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personally speaking



God only knows why He put so many of this world's most precious commodities in such hard-to-get-at places. If it was to test our wills—to see to what lengths we would be willing to go and what price we would be willing to pay to get to them—it worked.

Whether probing for oil beneath the deserts of the Middle East or within the Arctic Circle, or plunging into the subterranean dark and cold to mine for gold, diamonds, and other precious metals and gems, the most determined of us brave some of the world's harshest conditions and risk life and limb to get to the source and strike it rich.

But even for the fortunate few who succeed, is it really worth it? How long will their riches last, and how much *real* happiness will they find in the meantime? When you stop to think about it, their triumphs are really tragedies if that's all they're left with.

Isn't it wonderful, though, that God put the very most valuable thing in life—the one thing that can truly satisfy and last for eternity—within reach of everyone? I'm referring to His love, of course. "God is love," the Bible tells us (1 John 4:8). He is love itself—the well-spring from which love in all of its other wonderful forms flows. Why waste time looking elsewhere when you can go straight to the source and find all the love you ever dreamed of and more? There are oceans of love waiting for you, only a prayer away.

If you haven't yet learned how to tap into God's unending reservoir of love, this issue of *Activated* could change your life!

Keith Phillips



For the *Activated* Family



WHO STILL WANTS IT?

Author unknown

“I am going to give this \$20 bill to one of you,” the man said. Immediately he had everyone’s attention. “But first, let me do this.” He proceeded to crumple the bill.

He then asked, “Who still wants it?” Every hand went up.

“Well,” he went on, “what if I do this?” And he dropped the \$20 bill on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now crumpled and dirty, and asked again. “Now who still wants it?” Still the hands went into the air.

“My friends, you have all learned a very valuable lesson,” he said. “No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20.

“Many times in our lives, we are crumpled, dropped, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what may yet happen, you will never lose your value in God’s eyes. To Him, dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless.”



YOU ARE PRICELESS TO ME

A message from Jesus

My love is unconditional. I love without partiality. I love the unlovely and the difficult to love. I love the sad and the lonely. I love those who are struggling and those who are lost and confused. My unconditional love expects nothing in return. It doesn’t say, “But this one does not return My love, so I will withdraw My love.” My unconditional love never gives up hope; it is enduring, patient, and unfailing. My unconditional love gives and gives again. My unconditional love knows no limits and has no stopping place. My love will go any distance to love and bring one lost, lonely, battered soul through to victory.

Of course you have weaknesses and shortcomings, but I don’t love you any less because of them. My love is unconditional. That means no matter what condition you are in, I love you just as much. My love for you doesn’t depend on you having a glowing record. Don’t ever think that I love you any less because you aren’t all that you would like to be or think you should be. When I look at you, I don’t see any of your “lacks.” I only see My creation that I love, and I love you just the way I made you.

The source of true love

The things
of this earth
can satisfy
the body,
but only God
can ever fill
that spiritual
void in our
hearts that
He created
for Himself
alone.

God created us with the need to love and be loved, and He alone can satisfy the deepest yearning of every human soul for total love and complete understanding. The things of this earth can satisfy the body, but only God and His eternal love can ever fill that aching spiritual void in our hearts that He created for Himself alone. The human spirit can never be completely satisfied with anything less than utter union with the great and loving Spirit that created it.

“God is love” (1 John 4:8). He is the very Spirit of love itself, true love, everlasting love, real love, genuine love that never ends from a Lover who never leaves, the Lover of all lovers. He’s pictured in His Son, Jesus, who came for love and lived in love and died for love that we might live and love forever. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

—David Brandt Berg (D.B.B.)

When we find Jesus and receive Him as our Savior, we make direct, personal contact with the Creator and Source of love, God Himself. New worlds of love open to us. Our perception of love in its many human forms deepens and gets better. But there’s even more

than that in store for us: We can experience the supernatural love of God that far surpasses any earthly loves.

To receive God’s love in Jesus, all you have to do is open your heart and ask Him to come in. Jesus promised, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20). He waits lovingly and meekly at your heart’s door, not forcing Himself upon you, not pushing the door open, but waiting for you to simply ask Him in. If you haven’t yet done so, you can right now by praying a simple prayer like the following:

Dear Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God and that You died for me. I need Your love to cleanse me from past wrongs. I now open my heart and I ask You to come into my life. Please fill me to overflowing with Your love. Amen.

When you have done this, your life will be changed. Like a newborn baby, you’ll be born into a whole new world of love you have only dreamed of. He can give you a whole lifetime of love—all the love you’ll ever need to live your days to the full and come through any situation victoriously—but He can’t give it to you all at once. Jesus and His love



are always there for you, but you need to keep coming back for more. You need to let Him fill you up daily, and sometimes even hour by hour or moment by moment.

