

Nature of Our Human Love-I

Team Devotional Guide

He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was a little man and could not see Jesus because of the crowd. So he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus, who was going to pass that way.

Luke 19:3 - 4

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

When have you sought to see Jesus?

Prayer Focus: People who are struggling to find Jesus

My prayers go out for...

Nature of Our Human Love-II

Rising Out of Poverty

Most of us are poor. We live in and around poverty. Oh, I know you live in a nice house, have a nice car, wear nice clothes, and have enough to eat. I'm talking about a different kind of poverty – spiritual poverty. Most of us live lives which spring from the poverty of our spiritual lives. Lives which are played out without spending enough time with God in prayer, in contemplation, in study and in listening.

Our poverty in Spirit has to do with love – but totally different kinds of love. First, there is Agape – a type of love where the motive is solely to respond to another's needs without trying to get our own needs met. Serving another with no expectation of return. We serve without regard to our needs, and we find blessings.

Then, there is Eros. Eros is love where we respond to another's needs with the motive of somehow having our own needs met. We serve so that we can benefit. We serve in order to be blessed.

God made us for Agape. We function best on Agape! But when we don't receive the agape we need to function as healthy individuals, we quickly learn to survive by seeking Eros.

Lives that depend on Eros tend to develop certain ways of behaving:

We learn to manipulate people to get what we want.

We seek status by possessing things.

We adopt destructive behaviors.

How has my dependence on Eros been revealed in my behavior?

Many of those in prison have come to rely on Eros rather than Agape. Their resulting behavior may be what brought them to prison. They have developed a wall to protect themselves, and they give the appearance of relying on themselves – on their strength.

How do we rise out of our poverty? We freely offer our love – our love in action – with no agenda – with no expectation of return. Then, we find that in our vulnerability, there is Joy! Being on this Kairos Team is a chance to practice living in that Agape love.

I hope you have a good practice session!

Nature of Our Human Love-2

Team Devotional Guide

What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; they are envious, get drunk, have orgies and do other things like this. I warn you now as I have before: those who do these things will not possess the Kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

When have I given up my way for Christ's way?

Prayer Focus: People who only seek their way.

My prayers go out for...

Nature of Our Human Love-2

I Did It My Way

Can't you just hear Frank Sinatra's beautiful voice proclaiming "I did it my way"? What a great song! For so many, it represented a message of being confident in yourself. A message of trusting in your way. That's the message of the world, don't you think? Aren't we taught to be strong? Be true to yourself. Blaze your own trail. Be your own person.

When we join a Kairos Team, we receive a beautiful gift. It's really a gift from God! We get the chance to step aside from the "World" and to practice a new way of life. We get to practice living the sacrificial life. A life lived not for my way, but a life lived for His way!

Christ talked about getting rid of "our" stuff so we could follow Him. We give up "our" way to go "His" way. We empty ourselves of "our" focus, and breathe in the newness of life in the Holy Spirit. What "I" want is not so important anymore – give it up. Don't let "Me" get in the way of God working through His empty vessel.

Let us learn a new song. A song of praise for "God's Way."

I did it His way!

Lord, let me empty myself of me!

Nature of Our Human Love-3

Team Devotional Guide

For this reason you must obey the authorities – not just because of God’s punishment, but also as a matter of conscience.

Romans 13:5

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

When do I have trouble being obedient?

Prayer Focus: Prison wardens and leaders

My prayers go out for...

Nature of Our Human Love-3

Respecting Authority

As Christians, we know that we have an obligation to obedience. We learn that we can set ourselves aside. We don’t always have to be right – We don’t always have to have the last word – We don’t always have to be in charge. What we know is that we need to humbly acknowledge those in authority.

That is especially true in a prison setting. Kairos serves within a prison at the invitation of the prison chaplain and warden. Security is important to them – and there are many rules that are designed to help ensure proper security. Yes, some rules seem petty. Some seem unnecessary. But the rules are there, and we need to acknowledge the authority of the warden to make the rules, and we must follow the rules or risk having Kairos restricted from the prison!

