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GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller (BS) and Hannah Schuller (HS)

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Good morning.

HS: And welcome visitors and church family. We are so happy that you're here. One of my prayers for us is that we would always be people who never just love with word and speech but we love with action and in truth, and that's how God loves us. Thank you for being here. You are loved.

BS: Hey, you made a good decision coming to church today. There's a lot of things you could have done that made it a zero day, but today will be a good day. You started your day and your week off right. We're so glad and honored that you're here. And my hope is always that you leave here with something of real value; that you go wow, I'm glad I went. So I hope that happens today. Let's begin with a word of prayer. The reason we gather here is to honor the name of Jesus. So Lord, we lift up your name and we say thank you for life. Thank you for the people in this room. Thank you for our friends and for our family. Thanks for our schools and our places of work and all the things that are in our lives. We ask today that we'd be swelling with gratitude and hope and purpose, and we thank you, God, that you're in our hearts and minds, even right now. Lord, we love you and we thank you, it's in the strong name of Jesus we pray, all God's people said, amen.

HAVEN: Turn to the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

SCRIPTURE – 1. Corinthians 13,1-7 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, 1st Corinthians 13:1-7. If I speak in tongues of men or of angels but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and I can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it does not dishonor other people. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered. It keeps no records of wrong. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. And how wonderful is it that God is love. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Gabriel Conte (DF) and Bobby Schuller (BS)

Gabriel Conte is a content creator who focuses on making videos for YouTube with his wife, Jess. His passion is to be a positive light, not only to the people he meets, but those he reaches through social media. Also an author, his new book, A Mission for Meaning: The Choices That Lead to the Life You Really Want, looks at how to live a purposeful life — one that is good and honoring God.

BS: Gabriel hi! Thank you so much for joining us today.

GC: Thank you for having me. I really appreciate it.

BS: Hey, I'm so impressed with the outreach you have for the gospel, and for your ministry. You've got, man, millions of followers on YouTube and Instagram and all sorts of places. But a lot of people maybe they haven't heard of you or are not familiar with your message, maybe you can give us a short introduction and tell us a little bit about your message and what you're doing right now online.

GC: Yes, so I am a YouTuber, influencer if you want to call me that, and basically I make content on online showing my life, the life of me and my wife, and now my new three-month-old baby girl Makaiah has joined the family, so she's more or less kind of like in the background of the videos and stuff, too. But yes, we basically show our life and we like to do it through just story, really, like sharing the story of our life. We're not like on YouTube like preaching per se, but more so trying to share the gospel through the story of our life, and living it out day to day, rather than trying to preach it.

How to Love Strangers, Competitors and Annoying People

BS: One of the things I really like about your message is how positive you are. Obviously we can't be Pollyanna and super positive all the time about everything, but there is a way you do it that I think is so great that reaches a lot of people. A lot of times today there's a lot to complain about, there's a lot to be frustrated with or to worry about, but being positive is an important part of your message, isn't it.

GC: Yes, definitely. We always try to.. I mean for the most part.. well an overall positive.. like net positive message, because we like to be real, as well, and as someone who's like dealt with depression and anxiety and things like that, that so many people deal with today, we don't shy away from talking about those topics, but we try to talk about them in a positive light where as I'm working through them, hopefully people can relate and can also work through them. So definitely like a net positive that's not just trying to be all happy and dandy all the time. We try to keep it real.

BS: Like one of the things I love.. so you have a new book that's out, and I'm really excited to read it. It's called A Mission for Meaning. And really you give people great tools on how to be successful as Christians. I mean on one hand you obviously have your message you're preaching, but you're a successful guy. You're a young guy, but you've sorted out these tools that have helped you do really well as an entrepreneur, as an influencer, and you're wanting to help other Christians fulfill the kind of dreams, achieve the kind of things they want to achieve, and you're really helping people do that in your book, aren't you.

