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## Let Yourself Be Loved

Learn to receive another's love.

**Jerry D. Brown**



When we read verses about God's love and about the importance of loving others, we seldom view these words in light of allowing ourselves to be loved. Do you let yourself be loved? Many of us can grow in this area. Letting someone else love you can be one of the most difficult things you do. But, is it any more difficult than building defensive walls of protection from this very thing? Have you ever wondered how much time and energy you'd save if you switched from being an un-lovable person to a lovable one? I'd say "a lot." Why? Because it takes far more effort to push people away than it does to allow them to come in.

You can't help but view - "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall



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all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" - from a "lover" perspective instead of as a "lovee." (John 13:34-35)

I have known great men and women, ones adept at extending the hand of love to others, seemingly incapable of receiving love into their lives. They give, give, give, until they seem to have no more within them. Yet,

when called upon to receive, they appear as rocks, inflexible to human emotions and desires, realities that pound ever so gently on the doors of their hearts. What brings a person to the place where they love, but won't be loved?

Perhaps Peter can show us the answer:

Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. (John 13:36)

Peter said this because Jesus told him "Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." Verse 33. Jesus was telling him how to handle the separation. Peter became completely distracted on this point. Jesus answered his question in 21 verses. Then he does something

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remarkable. He brings the focus right back to the original line of love.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. (John 14:21)

Can people become so distracted with life and busy-ness that they completely miss the most important issues? Yes they can. Peter was. Asking questions isn't wrong. Missing the point, though, can mislead you for a lifetime.

It is just as important to love, as it is to receive love. A Christian must be willing to receive love. Without this balance, life will ache, be lopsided, frustrating, and unsatisfying. Can you imagine Jesus Christ manifesting himself to you? It is totally and entirely possible. What if you were one of those who refuse love? Then what? What would

that experience be like? Would it be an experience where you spend your time figuring out how to adjust to being loved? Or would it be a wonderful experience of full love between the both of you?

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. (John 15:9)

***This is why I can say, "in marriages, it is often the woman who does not allow herself to be loved."***

How can you continue in his love if you won't allow people to love you? Simply put, you can't!

The Corinthian Christians must have been really hard-hearted in this area as is expressed by Paul:

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. (2

Cor 2:4)

Their refusal of Paul's love caused him much affliction and anguish. Have you ever tried to love someone who refused your love? What did it do to you? I would imagine you experienced some affliction and anguish of heart too. Let's turn the table. Have you ever refused someone's love? Did you know you have the power to afflict and cause anguish in your lover's life? "What power we have if we only knew it" comes to mind, a phrase often placed in a positive light. It applies to negatively used power just as well.

There are many situations requiring a reception of love. That does not mean you are to receive everyone's love. Some people are bad for you. Their association can bring disaster. I am not talking about those kinds of lovers. I am talking about people you live with right now, people you confide in and rely on. I am talking about your brother or sister, your friends, your spouse.

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Can you imagine the marriage problems that would arise if one or both refuses love? Disorder in marriage happens 1.) If the husband refuses to love his wife, and 2.) If the wife refuses his love. Disorder comes from the refusal to abide by Ephesian's doctrine:

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband. (Eph 5:33)

The man is commanded to love the wife. This means that it is his responsibility to maintain the "love standard." The man's real problem comes if he doesn't love himself. He has to get this right first. Then he can love his wife. Her life will be much easier when her man loves her. Without this, the wife loses a primary source of love.

It is NOT the wife's responsibility to maintain Ephesians love standard! The woman is generally the more

delicate creature in marriage, but she is not commanded to uphold the love standard. The man is. WOW! How's about them apples? The woman is commanded to respect her man, and the context is along the line of "his love for her." If she disregards his love, refuses his love, does not allow herself to be loved, you have a gross lack of respect and disorder. This is why

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I can say, "in marriages, it is often the woman who does not allow herself to be loved."

How many of you married women have turned your hearts against your husbands in this regard? I've got to address marriages here, manliness and womanliness specifically, so if you are a "metro-man" or a feminist, you'd better run for cover. Most men go the extra mile to provide for and care for their families. It is built into their nature. They stop only

when they are beaten down for so long that they don't have the strength to get back up. If you fell for a weak man seemingly incapable of loving you, you fell for the wrong man. That was your mistake. Now you have to make the best of it. Generally speaking, a married man will bend over backwards for his wife. If the woman respects her man – receives his love – she automatically makes his job easier. If you do this, I applaud you, but I'd like to be really honest. I haven't seen very many women who fit this bill. In most marriages I have seen today, it is truly a job for a man to continue loving his wife. That is a sad fact.

