

This Valentine's Day, Love Others in Three Special Ways

Valentine's Day is a beautiful day to express your love to others. Not just to those in romantic relationships but to friends, neighbors and coworkers. Valentine's Day can stir up feelings of loss if you focus on what you don't have. Maybe you're single right now and every longing of your heart is for a soulmate. Or, perhaps you long for years gone by when you had romantic dates without toddlers screaming in the background. Maybe you wish with all your heart your spouse was just a bit more romantic. Why not shift your focus to the love you have in Jesus and then extend that love to others?

My guess is there are lonely people all around you who need to feel loved.

One of Jesus' greatest priorities in our lives is that we love others well. He told His disciples at the Last Supper, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34, NIV). Then on the way to the cross, He repeated his command, "Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

How can we extend Christ's love to others so that they feel valued and cherished?

Here are three tangible ways to get you started:

Bless Others. The word "blessed" in Latin is *benedicere*; it's the word we get benediction from. Often in churches, the pastor or priest gives a benediction. It is a blessing before people leave. Literally, the word means "speaking well or saying good things about another." A biblical blessing goes beyond saying nice things about another; it reminds a person of their belovedness. It speaks God's heart over a person. Author Henry Nouwen wrote, "To give someone a blessing is the

most significant affirmation we can offer.”

Pray blessings over people in your life. Ask people if you can pray blessings over them. I believe you’re going to see the Spirit of God do extraordinary things. As I’ve done this, I’ve never had anyone tell me I can’t pray a prayer of blessing over them. People are hungry for a blessing. Allow God to give you His heart for people and then pray accordingly. If you need some help, use these passages of Scripture: Ephesians 3:16-20, Philippians 1:9-11 or Colossians 1:9-12.

Beyond praying a prayer of blessing, you can bless others by writing a note of encouragement, affirming qualities you’ve observed in their lives and simply telling them that you appreciate their friendship.

The wise writer of Proverbs wrote, “The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed” (Prov. 11:25, MSG). May I gently challenge you? In honor of Valentine’s Day, try blessing three people every day this week. See what happens both in your heart and in the hearts of others. I think you’re going to be astounded!

Listening to Others. One of the most tangible ways to love others is by listening to them. Remember, people only feel as loved as they feel heard. So make it your goal for the people around you, whether in your family or office or neighborhood, to *feel* heard. How do you do this? Lean in and listen. Seek to understand. Give them space to talk. Let go of hurry.

I believe now more than ever, people are lonely for connection. They need other humans to offer the ministry of listening. What is the ministry of listening? Simply being the ears of Jesus to another. Ask the Holy Spirit to listen like Jesus did. He created space for people to talk. He asked great questions and He offered the truest picture of empathy that we have. Join Jesus and offer the ministry of a listening ear.

Give Gifts to Others. Sometimes the best way to encourage

another person is to give an unexpected gift. It doesn't have to be an ostentatious gift. It can be small; maybe it's a Starbucks gift card or a few flowers. Maybe it's a coffee or tea mug with an encouraging message on it. The key is to know people well enough to know what will encourage their hearts. Then give accordingly. If you don't know people well, you can always drop off the gift of a meal or some specialty dessert. It doesn't have to be perfect. The receiver of your gift will feel blessed that you thought of them.

Friend, these are such simple, small ideas. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you more ideas and start praying every morning, "Lord Jesus, show me how to love others well today. May I extend to others the love that You have extended to me." At the end of each day, ask yourself this question, "Who did I love well today?"

Would You Pray for Me?

This Thursday, February 17th, I will be interviewed by Focus on the Family. Then I will be traveling and speaking in three different churches in Arizona. I would love your prayers for the Holy Spirit to pour through me as I speak at each event! {eoa}

Becky Harling, a bestselling author, is a popular speaker at conferences, retreats and other events. She is author of 11 books, including *The Extraordinary Power of Praise*. Becky is a certified coach with the John Maxwell Team and offers parent coaching. Becky and her husband, Steve, have traveled and ministered in over 70 countries around the world. She is the parent of four grown married kids and Mimi to 14 grandchildren. Connect with Becky at [www.beckyharing.com](#), [www.beckyharing.com](#), Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

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