GC: I mean I'm doing my best. There's definitely a part that's like imposter syndrome a bit, like why am I writing a book. But I definitely felt like it was time for me to, I guess, share what I've learned and share what I've gone through, and a lot of that comes from my parents, as well. They have a pretty crazy story that I recap in the book, as well. My mom with HIV and her living past the ten-year death sentence that the doctors gave her way back in the day, and that leading my parents to Christ, which ultimately led to how they raised me and my siblings, and just kind of the whole like family upbringing, as well, and how that kind of set the stage for my life and my family and where we're at now. So just trying to recap all that, but weave Christ through the whole thing, as well, just because He plays obviously such an important role in the whole thing.

BS: Yes, that's an amazing story. So your mom had HIV and she was given ten years or so to live. That was a scary time in the early 90's/80's when that was coming out, and it really was a death sentence for so many people. And what an amazing thing that it brought her to faith. Is she still alive today?

GC: Yes, she's lived like over 20 years past that death sentence, I think like 30 or so years past when she found out that she got HIV. So she still has it, but she's now on medication, they come out with medication that can keep it at bay and just keep her healthy and live a relatively normal life.

BS: That's awesome.

GC: For the most part, yes.

BS: Praise God, that's great. One of the tools that I really like, and this is a little self-serving as a pastor, but you talk about the importance of friendships when you want to be more successful. There's a phrase I've heard, I learned from my grandpa that your network is your net worth. And I know that's not totally the message, but I have noticed that there is something weird about friendships that kind of forms us spiritually. Tell us a little bit about what you learned about friends and like the kind of company you keep.

GC: I mean I guess I left to live in Los Angeles for.. I lived there for five years, and it was pretty soon after I graduated high school, I'd just turned 20 when I left to LA, and I needed to make friends and find people, and in a place like that, I knew I needed to find the right friends and the right people to surround myself by. And really it's for any, like you said, your net worth is your network, so that's like I guess a financial way of looking at it, but the same applies with your faith, as well. And like just surrounding yourself with people who you want to emulate and who you want to become because you're going to become the people you spend your time with.

And so I do talk about that a bit in the book, as well, and just really surrounding yourself with the people, like your tight group of people, the people that are like your five closest friends, or whatever it might be, those people you're going to turn into, so really making sure that they're the people that you want to be.

BS: Yes, that's great. I love it. The book is called A Mission for Meaning by Gabriel Conte. Gabriel, thank you so much for your time. We appreciate you and really looking forward..

GC: Thank you.

BS: ..to the book. God bless you.

How to Love Strangers, Competitors and Annoying People

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

No matter who you are, we're glad you're here. Would you stand with me? We're going to say this creed together. We're going to beat you up a little bit today, so we're going to start with the easy stuff, how's that? Let's say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. It's who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with my neighbor.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller – How to Love Strangers, Competitors and Annoying People

