

LOVE RADICALLY

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

WORSHIP

Because of Your Love, Can't
Stop Singing, O How Great,
Take My Life, Build My Life

WELCOME

What are some “love quotes” or romantic one-liners that you are familiar with? Were you at the giving end, the receiving end or an observer of that quote or one-liner being given?

WORD

**JAMES 1:12, 2:8, 15-16,
3:8-10, 4:1-3**

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has [a] been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him...⁸ If, however, you are fulfilling the [a]royal law according to the Scripture, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” you are doing well...¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, [a] be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?...⁸ But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; ¹⁰ from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way... What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? [b]Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ² You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask [c]with wrong motives, so that you may spend it [d]on your pleasures.

LOVE GOD THROUGH TRIALS

James, writing to the dispersed believers in the early church has some difficult words to say to them. He tells them to “persevere under trial” during a time of great persecution (**James 1:12**). You may be under very difficult situations and may be wondering why God allowed such trials in your life, even as you are following Him. If your trials are a result of your living in sin, then that’s a different story; James was writing to those who love God but were experiencing trials. Trials are moments for God to test us if we’ll persevere. Many who are new in following Christ may think that once you accept Jesus as Savior and Lord, you will no longer go through difficulties. But when we persevere, God’s promise is that we will receive the “crown of life” --- eternal life with God in heaven someday. The condition for being blessed is to love God. As we continue to rediscover love, we are to love radically and the first thought on radical love is to love God through trials. We don’t go looking for trials so that we can show God, we love Him as we persevere! But if God does allow trials into our lives, we are to persevere and we will be blessed as we keep following Him.

LOVE OTHERS MORE THAN YOURSELF

Have you ever wondered about why James calls the command to “love your neighbor as yourself” as the “royal law” (**James 2:8**)? This is the only time the term “royal law” is used in the Bible, and James does it to remind us that this command is “royal” because it is supreme, and it is from the King. If it is from the King, then we all need to pay attention to it! There is great emphasis on loving our neighbor as ourselves as exemplified by the King. Jesus said that the whole Law and the Prophets (Old Testament) depend on the two great commandments (**Matthew 22:39-40**)! Does this mean that I need to love myself first (self-love) before I can love my neighbor (others)? This is not so as we are not to be lovers of our own selves (**2 Timothy 3:2**). It does not mean however that we do not take care of our bodies, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Jesus grew in “stature and in spirit”. But are we focused more on ourselves, our needs, wants and desires more than other people? Paul tells us to regard others as more important than ourselves (**Philippians 2:3**); this is not common messaging...this is radical!

LOVE SACRIFICIALLY

Love is “an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person for their highest good, which often requires sacrifice”. Is good health, money, good relationships a person’s highest good? The highest good is they will get to know Jesus and give their lives to Him and share that to others. Do we love others better than ourselves? Am I looking at every opportunity for them to get to know Jesus? Think of ways you can do this in practical ways at home, work, or school. At

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church, let us not be “consumer Christians”, always looking for what we can get from the church. Instead let us seek for ways to serve God and others in the church. As Christians, we are to love others radically, we are to ask ourselves, how can I serve others, how can I serve You here, God? And when our time on earth is done, and we’re in heaven, we will be serving there still! A true follower of Christ seeks to serve the Lord however God wants, not merely sit in church services. So don’t be a “consumer Christian”!

James 2:15-16 reminds us, are we all “talk”, not going beyond asking people “What can I pray for you?”. Nothing is wrong about that, but if we know that we can do something for that person and we resist that because it will cost us in some way, then we’re just all talk. At the heart of God for us to love radically is to show it and to love sacrificially. We may be struggling with giving material things to others because we feel we do not have enough. But as one African tribal chief in the poorest region of his country reminded a Christian missionary as he offered her a gift from the meager provisions of his tribe, “no one is too poor to give, or too rich to receive”. How many of us have conflicts because of our own pleasures (**James 4:1-3**)? God does want to bless us even materially, but is that our focus? Is that what’s driving us and making us restless about things? Randy Alcorn reminds us, “A disciple does not ask, ‘How much can I keep?’ but, ‘How much more can I give?’ Whenever we start to get comfortable with our level of giving, it’s time to raise it again.”

LOVE THROUGH “LIFE WORDS”

Lastly, James tells us that no one can tame the tongue...but this ought not to be this way with us (**James 2:8-10**). We need to love through “life words” (**Proverbs 18:21**). Let’s be sure to be speaking words of life to our family, friends and seek to be a blessing to everyone we meet. All of us have “heart wounds”, but the power of the gospel, and our God is in the heart-healing business. That’s why Jesus went to the cross, so that we in turn can help heal others through sharing God’s words to them! James, the brother of Jesus was skeptical of Him at first. But Jesus appeared to him after His resurrection, and James was radically transformed—became a leader in the early church (**James 1:1**). You need God’s radical love for you to love radically!

DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

What trials are you going through and how can you love God through this?

2. Setting It Right.

How can you love others more?

3. Living It Out.

What sacrifices do you need to make to love more?

4. What life words should you start using? Towards whom?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE
IN ACTION

Pray for people both in the church and outside, to sense God’s radical love for them through your example. Care for people in practical ways, giving sacrificially as God gave His Son for the forgiveness of our sins. Share the life-giving gospel in every opportunity for every encounter you have with people each day.

WEEKLY
PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God’s help and comfort, salvation for Israel, wisdom for their leaders in government, military and their soldiers as they defend themselves against terrorists’ attacks. PRAISE GOD for the release of hostages so far! Continue to pray for the release of the remaining ones.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; conflict in African, East Asian and Middle East countries to stop. Pray for Christians from different countries who have been persecuted, attacked and killed in recent weeks.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE

JAMES 2:8

⁸ If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.