

# Living In The Overflow of God's Love

## Love Does Not Boast

### Introduction: **The Pecking Order**

"There's always a sense of uncertain peace in a hen house. It's really an interesting thing to watch. There is a senior hen in most hen houses, and that's not based on a loving attitude shown by Mrs. Big. She comes by her title and position in life by sheer grit and aggression. She literally pecks the other hens into submission. And each hen down the line establishes her position in the pecking order by pecking and intimidating every other hen that she can.

Once the pecking order has been established, there is a corporate adherence to this social structure. Those who are low on the pecking order have a tendency to dart and duck into unoccupied areas of the coop, their heads held appropriately low. The seniors strut pretty much as they like, until they meet a more senior hen, then they too duck, dart and scramble for space. The most senior, of course, goes anywhere she pleases, any time she pleases, except when she comes up against a duck,...or me. I am automatically considered senior.

I think there's something in fallen human nature that faintly approximates the pecking order of chickens. Take the school yard bully, for instance. He bullies everyone into submission; until the teacher comes of course, and the teacher is automatically considered to be a potentially better bully.

It seems a lot of people have their eyes on the top rung of the ladder. And it's amazing the lengths to which some will go to establish their superiority. And, like chickens, they often draw blood in their quest for the top."<sup>1</sup>

But God tells us that love has no pecking orders.

1. Jesus teaches this and he has no tolerance for those who practice this behavior.
2. The pecking order may work with chickens, but it will definitely not work in his kingdom.

Just listen to what Jesus says about the "Birds" of his day:

**Matt. 23:5-7** "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries[a] wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'

1. Jesus makes it pretty clear that it's going to be a problem for these "Birds" of the church.
  - a. These are the ones who stand at the top of the ladder (or at least they want to)
  - b. These are the ones who want to flaunt themselves. (their robes, or jewelry, or having the choice seat)
2. Jesus has little tolerance for such behavior. (and there's a reason why)
  - a. How can you love others if your eyes are only on you?
  - b. How can you point to God if you're always pointing to yourself.
  - c. How can someone see God if all they do is show off their feathers?

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<sup>1</sup> **The Pecking Order** (<http://www.crossroads.ca/calcom/pre187.htm>)

God makes it pretty clear in 1 Cor. 13:4 that “love does not boast, it is not proud!”

Discover with me what God’s solution to the man-made pecking order is:

1. God calls his children to change direction
2. Our world is a world of upward mobility.
  - So God tells us to choose downward “servility.”

**Phil. 2:3** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Do you see what God’s doing?

1. He takes this idea of the pecking order and flips the coin!

**Phil 2:5-8** Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Would you do what Jesus did?

1. The light of the world stepping out of heaven and into darkness.
2. Jesus exchanged the worship of angels for the company of killers
3. Jesus-- who could hold the universe in the palm of his hand came into this world through the womb of a maiden

If you were God, would you sleep in a feeding trough, or nurse from a breast, and be wrapped in a swaddling?

- I really don’t think I would!

If you knew that only a few would really care that you came to this earth, would you still come?

If you knew that those you loved would laugh in your face, would you still have a soft spot for them?

If you knew that the tongues you made would end up mocking you, and the mouths you made would end up spitting on you, and the hands you made would pound the nails into your body in order to take your life, would you still make them?

1. Christ did!

Would you regard the immobile and the invalid more important than yourself?

1. Jesus did!

Jesus humbled himself.

1. Jesus went from commanding angels to sleeping in a feeding trough.
2. Jesus went from holding stars to clutching Mary’s finger.
3. The palm that held the universe allowed hands to nail him to the cross.

Jesus did this, because this is what love does.

1. Love puts the beloved before itself

2. Your soul was more important to Jesus than his own blood.
3. Your eternal life was more important than his own earthly life.
4. Jesus gave up his place in heaven so that you could have your place in heaven  
**Jesus loves you that much, and because this is true, you are most important to him.**

**Let me ask you:**

1. What's more important to you?
  - That the work be done, or that you be seen?
2. When a brother or sister in Christ is honored... are you joyful or jealous?
3. Do you have the attitude of Jesus?
4. Do you consider others more important than yourself?

This is a humbling lesson for me to preach:

The story of Penny

**Phil. 2:3** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

1. One day though God convicted me of my self-centeredness.
2. And today when I think of Penny, I'm thankful to God for such a great friend and teacher
  - God uses people like Penny to remind us to put others before ourselves.

God will use people and circumstances to illustrate this important teaching:

**Story of Lloyd Cain and Danny Mercer.**

**A quote from Max:**

True humility is not thinking lowly of yourself, but thinking accurately of yourself. The humble heart does not say, "I can't do anything." But rather, I can't do everything. I know my part and am happy to do it."

And then Paul tells us in **Romans 12:3**

**NASB**

3For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

**Amplified**

3For by the grace (unmerited favor of God) given to me I warn everyone among you not to estimate and think of himself more highly than he ought [not to have an exaggerated opinion of his own importance], but to rate his ability with sober judgment, each according to the degree of faith apportioned by God to him.

The humble heart honors others (the boastful heart only looks to himself):

1. Jesus is our example of this.
2. Jesus was content being known as a servant
3. Jesus, the light stepping down in to darkness, served his followers by washing their feet.
  - Jesus serves us by washing our feet as well.
4. Each morning Jesus gives us beauty
5. Each Sunday, Jesus calls us to his table.

6. And the beautiful thing is-- each moment Jesus dwells in our hearts.

Listen to the words of Jesus: **Luke 12:35-37**

35"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. 37It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.

If this is how Jesus honors us, can we not honor others in the same way?

1. Make people a priority in your life.
2. Be quick to share in the applause of others.
3. And the most difficult one for us-- most of all, consider others as more important than yourself. **(after all this is what love does)**

**1 Cor. 13:4 "Love does not boast, it is not prideful."**

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## Happy Mother's Day Quote

### "Paid In Full"

Author Unknown

A little boy came up to his mother in the kitchen one evening while she was fixing supper, and he handed her a piece of paper that he had been writing on. After his mom dried her hands on an apron, she read it, and this is what it said:

For cutting the grass: \$5.00  
For cleaning up my room this week: \$1.00  
For going to the store for you: .50  
Baby-sitting my kid brother while you went shopping: .25  
Taking out the garbage: \$1.00  
For getting a good report card: \$5.00  
For cleaning up and raking the yard: \$2.00

Total owed: \$14.75

Well, his mother looked at him standing there, and the boy could see the memories flashing through her mind. She picked up the pen, turned over the paper he'd written on, and this is what she wrote:

"For the nine months I carried you while you grew inside me: No Charge.

For all the nights that I've sat up with you, doctored and prayed for you: No Charge.

For all the trying times, and all the tears that you've caused through the years: No Charge.

For all the nights that were filled with dread, and for the worries I knew were ahead: No Charge.

For the toys, food, clothes, and even wiping your nose: No Charge.

When you add it up, Son, the cost of my love is: No Charge."

When the boy finished reading what his mother had written, there were big tears in his eyes, and he looked straight up at his mother and said, "Mom, I sure do love you."

And then he took the pen and in great big letters he wrote: "PAID IN FULL".