Sometimes life is very lonely. There are times in life when we're surrounded by friends, surrounded by family. We've got people calling us. We've got people texting us, and yet, why somehow we still feel a little bit alone. Something about the human condition that there's this gnawing thing inside of me that I want someone to want me. I don't want to be alone in life's experience. And very often that we don't know that, or we don't name that, we have this feeling: I just feel lonely, I don't know why. And although this is very philosophical and theological, may I say something for you: I want you to know that God loves you right now, right where you are, just as you are, because you are His child. The Lord sent His only son to pave a way for you that you could come home to Him. You're not what you do, what you've done or what's been done to you. You're not what you have or what you've lost. You're not your failures or your achievements. In God's eyes, you are His beloved child, and He wants to say to you come home to me. I think there's something about life's experience that we will never quite be at peace in God's world until we're at peace with God. Who believes that? That there's something about being at peace with God that puts us at peace in His creation. There's something about knowing that we're held in God's hand that helps us get through those times when we feel alone, even though we might have people around us. And I want to encourage you, whether you've been a Christian your whole life or you've never heard the name of the Lord in your life, if you feel away from God, come home to Him today. Make a decision to stop being away and come home. He's waiting at the doorstep looking in the horizon asking for you. Come home, my son, come home, my daughter. In fact, many of us, we sit around and we never make a decision to follow Christ, we just sort of stand in this middle Christianity sort of in our salad bar of philosophical ideas. It's the lettuce section, or something. No, the Lord wants us to be totally committed to Him, and to experience the life of the spirit. I experienced it in my life, was never the same. And so I want to ask you to make a decision today to follow Christ; to make a decision in your heart right now to follow Him and never turn away. If you made that decision, I want you to text the word HOPE to the number on the screen because I want to pray for you. And if you really did make that decision, maybe there's somebody in your life who's been praying for you: a grandma, a grandpa, a sister, a spouse, a friend who's been praying for you for years. I want you to call them and say you can pray for somebody else today. Today I've decided to follow Jesus and I'm not turning back. Today, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Can I tell you that phone call is a good phone call to make! To say I made a commitment to never be the same again. You can stop praying for me, you can pray for someone else. In fact, I'll pray with you because I know the power of the life of Christ. When I was a stranger, God loved me. When I was His enemy, He loved me. When I was away, He loved me. When I was a pest and annoying and bothering people around me who were trying to help me, God still loved me. Isn't that a great testimony? And so that brings us to the message of today. Today's message is how do I love, or how to love strangers, competitors and annoying people. Yes, we've got to do it. But here's a good question. Here's a good question. Why would you? Why would you love strangers, competitors and annoying people? That's a good question. Here's one answer: it's the right thing to do. But can I just tell you, the right thing to do doesn't go very far when you need a different kind of life. It's the moral thing to do, it's the Biblical thing to do, it's the decent thing to do. That's true! But is that enough to get you up in the morning? It's not for me. I think that's a type of like legalism. Here's the reason why we ought to love strangers, competitors, and annoying people. It's because it's the best kind of life to live. Here's another reason why we ought to love strangers, competitors and annoying people. There are some people in our lives that we want them to love us, but they view us as strangers, competitors and annoying people. I don't think that about you, of course. I think you're terrific. God loves you, I love you, but maybe there's a stranger, a competitor or someone in your life, maybe a teenager that you want to love you again, and you don't know how. Here's a great place to start: by loving strangers, loving people on the outside. Can I just tell you what a great feeling it is to love the kind of person that most people ignore.

