to share with you today, especially on Father's Day.

Before I kind of get at it, I want to visit with y'all for few minutes just to get you used to how I talk. This not an impediment, this is a southern accent. Okay? I'm from Savannah, Georgia, which is as far south as you can go. Once you get south of Savannah it starts turning north again. Alright, so that's as far down as you can go.

This is my little family from Savannah. You know what? We all talk just like this. We all talk this way. I've got 12 grandkids and they all talk this way too. Now, don't feel bad for us y'all. When we get to heaven we're going to all talk like this. Amen?

That's right. Come on. Come on.

You know a few years ago Doctor Ben Carson spoke at a national prayer breakfast and he told a story of a guy who was trying to find a birthday present for the 90th birthday for his mother. Right? It was a big day and he wanted to do something special that was appropriate and fit her situation and honored her.

And he was struggling to find her the right gift. He was walking through the mall and saw this pet shop. And he went in and they had these talking birds that were just amazing. They had been trained to talk and sing and dance. But they were super expensive. They were like five thousand dollars apiece.



So, he thought, “Man, this will be perfect for mom. They will entertain her. They will talk to her. They will keep her company. Perfect. He bought two of them and the pet shop shipped them out to his mother. He called his mom on her birthday and asked her, “What do you think about those birds?” She said, “They were good.”

He’s like, “Mom, you did not eat those birds.” She said, “I sure did and I enjoyed them too.” He said, “Mom, those birds cost five thousand dollars apiece. They could sing, and dance, and talk.” She said, “Well, they should have said something.”

Now, I want to say something today about the most important thing a man will ever learn to do. The most important thing a man will ever learn. This is a life skill that Jesus said was the most important skill you will ever develop.

So, that’s what I want to talk about. I’ll talk about some practical ways to put this in place today. Now, obviously this doesn’t just apply to men. It applies to everybody and I hope we’re all going to grow a little bit.

So, when you ask the author of a book what is he trying to say, you will get the real thing about that book. Right? And when you ask the Lord Jesus, “What’s the most important thing in the Bible?” The criticality of what He says next is pretty much off of the charts.

So, if you’ve got your Bible, and I know you do, turn to Matthew 22. I want to read a passage about a skill that Jesus says that you must master if you hope to accomplish the most important thing in the world, Matthew 22, starting in verse 34:

“Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

“This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’”
Matthew 22: 34-40 (NIV)

Now, what a fascinating moment. I mean, Jesus is in the crowd one day and a Pharisee asked Him, “What’s the most important commandment in the Bible?”

When asked what the most important commandment in the Bible is, Jesus’ answer is proactive, not prohibitional

Notice what he answers. Jesus’ answer is proactive and not prohibitional. Typically, when you think about a command it’s like: Thou shalt not; Thou shalt not; Thou shalt not.



But Jesus is like, “Whoa, this is what you’re to do. If you want to honor the Lord, this is the most important thing that you can do.

He quotes, in verse 37, the most famous verse of the Old Testament, to the Jewish people, Deuteronomy 6:5. It’s a foundational passage of the Bible because it’s quoted over and over and over and over again. The Jewish people call this the Shaamat, which means to hear.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (NIV)
And then Jesus adds Leviticus 19:18:

“...love your neighbor as yourself.” Leviticus 19:18b (NIV)

Jesus said you can boil the whole Bible down to two commands: Love the Lord with your whole being, and love your neighbors as yourself

Now, think about that. When He’s asked the most important commandment in the Bible, Jesus basically says, “You can boil the whole Bible down to two commands. Love the Lord your God with your whole being and then love your neighbor as yourself.” He’s kind of saying, “You can get a lot of stuff wrong in this life, but if you figure love out, you’ll have the most important thing right.”

Author Steven Covey is a business guru. You know, he writes books, he teaches at a university. He has an illustration he uses in some of his classes.

He’ll take a bucket, a five gallon bucket, translucent. He puts it up on desk and then he’ll fill it up with these big rocks. He’ll put four or five big rocks in it. Then he asks his students, “Is this bucket full?” And they are thinking, “Well, yeah. You can’t get any more rocks in there. It’s full.”

