

CAREY SCOTT



ENCOURAGING DEVOTIONS
FOR A WOMAN OF GOD



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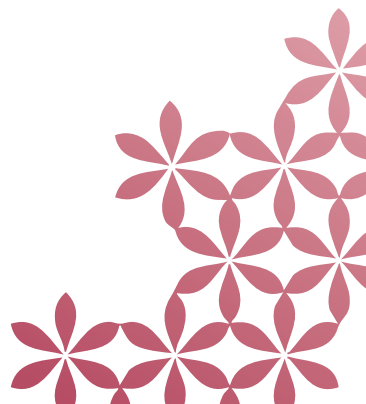
Introduction



God's greatest commands are to love Him and to love others. They are also the hardest! But as we grow in our faith and deepen our relationship with the Father, our desire and ability to love will flow from it.

Let this book help you understand what genuine and godly love looks like and how to walk it out in your life daily. Discover ways to express love powerfully, even when it feels difficult. Learn about God's love for you and how to accept it. Find meaningful ways to convey your love to the Lord.

As you turn each page, you'll be encouraged to embrace compassion in new and fresh ways. You will be challenged to think and act differently. If you allow it, clothing your heart in love will change your life.





When you ask,
God will mature your
ability to love patiently,
kindly, and humbly.



A Work in Progress

Love is patient; love is kind. Love isn't envious, doesn't boast, brag, or strut about. There's no arrogance in love.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 VOICE

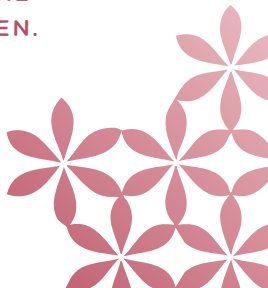


The truth is that loving others is hard. No matter how we slice it, being caring and compassionate doesn't always come easily. But the Bible is very clear about how we are to treat others, whether easy or difficult.

Ask God to grow love within you so you're able to obey His command. Rather than feel like a failure when you mess up and aren't as patient and kind as you'd like to be, remember you are a work in progress. Choose to celebrate the accomplishments of those around you so jealousy can't tangle your heart and mind with unhealthy feelings and thoughts. Always be humble, never thinking you are better than others.

When you ask, God will mature your ability to love patiently, kindly, and humbly.

DEAR LORD, HELP ME GROW TO LOVE
OTHERS IN THE RIGHT WAYS SO
THEY ARE BLESSED AND YOU ARE
GLORIFIED. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



With Excellence, Not Perfection

Never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong.

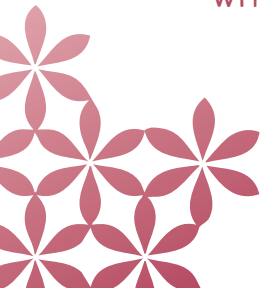
1 CORINTHIANS 13:5 TLB



How can you express genuine love to others when your words are rude and your demands are selfish? How can family and friends feel warm fuzzies from you when you're grouchy and moody? When you refuse to forgive and instead keep a scorecard of grievances, how are they to experience your kindness?

Be the kind of woman who loves others with excellence. . . not perfection. There will be times you get it very wrong—be it by accident or on purpose. You'll lose your cool, use hurtful words, entertain vengeful thoughts, and act in damaging ways. Your best efforts will fall flat. But in those moments, God will be there to convict and restore so you can apologize and rebuild.

DEAR LORD, HELP ME SHOW LOVE
WITH EXCELLENCE, NOT PERFECTION.
IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



Love for the Suffering

*It isn't happy when injustice is done,
but it is happy with the truth.*

1 CORINTHIANS 13:6 GW



When we love someone, it means we don't celebrate evil winning in their circumstances. When they lose or fail, or experience rejection or betrayal, we are burdened for them. We feel what they're feeling. Our heart breaks for what breaks theirs, and we stand with them as they navigate the fallout, seeking truth and healing from God.

Some people may secretly snicker, thinking they got what they had coming. They may feel superior because it didn't happen to them. But as believers, we should be flooded with compassion. We should be quick to come alongside those who are suffering. We should reach out to see how we can best support the hurting. Look for immediate and meaningful ways to express love.