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Most people, at least in my country, are not openly hateful to strangers. They do it online, they do it on Twitter, they do it on Facebook. But face to face it's rare that you would see somebody be blatantly hateful. But see the opposite of love is not hate. The opposite of love is contempt. The opposite of love is I don't care. The opposite of love is blindness. But when you love someone, when you notice somebody in the room that nobody else sees, when you care for someone or encourage someone, there is an actual, I hope this okay to say – metaphysical feeling that goes through your body that weirdly makes you feel loved the rest of the day. It's like you're like a tube – a tube of love. It's just like you love someone, and you feel loved and you can't explain it. Why. Do you know why? The Bible tells us – God is.. Look if love goes from up here through you to someone else, something goes through you and that thing is God, and that person is God, and God is love. You experience physically in your body something powerful. The answer to why should we love people that not everybody else loves is yes, its moral, yes, its decent, yes, its Biblical, yes, it's good, but it's the best life to live and it will show us and develop in us the kind of people that might invite other people who view us as strangers, as competitors or as annoying. You say I surely have competitors, strangers and annoying people in my life, but I don't care if they love me. Oh yes? Oh yes? Some of you say I just want my husband to love me again. I just want my wife to love me again. Maybe there was a day back in the day when you were first dating, and you were so in love. You had so much fun together, you were great friends, and now it just feels like you are strangers. That might be a stranger you want to love you again. Maybe you had kids and you were a great dad or a great mom, and they just adored you until they got to around 13 or 14 and now they might say you're annoying. Now again, I would never say that. I would never say that. I've heard that the second most difficult thing in the world is rocket science, but the first most difficult thing in the world is raising teenagers, that's right. That's right. Maybe you have a sibling and your parents recently passed away, and now there's a little bit of argument over the will. Who's going to get mom's ring? Who's going to get dad's old car? What are we going to do with the house? Or maybe you work together in business with a sibling, or an old friend. You were great friends and now you are business partners, and now somehow they feel like a competitor. When we learn to love competitors, when we learn to love strangers, and when we learn to love annoying people, the weird thing about that is something happens inside of us that it starts to open up the world for people to love us when we're that way to them. Can we just say what goes around comes around? What you reap is what is what you sow? This is the nature of things – things come around, and if we want more love in our lives, we've got to become loving people. Not because we ought to, not because its moral or any of those things, but because it's the best life to be a loving, joyful person who sees the best in others. We have no idea the types of affects that contempt versus love has on the history of the whole world. There's an old saying about chaos theory that it could be that the smallest flap of a butterfly's wings in Alaska could cause a tornado in Texas. What if one little act of love we'll see in heaven made the difference in someone's life, in their grandkids lives, in so many things. I want to be an agent for positive change in the world. How about you? Okay, so here's a life principle. We all need love and belonging. We all often feel very lonely, we feel like oftentimes we're a failure in our relationships and things, but we need great friends, we need great connections, we need to be close to the people in our lives. And though all of us aren't supposed to be married, we ought to thrive in our relationships, our marriages, etc., and when this happens, that's when we really feel most alive. So the question we ought to ask is – how do I become a loving person? Well that's a great question, but first we need to clearly define what love is. The type of love we're talking about today comes from the philosophy based on the Bible and that kind of love is called agape love. It's the kind of God-shaped, God-breathed love that existed before the creation of the world, and it goes a little something like this. Its experienced when you say to a complete stranger, God loves you and so do I. I had a man who asked me once, it was a great question. He said in church on Sunday, we turn around and we shake hands with someone and we say God loves you and so do I. And I turned and I saw a man, I never met him in my life, and we shook hands and we politely, in a business type grip shook hands and we said to each other God loves you and so do I. But I'm not sure I believed it, and I'm not sure he did, either. I don't know his name; I don't know if he's a convicted felon. How can I say I love you; I love you. I said friend, that's very easy. Loves not a feeling. Love is care for human good. This is the definition of agape love that we see in the Bible. It means you care. It means you literally care about the best for another person. Can you care for your enemies? Can you care about a stranger? Can you care about an annoying person? See this definition is better because sometimes loving people means boundaries. Sometimes loving people means no, I won't lend you money because I love you.

