

**THE BIG IDEA:** The more we love each other, the more there will be others to love.

### The Take-Off

Before we can really jump into week 3 of The Love Buzz, a few disclaimers:

1. You're going to love some of this.
2. You're going to hate some of this.
3. You're going to walk out asking questions that I won't answer because I can't.
4. I'm ok with that.

I know that sounds harsh, and I wish it didn't, but the truth is that today we're going to talk about something that most of us wish we did a better job of, and so we'll love the idea but quite possibly hate the action necessary to get us to the idea.

So, before you all jump up and head for the exits, let me give you the Big Idea.

Week 1 was that as a believer, we can't get more of Jesus, but Jesus can get more of us. The Buzz PERSONALLY. Me and Jesus. It was all about the Friendship of God.

Last week we talked about how when Jesus gets more of me, you will, too. The Buzz PRIVATELY. Me and Jesus and you. It was all about the Family of God.

Now, today's Big Idea simply says that the more we love each other, the more there will be others to love. It's The Buzz PUBLICLY. This week is all about the Fragrance of God - how the love we're full of as a family of God oozes out on the city, county, state, country and world around us.

Personal. Private. Public. It's the inside out order that ALWAYS defines the plan of God for taking over the world.

It's the perfect plan, too, because God created each of us with a natural desire to be loved.

Do you see it? A loving God created people who were made to be loved. Perfect.

Of course, we messed it all up by looking for love from everyone and everything but the God who wants to give it, and that's gotten all of us in all kinds of messes.

You don't have to be a Christ follower to agree with the fact that humanity really can botch this love thing up, right?

So, God's plan is for each of us to fill ourselves up with His love, and then begin to watch that love ooze out, like when you're milkshake at McD's is too full and the lid pushes a bunch of it out and down the side of the cup.

Once that starts to happen, it affects the family first, and then it extends out to people who aren't in the family but want to be.

So let's take a look at love, and specifically 4 things that loves does that will help us be a part of this crazy plan that we've called The Love Buzz.

#### **1. Love attracts.**

- a. For better or for worse, love attracts attention, doesn't it?
- b. It could be the gross couple making out in public or a mom and dad dancing or kindness shown to someone on the street, but whatever it is, it's attention grabbing!
- c. Jesus knew this, and so He reminded His followers that there was no better evangelism program than simple, heartfelt love in the family. He told them in John 13:35 that it would be a big neon sign pointing outsiders to Him.
- d. This truth is so profound that most people will use our LACK of love in the church as their NUMBER ONE REASON for not attending church!
- e. Love attracts attention, and when it does, we use that attention to point people to Jesus because we know how we would never have loved anybody without Him first loving us.
- f. 1 John 4:19

#### **2. Love accepts.**

- a. Let's talk wedding talk and then we'll get real, okay?
- b. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, we find Paul explaining to the Corinthians what love is all about.
- c. First, a bit of context. The Christ followers in Corinth loved Jesus for sure, but they were a church full of problems, and most of them revolved around pride and social status. As you can imagine, there was a lot of division in the church.

- d. And so Paul writes about love, and I can imagine the faces getting redder and redder as these verses were read out loud.
- e. Not one of the love descriptors is a feeling; they're all actions, choices.
- f. If they could be summed up in a phrase, it would be this: love accepts.
- g. I'll be the first to admit that this sounds a little risky, and right away our minds start trying to find the limit.
- h. Peter did the same thing with forgiveness. Remember? "How many times should I forgive?" (Matt. 18:21-22)
- i. It's the same with love, and all of us react the same way: surely love can't accept everything?
- j. Not everything, as we'll see in a minute, but always everyone. Always.
- k. Jesus fleshed this out for us in John 8.
- l. Now, a quick word about why this section has a footnote in most of your Bibles.
- m. The earliest manuscripts didn't include this story. It started showing up later.
- n. Some scholars think it should not be included in the Bible, and some do.
- o. However, even the scholars who think it shouldn't be included agree that it's true.
- p. And nothing in it is inconsistent with any other part of the Bible, so I have no problem referencing it here.
- q. A woman is caught in adultery and brought to Jesus to be judged (and stoned).
- r. She was guilty by law, period. The religious leaders accused her so that they could accuse Jesus (v. 6).
- s. Religion accuses, but love accepts.
- t. As we'll see going forward, Jesus didn't condemn this woman even though she was, in fact, guilty.
- u. How far do we go in accepting people? Farther than religion, farther than expected, farther than is comfortable.

### 3. Love assures.

- a. All of us have people in our lives - a mom, dad, friend, mentor - and we know that if we can just see them, hear them or talk with them, it's going to be ok.
- b. There is assurance in being loved unconditionally, isn't there?
- c. Look at the beautiful words of Jesus here to this woman who deserved death: "Has no one condemned you? Neither do I."
- d. And this assurance isn't just for her, but for all of us in Christ. Listen to these powerful promises in scripture:
  - Jeremiah 31:3 (I have loved you with an EVERLASTING love!)
  - Hebrews 13:5-6 (I will NEVER leave you!)
  - Romans 8:31-39 (NOTHING can separate us from the love of God in Christ!)

### 3. Love alters.

- a. Now is when we all start wondering about how long we're going to have to keep loving unlovable people.
- b. "If you only knew how bad he is, or she is" or "If you were married to MY spouse..."
- c. That's because we lose sight of the most powerful attribute of love: love alters.
- d. It makes people - and situations - better.
- e. It changes us individually. Here in John, Jesus loved the woman enough to tell her to stop sinning.
- f. Think about this: Jesus loved her without excuses and without excusing her sin.
- g. It is the nature of God's love to leave us better! (Romans 2:4)
- h. Love doesn't only alter us personally and privately, but it alters publicly as well.
- i. Remember John 13:35? As we love each other, the love attracts others, they see how we accept anyone and that our love is assured with no string attached, and that kind of love begins to alter this city.
- g. The early church took those words to heart and were the first to reap the fruits of The Love Buzz
- h. In fact, the early historian, Tertullian, wrote about how often the Romans would say, "See how they love each other!"
- i. When a plague swept through the world in the 3rd century, it was the Christians who tirelessly cared for the sick at great risk of disease or persecution, while the pagans were throwing their own families into the streets before they got the disease.
- j. The early church loved women and children and slaves in a time when none of them had a voice.
- k. In a time when there were very few organized missionary or evangelism programs, the church grew like wildfire, all because God had a better plan for taking over the world.
- l. It's called The Love Buzz.

### The Landing

It all sounds so good, but what do we do with it, right?

Just go out and love people!

Sounds simple, but we all know it isn't. So let me give you a three answer multiple choice test to help you start to figure out how you're doing with The Love Buzz publicly.

Your homework this week is going to be answering this question honestly and then asking 2 other people who know you to answer it honestly about you.

Here's the question: When it comes to loving others, are you a USER, an ABUSER or an OOZER?

- As a USER, you take more than you give because you're empty. End result? You tend to be lonely because you wear people out.
- As an ABUSER, you give until you're empty because you're prideful. End result? You tend to get offended because no one is ever good enough.
- As an OOZER, you give more than you could because you're full. End result? You tend to be content because you never miss the overflow.

It's easy to see why new believers make the best evangelists, isn't it? Because they're so full of the love of Jesus that they can't help but OOZE it everywhere and on everyone!

And when we love like that, it will ALWAYS attract.

The more we love each other, the more there will be others to love.