

# Stuck in an Elevator

## Message 1: LOVE

Scott Kramer

### Top Ten Rules of being stuck in an Elevator: “Elevator Etiquette 101”

(Elevatortrules.com – there is actually an extensive website devoted to this!!!)

1. It is not permissible to look anyone in the eyes; the only appropriate place to look is at the floor or at the numbers.
2. Conversations in the elevator are generally discouraged. However, it is acceptable to continue a conversation that was started before boarding as long as it is not clearly irritating others in the car.
3. While on the elevator, there will always be one person who will comment on how slow the elevator is, and they will probably push the floor button repeatedly to make it go faster.
4. (this is actually on the website!!!) Pay attention to which buttons have been pressed when you enter the elevator. Once a button has been pressed, nothing more can be done. Re-pressing the floor button will not make the elevator get you to your floor any faster. AND, re-pressing is disrespectful to the person that has already pressed the button, and is generally irritating.
5. The first person onto the elevator gets the ‘command’ position and gets to push the buttons. This allows them to feel important when other people ask them to push the button for their floor.
6. If you get off on the wrong floor but realize it upon leaving the elevator, it is much too embarrassing to immediately re-enter. The proper procedure is to wait for another elevator.
7. There will always be one person in the elevator who thinks that a bond can form between you and them between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. (Jenn said that is her!!)
8. If you board an elevator with your significant other, keep touching limited to hand-holding. Do not engage in a public display of affection while there are other passengers present. Intimate recreation in an empty elevator is discouraged, and should be conducted at your own risk.
9. Give strangers the most personal space possible. If you are with someone you don't know, you must stand no less than two inches from your opposite walls. Any closer and you enter the elevator's ‘neutral zone’ used for entry and exit passing.
10. There is zero tolerance for bodily functions whether or not anyone else is riding.

**What on earth is the significance here???** - “Elevators force us to be close to people that we may have never chosen to be around otherwise.”

**The connection??** The church, like an elevator, forces us to be around people we may have never chosen to be around!! This is the family of God, and you don't get to choose who gets to be a part of this community.

- People who don't look like you, act like you, dress like you, don't laugh at your jokes...

If you haven't noticed that this is true about God's family yet, you are one of two people:

1. You are very spiritually mature and are able to overlook flaws and love people in spite of your differences
2. You are only hanging out with clones of yourself and you haven't yet experienced the real community of God.

**SECRET NEWS FLASH:** Sometimes Christians don't get along!!! - The family and community of God can be difficult at times!!

- If you are part of the family of God, you are STUCK with your siblings...
- If all you have is your own private relationship with God and no relationship with the community of faith, then you are missing out on all that God has for you.

**Series Big Idea:** God wants His People to Enjoy Healthy Biblical Community.

**1 Corinthians 1:10** "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought."

**Q.** So, HOW do we achieve Healthy Community??

**In an elevator, there are 'unwritten' rules; In God's family, there are written rules – they are the "one another" statements of Scripture:**

- There are many 'one anothers' in the bible, but Tonight's is both the simplest and at the same time deeply profound - found in John 13

**Tonight:** **John 13:34-35** "<sup>34</sup> A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love (agape) one another."

**Message Big Idea:** The Command to "Love One Another" is the Foundation for Healthy (Biblical) Community

1. **This is a New Command** (He didn't say "a new *suggestion* I give you")
  - **How was this new??** Before, a person was identified by their clothing as to which group they were part of – Pharisees, Sadducees, Roman...
  - It was new in that now LOVE would be the identifying marker of His people – not just clothing like on Pharisees.
2. **Our love for one another must mirror Christ's love for us.** "As I have loved you..." (if you think you have mastered this concept, guess again!!) – more on this later – a very high standard!!
3. **Our love for one another proves our authenticity as Christ's disciples.**
  - Your ability to love each other, in this room, is your defining, identifying badge of Christianity!! It informs the world that you belong to Jesus!
  - Jesus was giving the unbelieving world permission to judge us by our love for each other!
  - Our love for one another is *supposed to* look different than the love that is between others outside the family of God.