He’s like, “I don’t know about that.” He grabs a bucket of gravel and pours it in over the big rocks. Right? He’s pouring and shaking, pouring and shaking until the gravel is right at the top. “Now, is the bucket full?” And they are like, “Oh, yeah.”

“I don’t know about that.” He grabs a bucket of sand and starts pouring sand over the gravel and the rocks. He’s pouring and shaking until the sand is right up to the top. “Now is the bucket full?”

“Oh, yeah.”

“I don’t know.” He grabs another bucket—of water. He starts pouring water over the sand and the gravel and the rocks. And you can just watch the water level come right up to the top of that bucket. And then he’s like, “Now is the bucket full?”

And they are so gun shy they kind of go, “Yeah?” And he said, “Well, yeah. Of course. The bucket is full.”

Now, what can we learn from this? There are all kinds of life lessons you can learn from that. But he says, “The most important lesson is, you always put the big rocks in first. Because if you don’t put the big rocks in first, you’ll get your life so full of minutia that you won’t have room for the big rocks.”

And Jesus is saying in this passage, showing love to your family and friends and your world is the biggest rock of all. So, in the time that is remaining today, I want to train you. I want to train you to do the most important thing a man or woman will ever do. So, let’s get started.

The first way you can do the most important thing in the world is to:
Tell people you love them

Just tell people. I want to thank all of the middle school girls who helped me with that. Let’s try this one more time. Alright? Everybody: Tell people. There you go. Just come right out and say it. Just say it:

I love you
Let’s practice. Repeat after me: I love you.
I love you.
Appreciate it. Let’s pick it up a little bit.
Like lions: I love you.
I love you.
Really gently: I love you.
I love you.
Like Elvis; I love you.
I love you.

I mean you could do this right? This is not impossible. And it’s important. Now, listen. What’s interesting is... I remember when I was single and at the end of every date the last thing we would say would pretty much plot where this relationship was. Right?

So, on the first date you come to the door. You’re getting ready to say goodnight. And you go, “I had a great time tonight.” And she goes, “Well, I had a great time too.” Now, because you had a great time, then there will probably be another date. Right? So, you keep having a great time and then at some point it’s going to go up a level and somebody is going to say, “I really like being around you. I really like getting to know

you. I really value your friendship.” And if they say it back, it’s like, “Well, okay. Let’s keep on dating for a little bit.”

And then you’re going to go to another level and somebody is going to say, “You’re becoming a really important person in my life.” And then they’ll say that back. And if you say it and they don’t say it back, it’s over. Right?

But if they do, eventually that relationship could continue to grow until somebody says the three most powerful words in the world, which are? I love you.

And now the relationship changes. It goes to a whole new level. Everything is different now because you just said the three most powerful words in the English language. Those words are so powerful.

Listen to me. Wicked men have been using those words to manipulate insecure women since the dawn of time. You know what I’m talking about? Just go, “Mm hmm.” Sad but true. Right? It’s just hard to over-estimate the importance, though, of hearing the words: I love you.

Now, unfortunately, many of us here today, especially in my generation, grew up in the John Wayne era where there was kind of this ambient message out there that you don’t have to tell people how you feel about them.

You don’t have to talk all of this talk. People are just supposed to know. They are just supposed to know. You provide for them. You pay for stuff. You take care of them. They are just supposed to know you love them. Right?

I remember a character on television named Archie Bunker. You all remember Archie Bunker? He told his wife, Edith, “Look. I told you that I loved you when we got married. How many times to I got to say it?” What’s the answer to that question? Every day. Every day as many times as possible.

A few years ago, my boys gave me a movie for my birthday called Eight Seconds. Have you all seen that movie? It’s a rodeo movie about a champion bull rider who had a dad who was unpleasable. He just felt like he could never please his dad.

His dad was one of these old timers who thought, “You know, if you don’t tell your kids how you feel about them, well they’ll just try to work harder and harder to win your approval and that’s good for them. Right?”

