

"HOW TO BECOME A MORE LOVING PERSON"

The Power To Change Your Life, Part 3

March 27th, 2011

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NLT) "Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love."
Galatians 5:22 (NIV) "But the fruit of the spirit is love..."

Love is probably the most misunderstood word in the world

It is difficult to give or receive love when you don't understand what it is

Love is NOT:

1. Just a feeling
2. Uncontrollable

Love IS:

1. A matter of choice
Colossians 3:14 (NIV) "Over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

2. A matter of conduct - Love is an action, not a feeling
1 John 3:18 (NIV) "Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

Jesus never commanded that we have warm affection feelings for everyone

5 Steps To Loving Others

1. **You must experience God's love – feel & understand how deeply God loves you**
Ephesians 3:17,18 (LB) "I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts, living within you as you trust in Him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love; and may you be able to feel and understand, as all God's children should, how long, how wide, how deep, and how high His love really is; and to experience this love for yourselves."

1 John 4:19 (GN) "We love because God first loved us."

Unloved people are often unloving people
John 15:12 (NIV) "[Jesus said] My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

2. **Learn to Forgive others – especially your enemies**
Colossians 3:13 (NIV) "Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

You cannot give total love when your heart is divided; a bitter heart is a divided heart

Forgive those who have hurt you, for your sake – not because they deserve it

People from your past cannot continue to hurt you today unless you allow them to hurt you by holding onto Resentment against them

3. **Think loving thoughts towards others**

Philippians 2:4,5 (LB) "Don't just think about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and in what they are doing. Your attitude should be the kind that was shown us by Jesus Christ."

Focus on other people's needs, hurts, problems, and desires – not just your own

Hurt people hurt people

Everyone needs love. If a person can't get positive attention, he/she will work at getting negative attention

4. **Act in love**

When you love by faith, you act yourself into a feeling

It is easier to act my way into a feeling than to feel my way into an action

Change Your Feelings Indirectly – Attack From Both Sides



Luke 6:27,28 (NIV) "[Jesus said] Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

Jesus said to do 4 specific things:

1. Overlook their faults - "Love your enemies" (Ephesians 4:2)
2. Love for ways to serve them - "do good to those who hate you" (Galatians 6:10)
3. Watch what you say to them & about them - "bless those who curse you" (Prov. 12:18)
4. Pray that God will bless them - "pray for those who mistreat you" (Romans 2:4)

All of the other fruits of the Spirit are simply expressions of love (see 1 Cor. 13:4-8)

5. **Expect the best of those you don't like or are having trouble with**
1 Corinthians 13:7 (LB) "If you love someone...you will always believe in him, always expect the best of him."

People live up to what we expect of them

When we expect the best, we bring out the best

Key: Treat them the way you want them to become

My Next Step Today

- I am asking Christ into my life for the first time; I want to experience God's love
- There is someone who wronged me that I am forgiving
- There is someone in my life I will begin to think loving thoughts toward
- There is someone in my life I will begin to act in love toward & expect the best of that person
- I will memorize Galatians 5:22,23