**ILL>** I think the biggest difference is **Conditional** vs. **Unconditional!!**

- Some may say 'unconditional love' is impossible for humans. I disagree. Did Jesus love unconditionally? - we are to *mirror* him!
- **DOSE OF REALITY:** Loving One Another is often uncomfortable, and rarely convenient; but it is part of being in Community!!

**We could spend hours and hours defining what love is and what it should look like in the family of God!! There are many scriptures that could be unfolded...**

### **3 Truths Concerning the Command to 'Love One Another'**

#### **1. The Command to "Love One Another" is one of the Greatest Personal Challenges in the Believer's Life.**

- For example, let me read one of these 'defining passages' and you can evaluate yourself and how your love within the community of faith measures up to these expectations: (FYI, this isn't just a 'wedding' scripture!!) **How are you doing with this???**

**1 Cor. 13:4-8** <sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup>It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup>Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. <sup>8</sup>Love never fails."

**Again, our love for one another should mirror Christ's love for us...**

**LESSON:** You can often tell Love by what it does: Love Sacrifices its own desires for someone else's benefit. (b/c it *mirrors* Christ's love! - LOVE is an ACTION!!)

**(ILL)** "Self-centered" vs. "Others-centered" - Auth. Christian Love is *others-centered*  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790) "He that falls in love with himself will have no rivals."

#### **2. The Command to "Love One Another" is Effective only if it is Sincere. (genuine; w/o deceit, hypocrisy, or falsehood)**

**Rom. 12:9-10** <sup>9</sup>Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. (philadelphia) Honor one another above yourselves."

#### **3. The Command to "Love One Another" is the Only Way to Experience True Christian Comm-unity.**

**Col. 3:12-13** <sup>12</sup>Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves (be covered in) with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (great recipe for living together in unity!!) <sup>13</sup>Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. <sup>14</sup> And over all these virtues put on love, (agape) which binds them all together in perfect unity."

"**Agape** love is... profound concern for the well-being of another, without any desire to control that other, to be thanked by that other, or to enjoy the process." MADELEINE L'ENGLE

**Col. 3:12-12** (NLT) “<sup>12</sup> Since God *chose* you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> You must make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. <sup>14</sup> And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony.”

- ‘Perfect Harmony’ is the full expression of Love in Action – and perfect unity will not be achieved as long as someone stands alone, being left on the outside of community.

**Q. Is Paul just a dreamy idealist, wanting ‘perfect unity’?? NO!!!**

- **True Love** Resists ‘*Exclusivity in Friendship*’ (Cliques); Instead, True Love is Including, Accepting, Embracing
- **Love** is the very foundation, the cornerstone to all healthy relationships/community

**ILL>** Convicted for possession of drugs, lead singer of the rock band Stone Temple Pilots, Scott Weiland, talked to Rolling Stone about how being in jail impacted his life: "A lot of my ways of thinking have backfired on me. My stubbornness. My pride. My arrogance... The difficult thing is that those defects of character become assets in my business, the rock and roll world. But I’ve changed. NOW, It’s not me thinking less of myself, it’s just me thinking of myself less.”

- That phrase epitomizes LOVE – thinking of yourself less and of others more!!
- Christian Love is “**Others First**” mentality

**(ILL)** “Forgetting oneself is not a refinement of love. It is a first condition of love.”

## Conclusion:

**Rom. 12:9-17** (The Message)

<sup>9-10</sup> Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle.

<sup>11-13</sup> Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality.

<sup>14-16</sup> Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down. Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody.

<sup>17</sup> Don't hit back; **discover beauty in everyone.**

“Love is the one treasure that multiplies by division. It is the one gift that grows bigger the more you take from it. It is the one business in which it pays to be an absolute spendthrift. You can give it away, throw it away, empty your pockets, shake the basket, turn the glass upside down, and tomorrow you will have more than ever.”