Institutional Rules

- All vehicles in parking lot must be secured (locked, windows up)
- No tobacco products on the premises
- No weapons on the premises
- Proper attire
 - No short skirts or tight or revealing clothing
 - No shirts with “advertising” or messages
 - Shirts with collars (no T-shirts)
- No purses or billfolds
- No (or little) money
- No chewing gum or magnets
- Cannot bring in any materials that you plan on giving to the residents
- Books, magazines must be mailed directly from a book store or publisher, not from an individual

Nature of Our Human Love-3

General Relationships

- Do not smuggle anything into, or out of prison
- You may not be on the visitor's list of any resident
- No metal or glass objects allowed
- Do not give, or accept anything from a resident ANYTHING!
- Do not purchase anything from a resident
- Do not pass messages from a resident to others on the outside
- Do not mail letters or packages for a resident
- Religious materials must come through the chaplain
- Do not give residents money
- Do not get involved with a resident's family
- Do not pry into a resident's life of crime
- Do not join in a resident's criticism of authorities
- Do not defend a resident's crime or their failures
- Avoid involvement in a resident's legal matters
- Treat residents, officers and staff with respect and love
- Encourage healthy attitudes and behavior
- Be honest with residents, while guarding your own privacy
- Avoid any appearance of romantic interest – never be alone in the same room
- Evidence of serious misconduct should be reported to a staff member
- Avoid telling jokes (they quickly get out of hand)

Nature of Our Human Love-3

Spiritual Relationships

- Recognize your limitations, acknowledging that with God's help you can make a difference
- Be sincere in reaching out to residents
- Glorify God in all things
- Listen and care
- Appreciate officers' responsibilities
- Present God's love, understanding, forgiveness and acceptance
- Present God's holiness and your capacity to relate to God
- Present the need for discipleship and how it disciplines your daily conduct
- Avoid suggesting a cheap form of grace:
 - As though it doesn't matter how one conducts themselves since God forgives
 - As though spiritual vitality were indicated by emotional display
 - As though exercise of a particular gift were the ultimate in religious experience
- Avoid putting down the theological concepts or practices of others
- Say everything in the love of Christ
- Seek answers in the Bible when offering guidance

Nature of Our Human Love-4

Team Devotional Guide

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! For in our union with Christ He has blessed us by giving us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world.

Ephesians 1:3

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How have I been blessed?

Prayer Focus: That prisoners will find Christ's blessings

My prayers go out for...

Nature of Our Human Love-4

Flow of the Kairos

The Kairos weekend is a time of transformation. Listen and watch as the Holy Spirit forms new life in hardened souls.

First Day *A time of uncertainty. Superficiality.
Greeting time. Friendliness.
Becoming comfortable.*

Second Day *Begin to set a pattern. Talk, Discussion
Listen, Listen, Love, Love. Openness,
Vulnerability. Walls start to crumble.
Light starts shining in.
More & more freedom and fun.
Music is fun.*

Third Day *Joy starts replacing freedom and fun.
Becoming more & more vulnerable.
Walls coming down. Music inspires.
Friendships developing. Trust growing.
Forgiveness. Testimony.*

Fourth Day *New Birth abounds. Love is evident.
Hunger for more. Want a new way.
Breaking old bonds. Music exalts.
New Birth is a birthday party.
Closing is an Opening.*

Nature of Our Human Love-5

Team Devotional Guide

God. I thirst for you, the living God. When can I go and worship in your presence?

Psalm 42:1-2

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

In what ways does my life give evidence of this Psalm?

Prayer Focus: Those who are not longing for God

My prayers go out for...

Nature of Our Human Love-5

Needing to Be Filled

Don't you find life to be a paradox? You know, the very thing we want least is the most important. Jesus knew this! He talked about it a lot. Has He talked with you about it yet? You know what I mean – the weak shall be strong – the first shall be last – the poor shall be rich – the giver shall be the receiver. God's world is just the opposite of man's world

The world, and our flesh, wants power, prestige, money, material things. We want to be noticed. We want to be in control. We want, we want, we want

Then there is God's way. We are needy. We need to experience love. Unselfish love. Agape kind of love. Love freely given with no expectation of return. Christ's love. That's it!

We need to be filled with the very love of God. Love offered by His people. Love delivered by His people. Love which fills the need we all have deep inside.

Agape. Oh, how important. To miss out on agape is to miss out on the kind of life that God intended for us. Funny thing is – when you receive it, then you have to give it away. That's God's way. Living life with your hand open, ready to give everything away rather than living with a closed fist, holding on to "your" stuff.

Take a look at your life's hand. Is it closed, or is it open?