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Or sometimes loving someone means an intervention and not judging but saying I'll walk with you; I'll be with you as you go through this tough time. Care for human good, agape love is most expressed in the message of the Good Samaritan. We know that story. Two tribes that hate each other – the Jews and the Samaritans. It's sort of like the Montagues and the Capulets. The Bloods and the Crypts. USC and UCLA. Can you imagine a story – the Good Bruin. Just a little Trojan walking along the road and a Bruin stops and helps him. Amazing. See that's what it is. The Samaritan, who was hated by their group, this Jewish man was beaten and robbed, his religious leaders just went by him, but his enemy group, his enemy religion, that guy stopped, helped him and Christ asks which one truly loved him. And the answer is the one who helped his brother. So love means care for human good. Here's what I used to think. I used to think love meant something like intense desire. The desire to be with someone. The desire to spend some time with someone. The desire to give someone a call, or for them to desire me. And desire is close because very often we do desire the people we love the most in life, but not always. I'd see a girl in high school and think wow! She's beautiful and amazing and I think I love her! What's her name?! I'd find out her name and I'd think about her for days and days. Couldn't sleep at night. She's beautiful and then I finally meet her – what's your name? And she says Heather, and she's got terrible breath, and then now I don't love her anymore, right? That's not a true story, by the way. Or I remember there was this kid named Ethan, he was a grade older than me and he was a rich kid in our neighborhood. And he had these motorcycles, and he and his brothers would build these ramps, and I used to always think oh, it'd be great to be friends with Ethan. He could be my best friend, and we could ride motorcycles together. And I thought that was like sort of a fraternal type love. It wasn't. Think about all the times that I've said I love fried chicken. You know why I say that. Because I do. Man, fried chicken, I love fried chicken, especially the spicey kind. I love it and you might say to me Bobby, I love fried chicken, too, but guess what – the chicken may disagree with you. See that's the thing. We use this term for love, but I cannot be a judge of whether or not I'm a loving person. It's the object of a love that has to say that. I can't really honestly say if I'm a loving person. My neighbor has to say. One time there was an Amish man. You know Amish folks, they wear 19th century clothing and go around in horses and buggies, and they're wonderful people, committed Christians, they're from typically the Mennonite tradition. And one time there was a little boy who saw an Amish person and he asked him, are you a Christian? Are you a cult? What are you? Are you a Christian? And Amish guy said to the little boy, I don't know. Ask my neighbor. Wow. That's a good answer. That's the kind of Christian answer you get when you don't have TV. Don't change the channel yet! Right? Don't change the channel yet. After this, you can turn it off. So a woman says I love my husband and I love my secret boyfriend. Right? I love them both and I can't decide. I just love them both and I don't know what to do. But the truth is, and I don't doubt her sincerity, the truth is she doesn't love either of them because she has no problem hurting people. See? The truth is she's afraid of not being desired, which is a real desire, right? We all desire to be desired. But let's not confuse the two. Love means you care for human good; that you want the best for someone else. If you want to be loved, you want to invite people into your life, you want to be surrounded by great friends, you want people to think well of you and want to be with you, here's the answer – become a loving person. Read the books, pray the prayers, spend the time, study. There is no doubt that all of us have ways we can grow in our love for other people, but we have to do the work, and then we will experience the kind of love we really want. Henri Nouwen was an amazing man of God, a huge influence on my life. What an accomplished life he led. He taught at Yale for many years, and as if that wasn't a big enough accomplishment, he went up over to Harvard and taught there for many years and was published and had all sorts of achievement. And then published many works of which he had best sellers. He probably, I don't know, made millions of dollars off of the millions of books that he sold. He spent time in the White House with Presidents and heads of state, and through all of that, he never could quite feel loved, until in the twilight of his life, he went to large community in Canada to serve disability adults and children, and these were mostly adults that, for example, couldn't walk and also had a mental disability. And they didn't care about Yale. They didn't care about Harvard. They didn't care about money and they didn't care about his books, they just loved him. And that was the first place, he says, that he really experienced and found the kind of deep love that all of us are looking for. But look, you don't have to go to large community to get that. Its available today. But we have to become loving people. One of the things I love so much about Shepherd's Grove is that it's a loving church. It is such a loving church, and I hear that a lot.