Don’t think so. I think, in fact, that he just wasn’t comfortable saying those words for whatever reason. So, he never actually mustered the courage to tell his kid how proud he was, how much he loved him.

Eventually, his son won the national bull riding championship and dad never tells him how proud he is and how much he loves him—nothing. Not, “Way to go.” Nothing. Right?

Well, in the movie the next rodeo this kid gets gored by a bull and dies. And the most powerful scene in the movie shows the dad sitting on the couch in the middle of the night watching a video of his son winning the national championship.

And his wife realizes that he’s not in the bed. So she walks out. She finds him in front of the TV and she just kind leans up against the door.

He realizes that she is there, eventually, and looked back over his shoulder and he says, “You know. I was just trying to remember if I ever told him how proud I was of him. I hope he knew that. But, I’m just trying to remember if he ever heard me say those words.”

It’s hard to overestimate the importance of hearing the words, “I love you”
Dads, look at me. Your family deserves better than that. Amen? Come on, man. Come on. So, let me train you. Let me train you. I’ll give you a couple of suggestions. We’ll get started.

Make it standard operating procedure

Make saying these words standard operating procedure. Just say them every day. Every day when I go to work I kiss my wife and I tell her that I love her. Every day when I come home from work I kiss my wife and I tell her that I love her. And I don’t kiss anybody until I kiss Sarah.

Did I mention that I have three sons? They once thought, “Oh, no Dad. You’re kissing us first today.” I’m like, “Get out of my way, boy. Don’t make me hurt you. I will. Where’s your mom at?” And they were like, “Oh, no. You’re kissing us.”

And they would jump on me. I’m dragging them through the garage. “No, no.” They’ve got lips out trying to kiss me. I’m like, “Get out of here, man.”

I grabbed their momma, leaned her over, gave her a big kiss and they’d be like, “Aaah. Nasty,” because my sons are weirdos. They are like the only ones in their class who think their parents actually love each other. Which is a good kind of weird, isn’t it? I’m just saying, man. You make it standard operating procedure. Right?
Now, listen. The last thing I tell my wife before I go to sleep every night is, “Baby, I love you.” One of those things she tells me is, “I love you.”

You might be thinking right now, “Cam, if I started doing that, people would say that it’s just because of this message. “ Not a year from now they wouldn’t. A year from now that would be standard operating procedure. Right? Your kids would all think, “Hey, my daddy tells me he loves me every day.” My mom, my kids, they tell me all of the time. Look for memorable ways to say it

I want to encourage you to look for memorable ways to say it. You know if you took your eight-year-old son and said, “Son, if I could line all of the eight year olds up in the world right here so I could see all of them at one time and I could walk up and down that line and pick the one I want, I’d pick you every time.”

Now, what do you think your kid is going to say when you say that? “Oh, Dad. Way to go, man. You put a big deposit into the love bank, bro. That’s going to shape me. I appreciate it.”

No. Now, he might tell you that when he’s 40 when he’s got an eight-year-old. Alright? But, what he’s probably going to say is, “When are we going to eat?” Where’s the pizza. Right? He won’t get it.

But the point is, you will have made a deposit in the love bank. You’ll have made an investment in shaping his heart and life.

I’m telling you, my dad was a farmer. He was all man. I remember watching my dad do one arm chin-ups on a four by six beam in one of our barns one day. And I just assumed every man could do that when they grow up. Apparently not. Okay? But, anyway, Dad was strong.

I mean he was a godly man. He loved my mom. He was an elder in our church. He was awesome. He just died at 43, when I was 11. Anybody here 43? My dad had made all of the investments in the things that don’t matter before he was 42 years of age.

He had a massive coronary arrest in the middle of the night. I went to bed on December the 20th and I woke up the next morning and my dad was in heaven. And I’m so glad the last words he heard me say were, “Good night, Dad. I love you.”

The last time I saw him alive, he kissed me and he said, ‘I love you, Cam. Sweet dreams.’ And those are the last words he said to me, because it was the standard operating procedure for him every day of my life. Consequently, when he died unexpectedly, he died with nothing left unsaid. Way to go. Well done.