As you spend time praying to Jesus, reading His Word, and listening to His voice in your heart, He will impart His love to you and it will become part of you. Little by little you will become more like Him. You'll become more loving; His love will spill out of you on others. As you grow and mature in His love, His Spirit within you will enable you to do the humanly impossible: love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39).

—Shannon Shayler (S.S.)

His love for you is unconditional.

No matter how weak or disheartened you may feel right now, or disappointed in yourself or others, He still loves you. His great, perfect, marvelous, unconditional love is not lessened, no matter what the circumstances or conditions. He keeps pouring it on and pouring it on without measure and without limit. His love is so beautiful!

His love is always there for us, pouring forth in full measure, gushing forth in such abundance! And we can experience that love; we can have it

manifested in our lives as much as we desire, according to our obedience and yieldedness to Him. He's always looking for ways to show His love if we'll just let Him. He's just waiting for us to make a way, an avenue for His love to pour forth, and we do that by staying close to Him, by loving Him, and by doing the things that He wants us to do.

—Maria Fontaine (M.F.)

If people could just understand

the magnitude of the Lord's love—how truly unconditional it is, how vast and deep and wide and unending it is—it would solve so many of their problems. They would find freedom from so many of their fears and worries and regrets. If they could just understand that, then they'd know that everything is going to work out, that He is going to cause everything to work together for good, because He is in control of every detail and His hand on their lives is so perfectly loving.

—D.B.B.

For more inspiring and thought-provoking material on the world's all-time favorite topic, love, order the booklet Love's Many Faces from one of the addresses on page two of this magazine.

No matter
how weak or
disheartened
you may feel
right now, or
disappointed
in yourself or
others, He still
loves you.



Show genuine love and concern for people, and you won't have a hard time winning friends. People can't help but be drawn to a person with a loving demeanor. People who like others are people others like. When you follow the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you," people will be drawn to you like bees to honey. Sooner or later, they'll respond in kind. That's one of the perks of knowing and loving Jesus, and of following His Golden Rule.

—S.S.

True happiness comes not in your personal pursuit of selfish pleasure and satisfaction, but in finding God and giving His life to others and bringing them happiness. Then happiness pursues and overtakes and overwhelms you personally without even seeking it for yourself. Look for someone to make happy, and then happiness will find you. Get so busy trying to make somebody else happy you can't help but be happy. Show others unselfish love and concern and they'll love you more than they ever loved anybody.

—D.B.B.

Let's love one another more. Let's do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Let's let the Lord's love shine through us more and be manifested in more forgiveness, understanding, communication, sharing, support, sympathy, affection, and practical, loving, caring action!

Let's give of our time. Let's be a listening ear. Let's open our hearts and lives to others. Let's be swift to forgive and forget. Let's do our best to be our brother's keeper. Let's not hold back the simple affection that so wonderfully communicates the Lord's love. Let's try with all our hearts to set a good example. Let's be a strong shoulder to lean on or cry on. Let's not jump to conclusions or judge unfairly, but instead give the benefit of the doubt to those who are struggling. Let's bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill God's supreme law: love. Let's all strive to be examples of the Lord's unconditional love.

—M.F.

Everybody has influence. One person walking in love will encourage others to do likewise. If you'll only show love, someone else will catch the same spirit. It's such a catching thing—love in action—and it spreads from heart to heart. If we shine forth with enough love, others will reflect it.

—D.B.B.

Love can cause marvelous chain reactions. As one person reaches out to love another, it sets in motion a chain reaction of love that continues and continues and continues. A single loving deed, a loving word, or even a loving thought is all it takes. Love begets love.

—S.S.

Ambassadors

OF LOVE

Through His children, God is trying to show the world what He is like. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21). Jesus came to love the world and He calls us to do likewise in every facet of life, in every way—to give God's love to others. The only way that others will ever find His joy and peace and love and happiness and Heaven is through us. No matter where we are from, if we have Jesus, we are now His ambassadors and represent the King of kings, the One who runs the universe.

What was Jesus' last message to His disciples at the Last Supper, just before He was arrested, taken to jail, beaten, and killed? "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). He talked about love, that love was the most important thing.

Wouldn't it have been enough for His disciples to simply *tell* others about the love of Jesus? Couldn't the Lord just as well have said, "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you preach My message"? Evidently not. It's not good enough to just talk about love. Jesus said His disciples had to *have* love; they had to *live* love. He knew that there would be no denying that example.

