

The Transforming Power of Love

Presented by Mary Lowman

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Day One

My question for you today is: What are the transformational points in your life? What person or situation or circumstance has made such a difference in your life that you can say, "That transformed me"?

Transformed is a very strong word. It means a real change in our nature, character, or appearance. Something permanent, not temporary. If you think carefully about it, my guess is the transformational points in your life came because of love. Love has the power to transform us.

For example, getting to know Jesus and accepting his gift of salvation certainly transforms our nature, doesn't it? The Bible says we become new creations in Christ; the new has come, the old has gone. The love of God transforms us like no other love ever could.

No wonder John 3:16 is the favorite verse in the Bible for many people.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

It's because of that incredible love that we can have eternal life. I love the old hymn that begins "Loved with everlasting love, led by grace that love to know." And then ends by declaring, "In a love that will not cease, I am his and he is mine."

Knowing I am the one Jesus loves has transformed me, how about you? I simply can't get through that hymn without tears of joy just knowing how God—the God of all the universe—loves me. Love is transformational. There's no doubt about it.

Secular studies have repeatedly shown how love transforms people. They tell us knowing we are loved actually changes our brains. And of course, we know people who are not loved as children grow up with inner coffers that are horrifically empty. And this lack of love leads to all manner of other emotional and mental issues.

Have you been transformed by the power of the love of Jesus? Have you accepted his free gift of salvation by confessing your sins and believing he is the Son of God who paid the price for your sin, because he loves you? If not, there is no doubt an empty space inside of you that is love-starved for Jesus, and I would urge you even today to simply confess your sins to him and accept the love he offers.

Day Two

Love transforms people. The Bible is full of stories of transformational love; we are admonished throughout Scripture to love as we have been loved by God. We know God not only loves, but he also is love. That's his very nature, and we are created by this God to love and be loved.

It is God's love for us that transforms us, and then, it is our privilege and responsibility to share that love with others. Romans 5:5 tells us God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. When we are born into God's family through faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us, and he simply pours God's love into our hearts. If others are going to know God's love, they must experience his love through me and you as God's love in us is shared with them.

Is there someone in your life right now who is trouble for you? It could be a coworker or a boss, a child or a mate, a friend or foe. You know what they need? Love. I know—they're probably not very lovable, but that doesn't change the fact that they need love! What could you do today to show love to that person—undeserved, unconditional love? Maybe it's a phone call or a note or a gift or a listening ear. Maybe it's a lack of criticism and condemnation, a willingness to love them as they are in their unlovable condition.

We often get so busy in our day-to-day lives we forget to stop and express love. Frankly, we're always ready to receive love but not always prepared to give it. I find I must become intentional about expressing love; I have to remember to do it. I often take for granted the love I receive from others—my family and friends—without focusing on the love they need from me.

Maybe you're feeling very unloved. If you're waiting to be loved before you give love, you've got the cart before the horse. It's the principle of sowing and reaping—you reap what you sow. You need love? Then love someone else and love will come back to you. We can only receive love when we are intentional about giving love.

Love is transformational—and we can become God's agents of change to people in our lives by simply taking time each day to give love—and love can be given in many ways. Think of some new ways to share God's love today; it will transform your day, I promise.

Day Three

I'm examining how love transforms people—it truly does! Researchers tell us that loving and being loved actually changes our brains, our thought patterns, and our reactions.

That's what God's love for us can do. It has the power to make us productive, grateful, kind, and generous toward everyone, even people who are not easy to love. For example, here's one of the changes we will see in others as we become better and better at sharing God's love with them: Love has the power to inspire someone to greatness.

Do you know someone who is wasting their potential? Maybe they don't even know they have potential, or perhaps they're fearful of trying. I wonder—if they knew you see potential in them, if you loved them by encouraging them, could it empower them to reach their potential?

Do you remember when Jesus called Simon as a disciple and gave him the name of Peter? He referred to Peter as a rock and said Peter would play a pivotal role in establishing the early church and spreading the gospel. Was Simon Peter a rock when Jesus called him? No, he had a long way to go before he reached "rock status," but Jesus called him what he would become, and Peter became the rock of the early church.