Here’s the second way you can do the most important thing:

Put your love in writing

Everybody say writing.



Writing.

I went to a funeral one time for a hero of mine, Doctor Bob Weaver. Dr. Weaver was a preacher. He was a scholar. Man, he was just an awesome guy. But he died. I went to the funeral.

And while the preacher was doing his funeral he reached into his pocket and pulled out an envelope that nobody in that family had ever seen before. Dr. Weaver put this with his will and it was his last words to his family.

He had written this letter to his wife, Mildred, who had been his partner for 50 years, who had served with him and loved him and given him these two great kids. He talked about his son who was a Delta Airline pilot and how proud he was of him. He talked about his son who was a Vietnam veteran who had a Chick-fil-A store.

He just went on and on talking about his kids and his family and how much he loved his family and how precious they were to him. And that letter was a voice from heaven. The last thing that he said to his family he said from heaven.

Now, when that funeral was over, what do you think that they did with that letter? You think that they just threw it away? No. Dude, that's a treasure for that family because when you write how you feel about the people you care about, that is a pretty memorable way to say, "I love you."

Children never throw away a handwritten note from their parents

I tell you what the norm is on a written expression of love, children will never throw away a hand written note from their parents. They might lose it, but they will never throw it away.

I'm telling you, dad, you write your daughter at college and tell her how proud you are of her, the value you see in her, the blessing she is and the value she adds to your family—I promise you, 30 years from now that girl will have that letter in her Bible somewhere.

I did an experiment on this one year when my boys were little. I got up early. I wrote them a little note and put it in their lunch box. You know? I mean, just three lines, "Dear Harrison, You're the greatest fifth grader. Love you, pal. See you soon. Love, Dad." Put it all three lunch boxes.

At the end of that school year when we were putting those lunch boxes up, one of my sons still had that letter in his lunch box, because maybe he didn't find it. He was a little slow? Right? Or, maybe he liked pulling out a letter from his dad in front of his friends every day. I'm just telling you, man.

When you express your love to a spouse or a child in a handwritten note, it's theirs forever

When you express your love to a spouse or a child in a hand-written note, that is durable. That is theirs forever. It's amazing what it is to do the most important thing in the world.

Here's another way:

Exercise loving touch

Everybody say loving touch.

Loving touch.

If you study Jesus's life, you'll discover that He often showed compassion through appropriate touch

You know appropriate human touch is amazingly powerful in its ability to communicate your love. Now, we know that because if you study the life of Jesus you will see that He would often show love and compassion through appropriate touch.

For example, people would bring their kids to Jesus to bless. And He would hold their kids and he would mess with their kids. I can't wait to get to heaven and see the video when Jesus is moving on with kids. Right?

I mean, you know kids only like one kind of man. They like men who like kids. And kids were coming to Jesus all of the time. He didn't just wave, "Hey, kids." He'd pat them on the back. He'd bless them.

He touched people who were ill. He touched blind people. He touched people with leprosy.

You know, when you go to the hospital that's one of the most isolating places in the world. But when you have a friend put a hand on your shoulder and pray for you, that is a powerful, powerful way to say, "I love you."

Now, my church in Savannah, I hug everybody who walks up to me. If they speak to me, I hug them. I'm just telling you, my motto is, "Hug them like God," sort of. Right? I just hug them all. Right?

And I had a captain in the military—this guy was of the JAG Corps, he was a lawyer. And he told me after my first year in Savannah, "You know, you've hugged me more than my dad ever did." I'm like, "What?"

He was like, "No, I'm just telling you, my dad was cold, man. I think it was because his dad was that way and he just never dealt with it. And I'm just telling you, man, you've hugged me more in the last year than my dad did in my entire life.

Now, he's working on it. And he's getting better. But, I'm just telling you." And I thought, "Lord have mercy, I am so glad somebody is hugging that brother." But, I think his dad dropped the ball.