And those first Christians turned the world upside down with the love of God. The way they lived convinced others that their faith was real. Even their Roman persecutors marveled. "Look at how

these Christians love one another!" "Who is this Christ?" they asked. "And how does He make you so happy? Even though you have nothing, you've got everything! How can I find this kind of happiness too?" And within two hundred years, one out of five people in the Western world were professing Christians.

Today, nearly two thousand years later, the heart of man is still the same. So many people are searching for love, but seldom, if ever, finding it. People everywhere are looking around for some little ray of hope, some salvation, some bright spot somewhere, a little love, a little mercy, someplace where they can find some relief. We who have found God and His love have what others have been searching for all their lives and need desperately, and if we can show them that love exists, then they can believe that God exists, because God is love.

Even the little things you do can mean a lot. The light of your smile, the kindness of your face, the influence of your life can shed light on many and have an amazing effect on some of the people you think might be the least likely to be impressed. When they feel your love and you tell them it's God's love, they think, *Maybe Somebody up there does love me!* It can change their whole outlook on life and give them a new start.

May we always be known by our love!

Even the
little things
you do can
mean a lot.

Marriage is...

Marriage is
coming to
the realization
that you are
not complete
without your
other half.

What is marriage? It's a union, first of all. It's a uniting, two hearts becoming one. Marriage is companionship and friendship. It's being together, acting together, doing things together, and not wanting it any other way.

Marriage is understanding. It's being blind to the faults of the other. It's being considerate in every way—considerate of the other's time, feelings, and desires.

Marriage is caring. It's being concerned. It's going out of your way to make sure the other person is well cared for.

Marriage is kindness. It's saying kind words and putting those words into action.

Marriage is support. It's supporting your mate in their endeavors, in their projects, in good times and bad. It's giving them moral support, physical support, prayer support, all-around support. It's cheering them on and encouraging them when they feel down. Marriage is stooping to lift the other. It's being strong when the other is weak.

Marriage is protecting your mate from harm, physical and emotional.

Marriage is provision. It's doing your part to make sure the other has

their needs met. It's pulling your share of the load. Marriage is hard work day after day. It's going out of your way to meet the needs of your mate in whatever way you can, even if you don't feel like it. Marriage is lending a helping hand.

Marriage is sacrifice. It's giving of yourself for the one you love. It's being ready to give up your own ideas or desires to make your mate happy. It's giving and giving and giving again. Marriage is yielding, bending, melting together. Marriage is going the extra mile. Marriage is compassion. It's preferring the happiness of another to your own.

Marriage is give and take. Marriage is taking turns; it's not one sided. Marriage is submission. It's giving the other person a chance. Marriage is living and loving and helping one another. Marriage is learning from one another. Marriage is humbling.

Marriage is being open minded. Marriage is walking a mile in another's shoes. Marriage is listening and understanding.

Marriage is being there for the other in bad times as well as the good. Married love stands through thick and thin, no matter how hot



By David Brandt Berg

the trials or how hard the test. Married love never loses hope. It's always there, always dependable, always ready with outstretched hands and open arms to take the other in—to love, to comfort, to hold, and to cherish. Marriage is learning to let the little things pass.

Marriage is communicating honestly and openly. It's being willing to humbly share your heart and deepest thoughts. Marriage is talking, praying, discussing, and agreeing together. Marriage does not let things build up between you by ignoring the other, but rather finds a way; it creates solutions. Marriage is joining hand in hand, heart to heart.

Marriage is discovery. It's discovering each other, learning about each other and all the funny things you say and do. Marriage is a good sense of humor. It's relaxing together, enjoying each other.

Marriage is respect. Marriage is having faith in each other. Marriage is accepting another for what they are. Marriage is coming to the realization that you are not complete without your other half.

Marriage can be the most satisfying and strengthening experience you will ever have.

THE JUDGMENT

A woman once enumerated her husband's faults to a divorce court judge. She simply couldn't live with "that man" one day more, she said. On and on she went.

Finally she paused to catch her breath, and the judge asked, "Well, why did you marry him in the first place? You must have liked something about him then. What was it?"

"Well," the wife said, "he was a good man, a hard worker, and a faithful provider. He was also kind to children, and he was loyal."

"Isn't he still all those things?" asked the judge.

"Well, yes," the wife replied in a huff, "but..." And she started to repeat her grievances. "He's terrible! He throws his clothes on the floor. He never puts anything away. He's always late for dinner. He's hard to get up in the morning. He picks his nose in public. He fusses if I burn the toast. ..." All were relatively insignificant offenses.