DEAR LORD, OPEN MY EYES TO SEE WHEN
OTHERS ARE SUFFERING, AND EMPOWER
ME TO FIND WAYS TO SUPPORT THEM SO
THEY FEEL LOVED. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



Dependable Love

If you love someone, you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:7 TLB



This is a call to believe the best in others. It's knowing they're not perfect, but purposeful in how they live. It's being a faithful friend and knowing when to speak hard truth laced with love. It's caring enough to challenge their wrong thinking, calling them higher when necessary. It's defending their name and being a steadfast champion as they walk through life's storms. Loving others is active.

This takes intentionality, because life is busy and sometimes overwhelming with responsibility. Being loyal to others is only born from a heart full of faith, a direct result of time spent with God. He is the one who will give us the desire and ability to offer dependable love to others.

DEAR LORD, FILL ME WITH LOVE
FOR OTHERS THAT IS FAITHFUL AND
RELIABLE. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



The Investment of Love

All the special gifts and powers from God will someday come to an end, but love goes on forever.

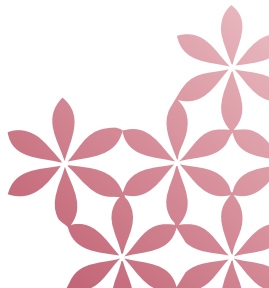
1 CORINTHIANS 13:8 TLB



There is an ending for so many things here on earth. Eventually, even God's gifts like prophecy, speaking in tongues, and knowledge will be fulfilled, lose their value, and cease to exist. But scripture says love will never end. It will never fade out or become unimportant. It will never fail.

Knowing that, invest heavily in it. Look for ways to express compassion and kindness every day. Ask the Lord to open your eyes and stir your spirit. From feeding a stranger on the street, donating to a worthy charity, cleaning a friend's home while she's sick, or speaking encouragement to the weary, let love be a driving force. Look for ways to be God's hands and feet to a hurting world. Know that each time you show benevolence, the Lord takes notice. He is well pleased with your kindness.

**DEAR LORD, HELP ME INVEST IN LOVING
OTHERS! IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.**



The Greatest Is Love

But now faith, hope, and love remain; these three virtues must characterize our lives. The greatest of these is love.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:13 VOICE

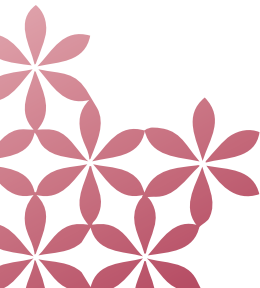


At the center of God's character is love. This is foundational to the Christian life because loving God and others is the greatest command. From this, we can clearly understand the value the Lord puts on it. It's at the heart of everything.

But why is love more important than faith and hope? It's simply because without it, faith and hope cannot exist. Love is what fuels them. It makes walking them out possible for believers. So, if we aren't putting in the effort to deepen our love for God and others, we won't grow in our faith walk or experience genuine hope.

Daily time in the Word, a robust prayer life, and a community of believers will help love to mature into something beautiful that will help faith and hope come alive.

DEAR LORD, HELP ME LOVE YOU
AND OTHERS WITH PURPOSE.
IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



When Love Feels Thin

*Be alert. Be firm in the Christian faith.
Be courageous and strong. Do everything with love.*

1 CORINTHIANS 16:13–14 GW

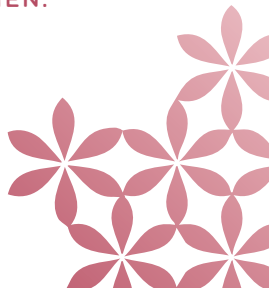


For many, the first few commands in today's verses are doable. We can be attentive and prepared for what's ahead. We can be unashamed of the gospel and bold in our faith. We can even exhibit strength and confidence when the storms of life hit. But we get tripped up when instructed to do *everything* with love. Sometimes the reality of it just feels too big.

Every day, we should humbly ask God for the ability to love because it doesn't always come easily, especially toward those we find frustrating or selfish. We need His help since we tend to show kindness and compassion conditionally. It's only through God's help we can experience supernatural love that makes this command possible.

As you lean on the Lord when your ability to love feels thin, watch how He empowers you in extraordinary ways.

**DEAR LORD, HELP ME LOVE THE
UNLOVABLE. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.**



Serving in Love

As for you, my friends, you were called to be free. But do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires control you. Instead, let love make you serve one another.