Now, guys. This is tough for some of us. Right? And it's natural for others. If you're Dutch, a handshake is a deeply emotional experience. Right? And if you're Italian, it's like if it isn't a full body hug with two sways, it doesn't even count. Right? I'm just saying you can leverage this. You can leverage appropriate human touch in a powerful way. Dr. Donald Joy says, "A child can learn a lot about the nature of God by watching loving parents just do what comes naturally."

I mean, watch an average mom with her kids. She teaches her child the gentle, compassionate, nurturing side of God's love. This is historic. You can look to all of the Renaissance paintings of the Mother Mary and the baby Jesus. How do they portray those paintings? She's holding the baby Jesus over the left side of her chest close to her heart.

You know, when a kid falls and scrapes a knee, who are they going to? Mom or dad? They are going to mom. Dad would just say, "Rub some dirt on it. Get back in the game." But mom is like, "Oh, baby. Come here. We need to take you to the emergency room." No. I'm just kidding. They are just nurturing and comforting and blessing. You know what dads typically teach their kids? They teach their kids the transcendent nature of God. That God can burst into any situation and just change things for the better sometimes.

I mean, a dad will come home from work, grab the kid and play with it on the floor like a lion and a lion cub. He's rolling around. The kid is giggling. Mom is going, "I'm calling the police. I'm going to call the cops. I'm going to if you don't let that baby go." Dad's will put kids on top of something and go, "Jump." And I mean they are getting mad if the kid doesn't jump. Right? Because he wants that child to trust him, "I am a transcendent power in your life. I'm here for you. You can do stuff when we're together that wouldn't be safe for you to do if I'm not here."

Dad's will take a kid and throw them up in the air and catch them. My mother-in-law almost had me arrested on that one. Throw them up in the air and catch them. Right? Dads typically do that stuff. Moms, not so much.

Dr. Joy says, though, that medical science confirms that for the inner ear of a child to develop properly there has to be the exact kind of turbulence in the child's ear at the exact developmental stage when the dad throws the child up in the air, and if the dad does not throw the child up in the air, the inner ear won't develop properly and as an adult the child will suffer from motion sickness.

So, if you are car sensitive as an adult, it's because your henpecked daddy listened to your momma instead of the Lord. Somebody say amen. I'm kind of kidding about that. You know, when dads do that kind of stuff, they teach their child to experience joy and fear at the same moment. And I'm not sure you can even know God unless you understand what it's like to experience joy and fear at the same moment.

Now, I know some of you all are out there, "Cam, I don't have to do all of this talking and touching and writing to communicate love to my family." Maybe not. Maybe not. Maybe your family is the exception. Maybe of all of the people in the world, your family alone does not need an overt expression from God. But I doubt it. I doubt it.

Even if this is uncomfortable for you, climb out of your comfort zone for the sake of the people you love

So, if you're not comfortable with demonstrating love through touch and talk and all of that, I want to challenge you to get over that. Get over it this year, because you can. You have the Holy Spirit. We are sons and daughters of God. You have the power to change in you right now.

I did a devotion for the Georgia State Senate and I did a talk on this subject. After that talk a 65-year-old Senator walked up to me with tears running down his face. He said, "Cam, I never really dealt with my own self-centeredness on this until just a couple of years ago. But, man. I'm telling you I'm making up for lost time. And my family is loving it."

You know who he is? A wise man. He's a wise old dog learning new skills and his family loves him for it. And if he can do it, you can do it too. Even if this is uncomfortable for you I want to challenge you to climb out of your comfort zone for the sake of the people who you love.

I think another way to do this thing that Jesus thinks is so important is through:
Small acts of kindness
Everybody say small acts of kindness.
Small acts of kindness.

Did you hear about the guy who was sitting at work one day and he was thinking about how he'd neglected his wife a little bit. He just wasn't on the same game as the family. You know? And he thought, "I've got to repent. I'm going to fix this."

So, on the way home he stopped at the florist. He picked out one long-stemmed, yellow rose. I think any idiot can wire a dozen roses, right? But he goes to the store, gets one beautiful one. He comes to the front door. Hides the rose.