"Very well then," said the judge. "Here's my preliminary ruling: Go home and think about those good qualities for which you first loved him, and try not to think about the things he does that peeve you. If after 30 days you still want the divorce, come back."

The judge never saw the woman again.

—Adapted from D.B.B.

God's life-changing love!

TAKE TIME TO LOVE!

From Solomon Downs, Australia

A very frail elderly woman approached me outside a shopping mall and asked where she could get a taxi. I was in a hurry, so told her quickly that there were no taxis that time of day and suggested she go phone for one. At that, she started to cry in frustration.

She needs My love, God seemed to say to my heart. Slow down and share it with her.

I put my arm around her, helped her inside the mall, found her a seat, and called a cab for her. Something was obviously upsetting her, so I sat down beside her and asked what was the matter. She explained that it was the third anniversary of her husband's death, and she was missing him. I told her about the wonders of Heaven, as described in the Bible, and assured her that she and her husband—both of whom were believers—would be reunited there for all eternity.

No sooner had I said that, than her taxi pulled up. As I led her to the door, she thanked me profusely for stopping to help, and for those few words of encouragement. I'm glad I took time to show her a little bit of the Lord's love!

WORDS LIKE NO OTHER!

From Jorge Solá, Chile

Eliodoro is a cripple who sells candied apples and other sweets on the street. He gets around on a hand-operated tricycle. One morning he received a "To You—With Love" tract from one of us, and I met and talked with him later that day.

"I've been an atheist and a communist activist all my life," he told me. "For five years I had to live underground to avoid prison. Recently, however, I've been wondering if there is a God. Since I work on the street, I have read tracts put out by every denomination and group, and my room is full of books on philosophy and politics. Still, I had never read anything that moved me as much as this! These few words have changed my life! Who wrote it?"

I explained to him that the text of the tract was a message from God, which someone had received in prophecy after praying for a special message for people just like Eliodoro.

"It's God speaking to you and loving you personally," I told him.

At that, Eliodoro became very excited. He opened his life to the Lord, and then hung on to every word I said! He asked me for more material to read, so I gave him some other tracts and encouraged him to read the Gospels, especially the Gospel of John because it contains so many words of Jesus.

Another life touched and transformed by God's love!

(Solomon Downs, Jorge Solá, J.D. Barnes, and Hebe Rondon are volunteers with The Family in their respective countries.)

VIETNAM VETERAN FREED FROM REMORSE

From J.D. Barnes, USA

My thirteen-year-old son Steve and I were in the parking lot when we met Robert. We had noticed him sitting in his car earlier, but had thought nothing of it. This time we felt the Lord wanted us to talk to him, so we walked over, greeted him, and gave him one of The Family's posters with a gospel message on the back. At that, he held up a little booklet of Bible verses on salvation and comfort.

"I just finished praying for God to help me," he said. "This is amazing!"

Robert went on to explain that he was a disabled Vietnam veteran. He had recently been robbed of all his cash, and his next disability check wouldn't arrive for several weeks. With nowhere to stay, he was living out of his car. We referred him to a homeless shelter where we do volunteer work, and then asked him more about himself.

It was soon apparent that he was still very troubled by his experiences in Vietnam. Before he was drafted into the army, he had enjoyed hunting. "Then I went to war," he explained, "and I began to feel the same way about the people I had to shoot." Then he started to cry. "I feel so guilty that I have thought about committing suicide many times. Can God ever forgive me?" he asked.

We assured him of God's unconditional love and forgiveness, and prayed with him for peace of heart and mind—"the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Right before our eyes, God lifted over twenty years of remorse and condemnation! By this time, all three of us were in tears. Robert was deeply touched by the Lord's love and care—living proof that Jesus can heal any wound and mend any aching heart!

ONE TOUCH OF LOVE

From Hebe Rondon, Brazil

When my husband and I were ending our visit with one of our friends at his workplace, João, a young man who works for our friend, walked us to our car.

"The first time I saw you two, I thought to myself, Those people have Jesus," João said. We talked for a few minutes, said goodbye, and I gave him a "Somebody Loves You" tract.

A week later I visited that same friend, and João came over to talk.

"Last week when you gave me that tract, it was my 18th birthday,"

he said. "Nobody had wished me a happy birthday or done anything special for me—not even my mother. It made me very sad that nobody paid any attention to me or remembered my birthday. Then before I went to bed, I read the pamphlet you had given me, and it made me cry. I could feel the Lord's love for me. It flowed from those words."

João is a simple laborer and the sort of person who can be overlooked or taken for granted, but the Lord remembered him and gave him the most beautiful birthday present that any of us could ever wish for—a touch of His divine love!