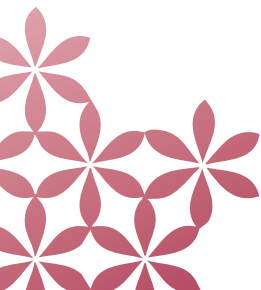
GALATIANS 5:13 GNT



Paul reminds us that our freedom isn't a license to live however we want and to do whatever we want. It's not for selfish purposes. Instead, as we recognize the depth of God's love for us that sent His Son to the cross, it should drive us to live with a servant's heart. Our greatest desire should be to love the Lord and others in meaningful ways that reflect His love.

In what ways can you walk this out? How can you serve others with compassion and care? How can you use your freedom in Christ to be His hands and feet? How can you demonstrate your genuine love to those around you? Ask God to show you.

DEAR LORD, THANK YOU FOR MY
FREEDOM! HELP ME USE IT TO SERVE
IN LOVE. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



Letting Your Love Shine

For the whole Law can be summed up in this one command: "Love others as you love yourself."

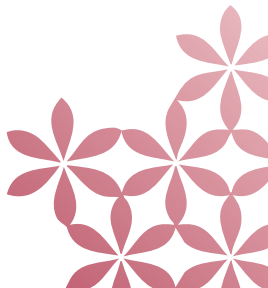
GALATIANS 5:14 TLB



Think about how you take care of yourself. You are careful to get enough rest. You try to eat a balanced diet (well. . .mostly) and exercise regularly. You treat yourself to what makes you happy. You keep your home nicely decorated and keep it clean. Maybe you splurge on hair and nails and cute clothes. For the most part, you are intentional in showing love to yourself.

God wants you to care that much for others. Rather than being self-focused, He expects you to treat others just as kindly. Offer to help. Bring a meal. Treat someone to a spa day. Take a walk with a friend. Listen when they share their heart. Give a gift in celebration. Point them to the Father. Let your love shine and let others know they matter.

DEAR LORD, HELP ME SHINE WITH
LOVE AND TREAT OTHERS WITH
CARE. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



Sacrificial Love

“For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

JOHN 3:16 TLB



Now *that's* a demonstration of sacrificial love. You may care deeply for others and want the very best for them. Your heart may be extremely invested in friends and family. You may even think there are no limits to your compassion and devotion. But only God could love so lavishly that He willingly gave His only Son to bridge the gap that sin left.

We're called to love generously too. Would you make a meal for a sick neighbor or offer free babysitting? Would you give up a weekend to help a friend move? Would you support a charitable cause with your time, even if it is inconvenient?

God gave the ultimate sacrifice for you without a second thought. His love is undeniable. Would others say your love is undeniable too?

**DEAR LORD, HELP ME LOVE WILLINGLY AND
SACRIFICIALLY. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.**



Practice Loving Others

Dear friends, let us practice loving each other, for love comes from God and those who are loving and kind show that they are the children of God, and that they are getting to know him better.

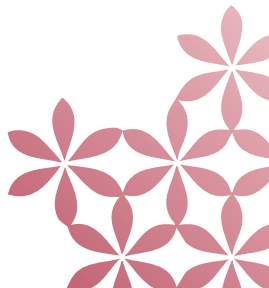
1 JOHN 4:7 TLB



Scripture tells us to practice loving others. So how do we do that? Just as you would put in the time to become a good baker, writer, or artist, you must also learn to love well. It doesn't always come naturally. Everyone feels love differently. Some respond to words of affirmation, while others need quality time. Maybe they need a bear hug or a thoughtful gift. Or maybe they feel loved when you do something kind and helpful.

Become a student of those you care about. How do your parents feel appreciated? What makes your best friend feel important? How can you best express your deep feelings to your husband?

DEAR LORD, OPEN MY EYES TO SEE
HOW OTHERS NEED TO FEEL LOVED
THE BEST. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.





How could we turn
our hearts away from
someone who we deem
unlovable when God
chose to love us in our sin?