His wife comes to the front door. She's just had a terrible day. He pulled that rose out and he said, "Baby, I was sitting at my desk today thinking about you."

"And I remembered how beautiful you were the day we got married. How I pledged that I would love and honor and cherish you 'til death do us part. And I don't think I've done my job very well. But I want to give you this rose as a token of my pledge to love you the way you deserve to be loved."

She took that flower and held it up to her chest. "This has been a terrible day. The kid got sick. The dog ran away. The washing machine broke. And now he's come home drunk."

Oh, it shouldn't be that way, should it? I mean, come on now. She shouldn't have assumed that.

Gifts, flowers and calls all say, "While I was away...I was thinking about you!" But you know, I'm just saying these gifts and flowers and calls... I call my wife every night at 11 o'clock when I travel. I called my wife last night. And if I don't call she thinks I'm dead. Because I want her to know, "While I'm away I'm thinking about you." That's what you do. Right? Those little things just say, "While I was away I was thinking about you."

Now, I've been praying for my wife's brother, Bill, because Bill was just diagnosed with stage four prostate cancer. And this is really tough. This is a tough fight. We're flying to Montana tomorrow to go see him and be with him and get Sarah and Bill together, all of that stuff.

Cancer is a tough fight. It's a year if it goes well. It's a year. And I know that because my Sarah was going through breast cancer when she was 36. I will never forget how thankful we were for our friends and our small group from church and the church itself and the way they just held us up and prayed for us and cared for us as Sarah fought her way through that year of cancer treatments.

So, one of the things that I learned during that is a tip that I will share with you. When your friend has cancer, don't ever say, "If you need anything call me." Because they won't. They will not call you. They don't want to impose.

But here's what you do because you love them, you just do what would have done if they did call you. Bring some food over to their house. Just bring it over. Surprise them. Take their kids to a movie. Babysit for them during chemo. Cut their grass. Wash their car. Sit with them in the waiting room.

Our life group did all of those things for us when Sarah was sick. And it made us feel so loved. We couldn't believe how thoughtful people were, to go to such an extent to show their compassion for us. It was a defining moment in our lives.

Enter into the life of the people you love

Finally, when you love somebody you want to enter into the life of people you love. Say enter into their life

Enter into their life.

You know, Romans 12, which I think is the greatest interpersonal relationship chapter in the Bible. It almost defines what emotional intelligence looks like for a believer. Paul says in Romans 12:15:

“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.” Romans 12:15 (NIV)
In a loving community, you laugh with those who are laughing and weep with those who are weeping

You know what that means? We show up for each other. That's what it means. In a loving community where there is a family or a church or a life group, you laugh with those who are laughing, you weep with those who are weeping.

Love means you show up for things!

How many of you all have ever been to a fifth grade band concert that sounds like a cat killing? Anybody? You know what I'm talking about? You don't go to that because you're a music lover. You love that trombone player. Amen. There's a flute player—that's why you are there.

Ever been to a Little League ball game where you think, “Nobody here going to the show y'all.” I mean you're a coach sitting on the third base line going, “That way. That way. That way,” because they don't even know which way to run a base. Right? Why do you go to stuff like that? It's not because you love sports, it's because you love that kid. You love that child. You show up so that you can laugh with those who are laughing and you can celebrate with those who are celebrating. Love means that you show up for stuff.

I've got a buddy named Rick who lives out in Colorado. He's from New York. And his dad had worked for some company in upstate New York for his whole career. On the day he retired, Rick surprised him by flying from Colorado back home so that he could be at the house when his dad came home with a box.

You know what I'm talking about? When you retire, you leave that job, and you put everything that's in your office in that box and you walk out the door for the last time.



And when he pulled into his driveway, his son was standing in the driveway going like this [clapping]. “Way to go, Dad. Way to go, man. Yes. You love my mom. You took care of our family. You provided for us. You told us how much we meant to you. Way to go.” I’m just saying, love means sometimes you show up. You just show up at weddings and retirement parties and graduations and birthday parties and bad band concerts—stuff you would never go to except you love that person.