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If you're here for the first time, you probably had somebody give you a smile, offer you some coffee, maybe somebody prayed for you. If you ask them to, they sure would. Yes, every church has a couple of screws loose, and that's okay. I'm one of them. Every church has some people that aren't nice, or some people that are having a rough day, and sometimes I'm one of them. But in general, this is a loving church. And you know what that means? It attracts loving people. Legalistic churches attract legalistic people. Angry churches attract angry people. Loving churches attract loving people. It's like a good music program attracts good musicians. You want more love in your life, begin to think of agape love as a skill that's developed. If you're a disciple, why would you think anything else? Disciple means committed student who's committed to training oneself in a certain way. Love is a skill that can be learned and trained. Now let that be good news for all of us. Because that means if I want more love in my life, then the answer is to learn to be a more loving person. And if I can learn to be a more loving person, that means the power is in my hands to make a decision today to be a different kind of person. Don't put it off till tomorrow. Become that person today. Well what does that look like? The great apostle wrote in 1st Corinthians chapter 13. Now if you've been to a wedding, you've heard this passage before, haven't you. Anybody been to a wedding? No one? Just me? I've done over a thousand weddings, I think, in my life. And almost every wedding has this scripture, and it's a good place to read this scripture. Goes like this: "If I speak in tongues of men or of angels, but I don't have love, I'm only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but no love, I'm nothing. If I give all that I possess to the poor, and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing." Those are three amazing qualities, by the way. The first one, I don't think he's talking about praying in tongues, which is a charismatic gift. I think he's actually talking about being a great communicator. Wow, that's a great thing, if you're in a church to be a great preacher, great teacher, great talker, great therapist, a great whatever. But guess what – that won't get you love. That won't get you any love. It'll get you admiration, but not love. And there's another person he says, the person prophet who performs miracles, and can raise the dead, can move mountains. That's amazing. That's an amazing thing. But guess what – that won't get you love, either. And there's another person - the martyr, the person who would lay down their life for everyone, lay down their life for the gospel, the type of person who's like a social worker who would just go out and feed and care for the poor. The deacon type person, the person who cares for those who are in need. The missionary who goes overseas to share the gospel. That's an amazing thing. That'll get you a lot of glory. That'll get you a lot of brownie points in heaven, but guess what it won't get you – it won't get you love. It won't get you love. People might desire you; it might get you acclaim; it might get you a crowd, but won't get you love. Guess what gets you love? Becoming. Becoming. Becoming a more loving person. Don't confuse becoming a loving person with becoming a loveable person, because it's not the same thing. It's becoming a loving person because every time you love someone, you experience love. And you send something out there like a boomerang that comes around to you. Trust me, my friend. Try it out and you'll see. And then the apostle sits down and he decides you know what I'm going to do for all the students who say okay, I want to love someone. I want to love the way God loved. I want to make a list. A list of the most important things that define what love is and what love is not. And I picture the apostle sitting there with a pen and he's staring at the page, and he writes love is.. and he's looking at the page. What's the first thing I should write here? Love is, love is, love is, what would you say. What would you say. Love is sweet. Love is complimentary. Love is forgiving. Love is.. what would you say. Love is.. love is.. The first thing he says is love is.. I got it. I got it. Patient. That's the first thing. Patient. Love is patient. Love is unhurried. Love is not in a hurry to get somewhere. Love is not too busy to see you. Love is not worried and thinking about something else while you stand before it. One of the most loving people I ever knew was my grandpa Schuller. And there's other people like that who I've met. My grandma and grandpa Pursley are this way. You're there and you're the only person they see. Wow. They're not thinking of being somewhere else because love is patient. And then he says love is kind. A man sees a woman in a grocery store, and she's got three kids, and she's having a rough day, and she can afford the groceries. She doesn't look poor, but she's stressed out. And a man behind her maybe he's a retired father, empty nester or something. He sees this woman and he says you know what, you're doing such a good job as a mom. I want to buy your groceries. I got it. You go. I'll take care of it. I love you. You're doing great. Your kids have a great mother and I'm proud of you. Hey, that is love. That's kind. That's kind. And he says it's not envy. Here's a new word in our society that's in pop culture – frenemy. When you get a friend that's also an enemy, it's a frenemy.