Loving Rightly

*So, my loved ones, if God loved us so sacrificially,
surely we should love one another.*

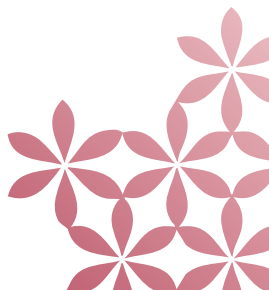
1 JOHN 4:11 VOICE



There's no good excuse for us to not love others. As believers, how could we turn our hearts away from someone who we deem unlovable when God chose to love us *in our sin*? He didn't wait until we were less wretched. We didn't have to get cleaned up. Instead, the Lord showed extravagant love right where we were. So let us do the same.

This doesn't mean we stay in abusive relationships or let others walk all over us in the name of loving them. It's good and necessary to have healthy boundaries in place. Sometimes loving means we have tough conversations and let people walk out the consequences of their actions. But let's make sure our heart for them is good rather than bitter. Ask God to help you love rightly.

**DEAR LORD, SHOW ME HOW TO LOVE IN
THE RIGHT WAYS. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.**



Love Over Hate

God showed how much he loved us by sending his only Son into this wicked world to bring to us eternal life through his death. In this act we see what real love is: it is not our love for God but his love for us when he sent his Son to satisfy God's anger against our sins.

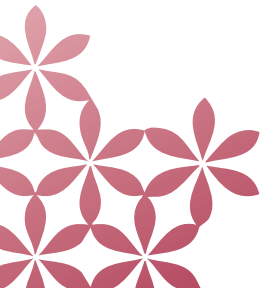
1 JOHN 4:9–10 TLB



Jesus stepped out of heaven and into this wicked world simply because we mattered so deeply to Him. The thought of eternal separation from His creation was unacceptable, so God made an extraordinary decision that satisfied His anger.

Knowing that, how can we let our hearts become filled with hate? If the Lord didn't, how can we decide someone is unworthy of our kindness and generosity? How can we turn our backs on those we see as unlovable? Ask God to help you respond in love, appropriately, and with necessary limits when you feel incapable.

**DEAR LORD, EMPOWER ME TO CHOOSE
LOVE OVER HATE. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.**



Proof God Lives in You

No one has ever seen God. If we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. We know that we live in him and he lives in us because he has given us his Spirit.

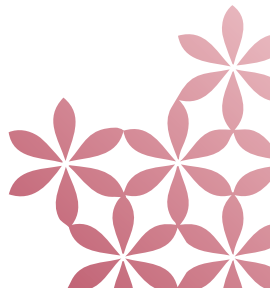
1 JOHN 4:12–13 GW



Today's scripture reminds us that treating others with love and respect proves that God's Holy Spirit lives in us. If we show genuine compassion with the right motives to those around us, His love is certainly being perfected in us. We should be encouraged each time our heart is tendered toward someone, whether they are hurting and hopeless or happy and healthy. That kind of love comes from God.

Time in His Word will bring about a change in how you think of others. You will notice a sensitivity to what they may be facing. There will be a desire to connect in meaningful ways as you deepen relationships.

DEAR LORD, THANK YOU THAT YOUR
SPIRIT IN ME HELPS ME LOVE OTHERS
WELL! IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



An Unquestionable Truth

We know how much God loves us because we have felt his love and because we believe him when he tells us that he loves us dearly. God is love, and anyone who lives in love is living with God and God is living in him.

1 JOHN 4:16 TLB



Do you believe that God loves you, friend? Sometimes it's difficult to understand how a perfect God can love very imperfect people. We may think He's disappointed in us or angry that we make mistakes. We may feel ashamed because we can't stop sinning in certain ways. Rather than run to the Lord when we mess up, we hide and stay silent, assuming we are beyond forgiveness. But that simply isn't true.

God wants you to *know* how much He loves you. Without any doubt, He wants it to be an unquestionable truth in your heart. Ask the Father to reveal this to you and then watch as He shows you just how much.

DEAR LORD, REVEAL YOUR LOVE
TO ME. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



No Need to Fear

We need have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly; his perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what he might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what he might do to us and shows that we are not fully convinced that he really loves us.

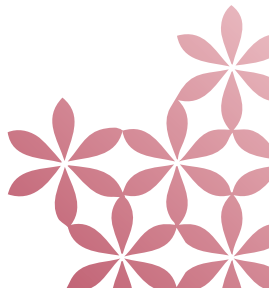
1 JOHN 4:18 TLB



There is no need to be afraid of God and His wrath. You don't need to worry about the proverbial lightning bolt striking you when you make mistakes. He won't step out of heaven to come down and scold you mercilessly. But because God loves you perfectly, He will convict you through the Holy Spirit. It's that gut feeling that's encouraging you to repent and make better choices.