And doctor’s offices. And hospitals. And Funeral Homes. And gravesides. Because, man, when you love people you show up.

I have a nephew named Josh. Josh was a member of our church. He grew up in California and in Texas. But he grew up in our church.

And Josh became the first missionary we ever sent out full time. He went to Greece. He did a remarkable job over there. I love that kid. I mean, he was so strong. I took 19 kids from our church over there to work with him one summer. It was amazing what he got done.

Well, after he was over there for four years, he took a year furlough back in the states to kind of recoup and catch his breath. He was going to Dallas Theological Seminary. Sarah and I got a call one morning saying that Josh has been found dead in his apartment. And we were like, “What? He was 31 years old.” And they were like, “Well, he had an enlarged heart.” Great athlete, but he had an enlarged heart and it just gave out on him at 31 years old.

I can’t tell you how shocked I was to hear this. But then I heard that his mother was traveling from San Antonio to Dallas to identify the body. And her husband was sick, so she was going to have to do that alone. And I was like, “No. No she’s not. I don’t think so.”

So, I called the chairman of the elders of our church and I told him, I said, “Listen. This is our missionary and his mom is going to be heading up to the funeral home. Somebody needs to be there.” And Dale, our chairman, said, “Go. I don’t care what it costs; I don’t care what you have to do. Get out there to take care of her.”

When Cathy arrived from San Antonio I was standing in front of the funeral home waiting for her. And I walked into that funeral home with her when she saw her son, who is now in heaven. Thank God. And can I just say, that’s a hard place to be? But when you love people you show up. Right?

So, we took Josh out to California for the funeral. That’s where all of Sarah’s family is from. And the night before the funeral we’re standing at this little motel in Oceanside,

California. And we're sitting around talking around the campfire just kind of getting ready for that big day tomorrow.

And I look over and here comes a guy from our church, Dave Steward, "Dude, what are you doing in California?"

Listen. Dave Steward was my son's Little League baseball coach when my kids were little. Dave, I had an opportunity to lead him to Christ and baptize him and his wife and kids into Christ. He was in my life group when he was a regional director for UPS. I remember Dave called me on a Sunday afternoon and said, "Can I come over and talk to you?" I was like, "Sure. What about?" He said, "I'm getting ready to beat the life out of somebody." And I'm like, "Well, please come right now before you do that. Let's talk." Because that's how we solve problems, being seen before Christ. Right? So, we had an opportunity to visit and talk about how the angry man does not accomplish the purposes of God. And it was just cool to kind of talk him off the roof and watch him cool down and watch the Holy Spirit bring some self-control into his life. He told me, "Man, that was a tipping point for me, to realize that the Holy Spirit can control anger."

And then, a few years later I asked David if he would quit his job at UPS and come join our staff as our mission's pastor. He did. And that's part of the reason why he left his wife and kids in Savannah to fly to California to be there with me and Sarah and our kids and Josh's mom. Because, man, when you love people you just do inconvenient things to show up

Can I just say, if you're a follower of Jesus, you were born for this? You were born again for this. I mean, if you're a follower of Christ the love of God is in you. The Holy Spirit is trying to get it out. It's why John, Jesus's best friend, said:

"Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love." 1 John 4:7-8 (NLT)

"Dear friends," Dear dads, "since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us." 1 John 4:11-12 (NLT)

Dads, this is the good fight. Amen? Let me hear the dads say amen. This is the good fight. Amen?
Amen.



Come on. We were made for this y'all. We were made for this. So, let's make a commitment this year to master this skill, to show our family and our kids and our world that we love them—the love we have in our heart for them.

These are skills every follower of Jesus can master because you have the Holy Spirit. And if you do, you won't know until heaven the full impact of all of that.

I heard a story about a guy named Milt Cunningham who was a business man and a missionary. He'd been on the mission field. He also had a business in Atlanta. He got a call one morning saying, "Hey, you're going to need to be in Dallas by this afternoon."

You know how it is, you call the airport, you get the last seat on the last plane to Dallas. And it's always the middle seat. Right? Milt was a big old guy. And he's in that middle seat.