How to Love Strangers, Competitors and Annoying People

It's usually driven by envy, isn't it. Can I tell you something? There's no such thing as a frenemy. There's either a friend or there's an enemy. There's no frenemies. Envy drives out love in the same way fear drives out love. Love does not boast. Remember once sitting at a table with a famous pastor and I know he had been going through a hard time, and this is the first time I had met him. Very famous guy, and there were 12 other pastors around the table, they had grouped the pastors together because nobody wanted to feel judged. That's just a joke. But we're all sitting there, all the religious guys are at one table over in the corner. It was a fundraiser for something, and all the other pastors were from maybe more smaller communities, and they were doing great things for God. And one guy would say, we had eleven people that came to faith last week, and then the famous pastor would say, oh that's amazing. We had two thousand at our last event. And somebody else would say we went to Israel and we did a study group there. And he said that's amazing. I just brought a bus of five hundred people back from Israel where you did a study. And somebody else would say I just finally got my doctor of ministry, and he would say I've got 35 honorary doctorates. And as he's eating chicken, it was like.. it was rough. And my main thought was, have I done that, and I wonder if I have. These men and women who are trying to share their stories, all they're experiencing is this giant of the faith who if he said wow, that's amazing, would have meant the world to them, but instead something was happening on the inside of him. It's not proud. Pride and love is when you say they should apologize first. Yes, I made a mistake, but theirs was a bit worse, wasn't it. Keeps no record of wrongs. Anybody here Irish? Keeps no record of wrongs, yes. We Irish have this thing called an unforgiveness list. We tattoo it on our brains. It takes a lot, but once you cross a line, you are on that unforgiveness list forever. Maybe you're from a family that can be that way. I am not, but some Irish folks can be that way, and I would say to you, throw that list away. It's time to forgive. Time to forgive. Don't have an unforgiveness list. Paul says "when I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I came a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me." What's he talking about? He's talking about not thinking about love like a teenager. He's talking about thinking about love like an adult. That love is care for human good. Love that says when I was a stranger God loved me. When I was a sinner, God loved me. When I hated God, He loved me. And even still, when I made my worst mistakes, He loves me. I can love, I can forgive, I can be a source of love and compassion to those around me. Here's a final thought: Oral Roberts University, 1999, I was in college and I remember being there and there was one thing that they impressed on every student. It was emblazoned on the back of the chapel and it said this: If you have a need, plant a seed. This is a principle that farmers know. Used to be that a majority of Americans about a hundred years ago, majority of Americans were farmers, and much of what they learned about faith and life they were able to discern in a farm. They knew that you plant in the spring and you harvest in the fall. They knew that you plant, you care, you tend, you defend, you harvest. And that what I have today is the result of what I did six months ago, a year ago, two years ago. If you have a need, plant a seed. And I still remember what my old mentor and chaplain at that school said – he said you've got one of two choices. Either you plant in the spring, or you beg in the fall. You plant in the spring, or you beg in the fall. How many of us are begging for love? How many of us are surrounded by the kinds of frenemies or friends that we don't really get along with, but we can't get ourselves to get rid of them but we can't be alone. Going back to those old relationships, that old boyfriend or girlfriend, that old group of people. We didn't plant in the spring. We didn't become loving people. We didn't develop those relationships and now we find ourselves begging in the fall. You say Bobby but I need love now! I need someone to love me now. I need it now! What I learned back then from that chaplain was you don't reap what you need. You reap what you plant. You don't reap what you need, you reap what you sow and more so. You reap 30/60/100 fold. I remember he'd say, you go before soil, a farmer goes before a soil and just shouts at the soil I need crops! And the soil says back to you, who is this that comes before me with need? Don't bring me your need. Bring me your seeds. See that's why love is patient. You say Bobby you don't understand. I've started being nice to my husband. I've started being nice to my sister. I've started being nice to my coworker. I've been doing it for like three weeks and still they're being a jerk to me. Hey how long does it take for a seed to grow? I know not all of you are farmers, but there's a couple in here. How long is the distance from spring to fall? What is it, about six months? Can I make you a promise, my friend. If you plant seeds now, and tend to them for six months, then you'll see a difference. That's why love is patient. You plant now, plant now in the spring, you're going to reap it in the fall. You don't reap what you need, you reap what you plant. You reap what you sow.

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And isn't it great the Bible.. it doesn't say you reap what you sow, it says you reap 30/60/100 times what you sow. So let's get out there and do some sowing. Amen? Father, we thank you for life and for love and for friendships. Lord, if love is a skill, help us to learn to be experts. Help us to be kind and loving, and help us to work on it with people that are not always noticed by everyone else. Lord we love you, we thank you, and it's in the strong name of Jesus we pray, all God's people said, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you His peace, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.