If you're truly worried about what He might do if you upset Him, talk to God. Be honest. Read what the Word says about His love. Ask Him to help you accept His perfect love with confidence.

DEAR LORD, HELP ME TRUST YOUR
LOVE. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



Alignment

If anyone says “I love God,” but keeps on hating his brother, he is a liar; for if he doesn’t love his brother who is right there in front of him, how can he love God whom he has never seen? And God himself has said that one must love not only God but his brother too.

1 JOHN 4:20–21 TLB



As believers, our words and actions should align in many areas, but especially in how we love. Today’s scripture echoes this by asking a powerful question: How can we hate someone and love God at the same time? We can’t, which means we desperately need His help.

When you struggle to show care and compassion to others—even when it feels justified—ask the Lord to help you love them *through* Him. Confess your struggle, sharing the details of your heart. Ask God to replace your perspective and understanding with His so you can see that person as He does.

DEAR LORD, HELP MY LOVE FOR OTHERS
ALIGN WITH YOURS. IN JESUS’ NAME, AMEN.



Handling Offenses

*Most of all, love each other steadily and unselfishly,
because love makes up for many faults.*

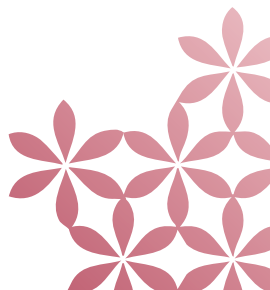
1 PETER 4:8 VOICE



The goal is for us to love so fiercely that we're able to overlook offenses regularly. We should want peace more than we want to be right. Rather than keep a scorecard of wrongs, we choose to forgive quickly. We choose to trust that their heart for us is good and know that our heart for them is good too. So, when something they do or say stings, we can choose to let it go because of our love for one another.

That doesn't mean, however, that we can't express our feelings or call someone out for bad behavior. But we do so with truth and love, looking for quick and complete restoration. We listen to their heart too, being humble and apologizing where needed. Relationships work best when we are focused on loving and commit to reconciling before too much time passes.

**DEAR LORD, LET LOVE REIGN MOST IN MY
RELATIONSHIPS. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.**



Loving Through Hospitality

*Show hospitality to each other without complaint.
Use whatever gift you've received for the good of one
another so that you can show yourselves to be good
stewards of God's grace in all its varieties.*

1 PETER 4:9-10 VOICE

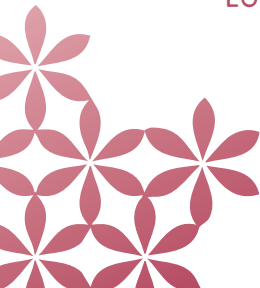


This is a call to be hospitable to other believers, using our spiritual talents to benefit one another. It's to be done ungrudgingly and without complaining. This can be challenging!

It's easier to show kindness when we're well-rested and life is calm. When bills are paid, food is in the pantry, and gas is in the tank, loving others feels natural. But hospitality may be the last thing we feel equipped to offer when our world feels chaotic and uncertain.

This is why we need God to work through us. We need Him to equip us with love and compassion. Be quick to pray when you feel unable to walk out today's verses and let the Lord empower you through faith.

DEAR LORD, I NEED YOU TO HELP ME
LOVE WELL. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



Truthfulness

Don't tell lies to each other; it was your old life with all its wickedness that did that sort of thing; now it is dead and gone.

COLOSSIANS 3:9 TLB



When you love someone, you work toward building trust with one another. You do this by choosing to be honest and authentic about your plans, your thoughts, your hopes, your feelings, and the like. You tell the truth, even when it's difficult to do. When you must share hard things, you speak with kindness and truth.

Do you struggle with sincerity? Is it hard for you to be open and direct with others? Remember that as a believer, the Holy Spirit lives in you to mature your faith into something beautiful. Listen for His voice and prompting to be truthful in every interaction. Love enough to be honest. It may be challenging, but it's a choice that benefits relationships in beautiful ways.

DEAR LORD, I WANT TO SHOW LOVE
TO OTHERS BY BEING TRUTHFUL WITH
THEM. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.