Anyway, he was hoping that... There was empty seat over here and he was kind of hoping that nobody would sit in that seat so that he could slide over because there was a little Down Syndrome girl sitting in the seat by the window.

Those little kids are the sweetest kids in the world. And she had all kinds of stuff to color and play with. All of this stuff to stay busy during the flight. So, Milt was kind to her and spoke to her. But as long as that aisle seat was open he was thinking, "As soon as they close that door, I'm moving over."

Pretty soon the little girl nudged him and said, "Hey mister. Did you brush your teeth this morning?" And he said, "Yes, I did love." And she said, "That's good. You supposed to do that every day." And she went back to doing her thing. Right?

A few minutes later she poked him again and said, "Hey, mister. Do you smoke?" And he said, "No, baby. I don't smoke." She said, "That's good because smoking will kill you." She just turned back doing her thing."

A few minutes later, she poked him again and said, "Hey, mister. Do you love Jesus?" And he said, "Yes, darling I do. I love Jesus with all my heart." She said, "That's good. Everybody is supposed to do that." She went back to doing her own thing.

Well, they are getting ready to close the door and at the last second this guy comes through the door, briefcase, overcoat, comes right to that seat and sits down. Right? So, Milt was like, "Okay, here we go." The guy gets all settled in, "Hey. How are you doing?" They greet each other.

They are pushing the plane out and the little girl says, "Ask him if he brushed his teeth this morning." And he was like, "I am not asking that man if he brushed his teeth." She said, "Ask him!" The little kid was not taking no for an answer. Right? "Ask him." So, he was like, "My little friend over here is wanting to know if you brushed your teeth this morning." And he looked over and he saw her and he was like, "I sure did." And she said, "Tell him he's supposed to do that every day." "You're supposed to do that every day, you know?"

So, they are moving out to the end of the runway and she says, "Ask him if he smokes." And Milt was like, "You can't smoke on an airplane, girl. I'm not asking."
"Ask him!"

"So, my little friend over here wants to know if you smoke."
"No, I don't"

She said, "Tell him that's good because it will kill you."
Y'all know where this is going? We're in line to take off and she says, "Ask him if he loves Jesus." And Milt was like, "I am not going to ask this man if he loves Jesus. That's too personal."

Of course he just asked the man if he brushed his teeth, I don't know what the big deal was. You know that's personal. So she's like, "Ask him!" And he was like, "My little friend over here wants to know if you love Jesus."

No smile, "No. No I don't. I wish I did. I'm under amazing stress. My marriage is falling apart. I wish I was a man of faith, I just don't even know how to get there."
And by God's grace the Lord had put him in a seat right beside a missionary who was able to share the gospel with him all the way to Dallas. And a little girl who had mastered the most important thing in the world.

Now friends. If Milt was able to lead that man into a life changing relationship with Jesus because of the proactive love of a little Down Syndrome girl, imagine what would happen if the rest of us would get ourselves trained to master the most important thing in the world?

But you'll never master it until you become a follower of Christ. Now, you can love people without knowing Christ. Absolutely, but you'll never optimize your potential for love. You'll never have the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

You'll never have the Lord pointing you like a laser to the people who need to be loved. You'll never have that blanket of grace settle over your family and the love of Christ until you give your life to Christ.



If you've never done that, I want to encourage you to humble yourself today. Humble yourself. "Cam, I've got intellectual problems." Well, you don't have to give up your brain to become a Christian. You just have to give up your pride. So, I would encourage you to humble yourself and ask Jesus to be the leader of your life, forgiver of your sins, and let Him put a love in you that you will never be able to muster up on your own.

Father, thank you for this opportunity you've given us together. Thank you for this opportunity we've had to look at what Jesus said is the most important thing in the Bible. "By this will all men know that you are My disciples if you love one another."

I pray, God, that we will master this. That we'll become the church that everybody in Indianapolis is talking about because the love of Christ flows so freely in our families, in our relationships, in our community because of Your love in our hearts. And we pray all of this in the strong name of Jesus. And all God's people said: Amen. Amen.
God bless you.