Yes, there are still some fine marriages, but there are far more tainted ones. With the American divorce rate at over 50% for first marriages and close to 75% for second ones, we should consider the causes. Our men are taught to become more feminine and our women are taught to become more masculine. Nothing will bring more chaos into a marriage than this kind of imbalance.

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Why is this? Perhaps it is due to inward yearnings that both have, yearnings a man has for respect and adoration, and yearnings a woman has for love from a man. If he doesn't get what he needs, he starts to turn into what it is he is seeking—a woman. If she doesn't get what she wants, she starts to turn into what she is seeking—a man. A woman wants her man to be a "real" man, whatever that means to her. She'll nag him to death to make her point(s), but as soon as her man asks her to be a "real" woman, he gets all kinds of fights. She makes demands on him that even God couldn't meet. As soon as he turns around and asks for one small favor, the battle has begun.

A "real" man loves his wife unendingly, acts like a man with strength and courage, and rules over his household as God commanded him. There are some out there and if you are one, I applaud you as well. A "real" woman receives his love unconditionally in each and every area of life, refuses to act like a man, revives and maintains

virtues meant just for her, and runs her household according to the dictates of God's Word. How many have you seen lately? Can you imagine what your schools, workplaces, towns, cities and countries would be like if marriages were maintained in this fashion. Why, it would be heaven on earth! I thank God for my wife. She is a real woman, one who refuses to act like a

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man, one who maintains godly virtues as listed in Proverbs 31, and one who runs her household with a truly godly hand. She supports me and returns my love. She has an undying commitment to maintain Ephesians' order. She has never and would never disgrace me in public, and she won't even do that in private. She is an example for the world to see and for this she will be rewarded.

We have got to get past the smoke screens of satan and into

the glorious system of God. God intended marriages to run a certain way, along certain lines. There is so much smoke and so many mirrors that most cannot see God's way clearly any more. Lack of vision is compounded by internalized pains and agonies brought about by worldly means and ways. We have got to recognize the source of our troubles and counter them with Christian power and persuasion – things that come from within. Isn't it about time you drop the walls of protection and let love in? Isn't it about time you realize that you have been the source of many of your own troubles? Isn't it about time you stop pushing people away and start receiving them into your life? I'd say it is. There is no better time than today to start doing things God's way!

And the Lord make **you** to increase and abound in **love** one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward **you**: (1 Th 3:12)

Whose business is it anyway?

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When you set it in your heart to love and to receive love, that act automatically becomes the Lord's business. The Lord refers to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has made this a personal issue and so should you. Here is where I'd like to draw your attention to what "love" is.

All usages of "love" in the previous verses are from the Greek word agape. This form of love refers to a lifestyle of disciplined living as outlined in 1 Corinthians 13. It is a lifestyle composed of specific characteristics. It is NOT a feeling, warmth in the heart, a fuzziness all over, or anything dealing with human emotions. Agape's lifestyle commands discipline, specifically along the lines of these listed characteristics.

Charity suffereth long [is slow to anger], *and* is kind [is beneficial]; charity envieth not [has godly zeal]; charity vaunteth not itself [is not a braggart], is not puffed up [has no prideful

thoughts], Doth not behave itself unseemly [has no manners open to censure], seeketh not her own [seek that others have salvation], is not easily provoked [maintains a fearless godly defense], thinketh no evil [does not love money]; Rejoiceth not in iniquity [has no injustice],

***So, here we are again, at another crossroad in life. To allow yourself to be loved or not.***

but rejoiceth in the truth [has no wrongfulness]; Beareth all things [maintains patience], believeth all things [energizes believing], hopeth all things [maintains endurance], endureth all things [maintains patience endurance]. Charity never faileth: (1 Cor 13:4-8)

So, here we are again, at another crossroad in life. To allow yourself to be loved or not. I ask

you to look deep within yourself to determine if you refuse or accept other's love. If you don't accept love, you may have a life of great structure, filled with well-meaning actions, but your heart will also have a deep and persistent ache of loneliness. No matter the outward actions, nothing can resolve this discomfort save the receipt of another's love. Let that special someone love you. Stop throwing up your hands of refusal and receive what they have to give. Love doesn't cause pain. Its mismanagement does. Depending on your age, what was once a deep well of love may now be all but dried up. Why is this so? Because you have spent your life giving, but not receiving. As long as there is water on the other side, the open valve brings forth water. If the supply stops, so does the outflow from the valve. Love is no different.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, **and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a**

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**tinkling cymbal.** And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, **and have not charity, I am nothing.** And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, **and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.** (1 Cor 13:1-3)

To have means to receive it into your lifestyle. Not only from God's Word, but also from others. Let yourself be loved – starting today!

God Bless You!

Jerry D. Brown

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