

## **A Plan to Practice Love**

*Presented by Mary Lowman*

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### **Day One**

Everyone talks about love, so what in the world could I say about love that hasn't already been said thousands of times and much more eloquently? I find talking about love is pretty easy, but putting it into practice can be quite challenging.

Love is such an abused word that it almost becomes meaningless in today's culture. But when we understand the Bible's definition of love, it becomes quite a challenge. If you and I are going to be the kind of lovers the Bible says we should be, we'll need some help in knowing how to practice love. That's my goal this week.

I've prepared a two-week plan to help you and me learn to practice love by the Bible's definition. The truth is, if you're not intentional about putting God's principles into practice, they just remain words on the pages of your Bible. They don't become transformational in your life. That's why I often use specific plans, in writing, to keep me on track and help me do what I really want to do.

This two-week plan is based on 1 Corinthians 13, which gives us very explicit and practical instruction on just what it means to love. It has very little to do with our emotions, but it has everything to do with our attitudes and our actions. This plan will help you focus on one thing at a time—one characteristic of real love each day—and give you ideas on how to implement them in your life.

The Apostle Paul prayed for the believers in Ephesus that they would be "rooted and established in love." In John 13, Jesus says to his disciples,

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another (John 13:34-35).*

I think it's so interesting Jesus says this is a new command; loving one another wasn't required under the Law but under the New Covenant, under grace, we have a new commandment, and it is to love as we have been loved by Jesus.

I invite you to join me in this two-week plan to practice love. It's important we take this love thing seriously, and if you will join me in learning to practice love, I think it will be transformational for you and me.

### **Day Two**

Do you practice love? My challenge to you is to make love your theme word for at least two short weeks. John wrote,

*Dear children, let us not love with words or speech, but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:18).*

To help you and me put love into action, I have put together a two-week plan to learn to practice love, based on the definition of love we find in 1 Corinthians 13. You'll find this plan on our website—

christianworkingwoman.org—or we'll be glad to mail one to you. It's just a method you can use to keep you focused on growing in love.

For example, the plan includes reading 1 Corinthians 13 every day for two weeks and then focusing on one aspect of love each day. The first day's focus is patience, because love is patient. But if you're like me, patience does not come naturally for you. What can you do to learn to practice patience?

Here's my suggestion for Day 1: Think about who or what makes you impatient and then pray for that person or situation specifically. Perhaps it's a person you work with who just really tries your patience, and because of that, you've had some harsh words or at least harsh attitudes and thoughts about that person. But have you ever prayed specifically that God would help you show patience to this person?

When you do this, you begin to see that person the way God sees them, and you understand why they behave as they do. That, in turn, helps you be more patient with them as you look at them through God's eyes. Praying specifically for a person or situation will unleash God's power in you to learn to practice patience. And when you practice patience, you are practicing love! I promise—it works!

### Day Three

No doubt you know this one verse from the Bible that says *God is love*. But what does that mean? This verse in 1 John 4 goes on to say,

*Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him (1 John 4:16).*

Living in love—that's my focus for this week, and I'm challenging you to join me as we undertake a two-week plan to learn to live in love.

Living in love takes practice. This plan suggests reading 1 Corinthians 13 every day for two weeks. It's a short chapter—won't take you long at all—but after two weeks of soaking truth into your mind, you will have a much clearer understanding of what living in love means.

Then, on each of those 14 days, I suggest you focus on one specific attribute of love. For example, on Day 10 the focus is "looking for the good in others." That's because 1 Corinthians 13:6 says *love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth*. That means you're intentionally looking for the good in others instead of focusing on the things that irritate you.

That could be someone you really don't like, so you pray God will show you something about this person that is good. Or it could be your mate or someone close to you. Maybe you've been so focused on what you don't like about them you've forgotten all the good things you do like. If you pray and sincerely look for the good in others, you will be practicing love—you will be loving like Jesus loves. How exciting is that?!

God taught me this principle many years ago when I worked for a difficult man. All I saw was his bad points. Then I finally asked God to help me see him the way God saw him, and it changed me. I saw that he had outstanding business knowledge and acumen which I could learn from him, but until I intentionally prayed and looked for the good in him, I couldn't see it at all.

We just have to get serious and specific about living in love. I hope you'll take my challenge to get my two-week plan on our website and join me in this adventure.

### Day Four

If I asked you to define love, you might come up with an emotional description, because we typically think of love as it relates to our feelings. We have warm feelings for people we love, or our dogs, or any

number of other things that we “love.” But the Bible’s definition of love as found in 1 Corinthians 13 is all about actions and attitudes, not about feelings.

Did you know love is a skill you can learn? Like any other skill, the more you practice love, the better lover you become. In 1 Timothy 4, Paul exhorts Timothy to set an example for believers in the way he loves. And he says,

*Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress (1 Timothy 4:15).*

I’ve come up with a two-week plan to learn to practice love, based on 1 Corinthians 13. This plan will help you to be diligent in learning to practice love, and believe me, your progress will be very evident.

It’s an easy plan; it won’t take a lot of time. You just read 1 Corinthians 13 every day for the two weeks, and then you focus each day on one of the specific attributes of love found in that chapter. For example, on Day 6 the focus is on Verse 5, which says, *love is not rude, it is not self-seeking*. The challenge for that day is to practice very good manners. Just simple things, like remembering to say thank you, to let others go ahead of you, to open doors for others, to let other cars in your lane of traffic, to relinquish your seat to someone else.

Love is not rude, but sometimes I can be careless in my attention to simple everyday manners, and that means I need to practice love by having better manners. And to do that, I must intentionally work at it. Now, the secret to success in learning to practice love is to pray these love actions into your life. On Day 6 pray that God would remind you to be aware of practicing good manners—to go out of your way to be polite. When you do, you’re practicing love.

If you seriously started each day with a focus on becoming a better lover, by God’s standards, can you not see how it could truly make a difference in you? I urge you to join me; go to our website—[christianworkingwoman.org](http://christianworkingwoman.org)—and print out the two-week plan or call us and we’ll mail it to you.

## Day Five

Would you like to become known as a person of extraordinary love? It is possible for you and me to become really good at loving other people the way God wants us to. But it won’t just happen. We have to learn how to practice love in our everyday lives.

My challenge to you is to truly focus on loving like Jesus loves. I am offering you a two-week plan to learn to practice love, which is based on the description of love found in 1 Corinthians 13. God’s love is an action, not a feeling, so we can learn to be a true lover as we learn to practice those attributes of love found in this wonderful chapter.

This plan is available to you right now online at [christianworkingwoman.org](http://christianworkingwoman.org). It’s simple, easy, and doesn’t take much time. But it could be absolutely life-changing for you because as the famous chapter reminds us, love never fails. It never fails to transform us as we learn how to love better and better, and it transforms those to whom we extend God’s love.

Our motivation and power for learning to practice love has to come from God’s love for us. John wrote:

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are (1 John 3:1)!*

In his Gospel, John identifies himself as “the one Jesus loves.” That was his identity, his motivation, his inspiration—Jesus loved him, and he lived in that love.

As you and I live more and more in the truth that we are loved by the eternal God, that nothing can ever separate us from the love that is in Christ Jesus, and that God's love for us will never change, the more we are capable of loving others. Then we will have the love of God to give to others, and we can truly practice love on a daily basis and become powerful transmitters of God's love to our world.

I hope you will join me and make loving God and loving people your primary focus. I believe my simple plan will help you, but however you do it, make love your life's goal. Pray that you will be more and more rooted and grounded in love. Remember, that two-week plan is available now at [christianworkingwoman.org](http://christianworkingwoman.org).