

The Spirit-Led Path to Loving When You Feel Unloved

What's the purpose of this friendship if I constantly feel under-valued and unloved?"

We've all been there. We go through a season where we have that *one friend* who we feel utterly rejects us. It is hard. There's no doubt about it.

And they're everywhere, right? We can't avoid them.

They're at church. We see them in Bible Study. They're all over social media—seemingly having a fantastic life while we are questioning where the friendship has gone.

A couple of years ago, I was in this place.

I had just discovered I was dealing with depression. For nearly a year and a half I was moping around, downcast and emotionally despondent, and finally I found what was going on. I was depressed. There was almost a bit of a relief to understand why I was struggling so hard. I mean, so hard. Suicidal hard. So, naturally, I began sharing what was going on with me with those that I was closest to.

I finally admitted to my best friend what was going on, and how I was getting the help that I needed. It felt like a relief to be able to confess to someone so dear to me all that had caused me to be so heavily-laden. And then the strangest thing happened: She started to pull away. I began noticing a distancing in the relationship.

I'm the type of woman who wants everything out on the table. Don't be passive-aggressive with me; don't beat around the bush. Just tell me straight-out what's on your mind.

One Sunday afternoon, my best friend did just that. She laid

everything out on the table, and I could not have prepared myself for the blow I was about to receive.

She confessed—with her husband and my husband listening—that she needed to distance herself because she could not handle me while I struggled with depression. She needed a break from me.

I, of course, responded saying that genuine friends don't do that to each other. I still stand by what I said. But it didn't matter; she couldn't handle me. She couldn't be there for me when I was at one of the lowest points of my life.

I was heartbroken. I mean, so hurt.

Life didn't stop, though, and everywhere I went, she was there. Our children were close, we went to the same church and we had the same best friends. I had to see her all the time.

I didn't want to look her in the eye, and I didn't want to interact with her; every fiber in my being hated her. I knew that was wrong, so I tried forgiving her often, but the rejection and hurt ran deep. The friendship needed to be reconciled—but how was I to convince her to love me? I couldn't. So, I just had to move on. Pretend like I was OK. Pretend like I still wanted her in my life.

The story does end up changing. God did end up reconciling the relationship after about a year and a half. But for the purpose of this post, I will save the end for another time.

The Purpose in Loving When We Feel Unloved

We all want to know what our purpose is; we long to add meaning to life. We want to contribute value to the world. But we want it to be easy.

Having a purpose? Being a purposeful woman is never easy.

And often, the areas where God is asking us to be purposeful are right under our noses.

Forgive the friend.
Love her even though you feel unloved.
Be selfless with your affections and time.
Give to those who can't give back.

All those things are what purpose looks like. That's what a having a calling normally requires, pouring yourself out when you have nothing to give.

Sure, I could write a post about boundaries in friendships and how to cut off toxic people, but I think if we were to take a hard look at Scripture and try to line up our own hearts with that of Jesus, we would see a need to love those who have hurt us. Isn't that exactly what Jesus does with us?

(I'm not dismissing the need to have boundaries and cut off toxic people; I'll write about that soon)

When God called Abraham out of his native country and into a new land, God told him that he would bless him and that Abraham would *be a blessing* to others.

If we want to be women who are marked by joy and love, we have to embody that to others as well. That means loving those who have rejected and hurt us.

This is God's purpose on your life. You were called to love others and to have joy. Today you can start by loving those who have hurt you.

How Do We Love the People Who Have Rejected Us?

1. Pray for them: "Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you" (Luke 6:28).

When we pray to God and we enter His presence, we are changed. If you're not changed after praying, then most likely you were just complaining.

Be intentional in the ways you pray for others. Pray God heals them, blesses them and teaches you how to love them

selflessly. Pray for God to reconcile the relationship. Pray for God's hand to move in their life.

Pray for God's grace to forgive them. That's the power of God on our lives. When we are able to let go of bitterness, rejection and unforgiveness, that is the grace of God.

As you pray for them, you'll notice your heart changing towards them.

2. Intentionally serve them.

Most likely if they had the place in your heart to hurt you deeply, you probably know them well. If that's the case, then love and serve them well. Give them intentional gifts. Don't forget their birthday. Hug them intentionally when you see them at gatherings.

And expect nothing in return.

Intentionally serve them in your thought life too, by giving them the benefit of the doubt and not jumping to conclusions.

I started this month off with loving those who have hurt us because I think that is the most purposeful way we can live this month out. We are only given so many days on this earth; choose to live each day with purpose and intentionality.

You have been called for more! {eoa}

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