I have a dear friend who many years ago was bothered by a stutter. But I saw potential in her; she had the instincts of a performer, and I encouraged her to take small parts in a ministry at church that put her in front of people. She loved doing it, so she joined Toastmasters, where she learned to make presentations. Now she is very polished and gifted as a speaker and actor, and that stutter has been conquered. I just loved the potential I saw in her, and she has done what she never thought she could do as a result.

Your love of encouragement could transform someone's life. Don't underestimate the transforming power of love.

Day Four

Why is it so important for us to be loved? We were created by God with this need to love and be loved. This need is at the core of your being, and if you don't feel you are loved, it leaves a huge empty space in your sense of worth and value.

The sad truth is if you grew up without feeling loved as you should have been, it can leave you emotionally needy, and that means you can't love others as you should. You don't have love to give, so to speak. This lack of love and loving then can lead to all kinds of emotional and mental problems, such as resentment, bitterness, a judgmental spirit, or depression. And then your lack of love from others begets more lack of love from you to others. It becomes a vicious cycle.

This great need for love can lead you to look for love in all the wrong places, as the song goes, and put you on an endless quest for acquiring love, and that quest actually takes you further and further away from true, unconditional love. Can you relate to this? No doubt you know people who are on or have been on that futile quest for love.

Here's the incredibly good news: God's love for you can fill up that emptiness inside, which then gives you the ability to love others, and then you'll discover the love you give others comes back to you. We get love by giving it away, and we have love to give away because we know we are loved by Jesus.

If you want to fill up your inner coffers with love, find some ways today to love others. Who is in your life today? How can you give them love? Here are some suggestions:

- Purpose in your heart to find something good about that person or people in your life today and express it in words to them.
- Listen to someone's story without criticizing or lecturing them—even without giving advice.
- Call someone who is needy and say, "I'm here for you if you need me."
- Compliment someone on a job well done, an attractive outfit, a kindness offered.
- Smile!

It doesn't take much to share love with someone else. We just have to remember to do it. Of course, we need to pray God will help us to become lovers—people who willingly and frequently share his love with others. Remember, love begets love. Try it! You won't be sorry you did.

Day Five

When was the last time you told someone, "I love you"? I hope it hasn't been long since you expressed love to someone, and I hope it hasn't been long since someone returned that expression of love to you. Love has the power to transform us, both as givers and receivers of love.

I'm not speaking necessarily of romantic love, though of course that certainly can transform us, can't it? Rather, just love in general—knowing that we are loved and being able to love others can change you, put a smile on your face, put a lift in your step, transform the mundaneness of life into something meaningful. All because we are loved and are loving.

That's why Paul wrote to the Corinthians that love never fails. What else in life can you say never fails? The best computer you can buy can and does fail. The best friend can fail you. The best job can fail to deliver what you need or want. God can never fail you, and God is love. Love never fails.

It never fails to transform a person who is difficult, though it may take longer than you want. I remember when a friend of mine, Beth, worked for a very difficult manager. No one liked her; she was demanding, unfriendly, sour—just a miserable person. God used a verse—Proverbs 19:6—to tell Beth how to show love to this woman. That verse says, “Many curry favor with a ruler, and everyone is the friend of one who gives gifts.” She knew God wanted her to give this woman a gift on her birthday.

She bought something small but thoughtful, wrote a note thanking her for pursuing excellence, and left it on her desk on her birthday. This simple act of love transformed that woman, and she and Beth became friends from that point on. With tears in her eyes, she said to Beth that no one had ever given her a birthday gift before. Because Beth was willing to obey God’s voice to show love to this woman, it transformed her, filling up a huge empty space inside of her and changing that relationship.

Love is powerful. It never fails. I hope you will bask in the incredibly good news that God loves you and nothing can separate you from his love. And then you will become more and more intentional about loving others. It has the power to transform you, your relationships, your attitude, your productivity—love transforms us. Believe me, it’s true.