Q: My wife and I have been married for 11 years, and though we still love each other, our relationship has grown stale. What can we do to put the magic back into our marriage?

A: When most couples vow “for better or worse,” in the starry-eyed magic of the moment they can only imagine their lives together getting better and better. New parents take one long, deep look into the eyes of their baby and vow to never hurt or disappoint the child. Children promise to stay best friends forever. Doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers, volunteers, and others dedicate their lives to serving others. It’s love—that superglue of families, friendships, and every other good thing—that inspires such commitment. Why, then, do married couples squabble? Why do parents nag, belittle, and get impatient? Why do friends drift apart? Why does the inspiration to selflessly serve others wane?

As time passes, we become so familiar with the people we are closest to that we stop valuing and treating them like we should. The wear and tear of daily living takes its toll, and the bright newness of once-treasured relationships begins to fade.

Up close and personal, everyone’s flaws and wrinkles begin to show. Routines become ruts. Our once-prized blessings begin to weigh on us.

When that happens, it’s time to reverse the trend. That will take a conscious effort and may not be easy, especially if the problem has been going on for some time, but it can be done. Count your blessings. Remind yourself of all the things about the other person that drew you to them in the first place. Then put yourself in their position and ask the same question. The quickest and surest way to return the shine to any tarnished relationship is to polish your own good qualities. Get busy being the person you set out to be at the start, and the other party will almost certainly follow suit.

And remember, God specializes in fresh starts. “If anyone is in Christ,” the Bible tells us, “he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). That’s a promise about salvation, but it’s also a promise for everyday living. God will revitalize and renew any relationship if we ask Him to start with us.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Coming Economic Crash

By Joseph Candel

Many analysts and respected economists warn that a devastating worldwide economic crash is coming. Although not specifically predicted in the Bible, such an event is in line with key prophecies regarding the Endtime and would almost certainly hasten their fulfillment—particularly the rise of the world dictator known as the Antichrist and the implementation of his universal credit system, the mark of the Beast (“666”).

Modern economies are built largely on faith. People have faith in their currencies, but it is misplaced faith. They don’t realize that their currencies are not backed by any substantial amount of physical assets, such as gold or silver, and are issued by governments that are often deep in debt. When people do lose faith in their currency, its value plummets, stocks slump, and their country’s entire economy crashes.

In this era of Internet trading and globally linked economies and stock markets, a sudden and drastic downturn in one major financial market could create a worldwide

panic that would send the global economy tumbling down like a house of cards.

In one possible scenario, if the American economy were to fail because of some international crisis like a major war in the Middle East or a severe oil shortage, the rest of the world could rapidly lose faith in the U.S. dollar. The dollar and other dollar-based currencies and international stocks would lose much of their value and, as a result, banks and financial markets worldwide would likely fail. Such an economic crash would also most likely lead to widespread political and civil chaos.

Another major factor is the international debt crisis. Nearly every nation in the world has been enticed by powerful international financiers, working through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to take out huge loans at interest rates that make it impossible for them to ever pay off their debts.

Why do you suppose the World Bank, the IMF, or anyone else would give out billions in

A sudden
and drastic
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create a
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panic.

People
are going
to hail the
Antichrist
as the
savior of
the world
when he
“rescues”
them
from the
economic
ruin he led
them into.

loans that they know can never be repaid?—Because when nations fall into bankruptcy and default on their loans, the lenders gain control of their economies. As the Bible says, “The borrower is servant to the lender” (Proverbs 22:7). That’s the real reason the international financiers loaned those countries the money in the first place, to gain control!

The World Bank and IMF are now dictating the economic and other internal policies of these nations—their governments, their industries, their banks, virtually everything. They are running these governments by proxy through financial pressure. Just look at the economic problems that have plagued Argentina and other countries in recent years and you can see where all of this is leading.

The world’s present economic woes are not accidental or merely the result of “basic market forces at work,” as we so often hear in the news. Through manipulation of the world’s money—cleverly choreographed crashes followed by temporary rebounds and more severe crashes—more and more of the world’s money is making its way into the hands of a few, while more nations are being pushed toward bankruptcy and forced to surrender control of their economies in return for foreign loans.

As time goes on and the situation worsens, there will be even more economic instability in the money markets of the world and unprecedented ups and downs in the major economies. When that happens, people are going to look for a savior. Paul Henri Spaak, first president of the General Assembly

of the United Nations, once said, “What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all people and to lift us out of the economic morass into which we are sinking. Send us such a man and whether he be God or devil, we will receive him.”¹ And that’s exactly what the world is going to do!

The people of the world will look for a financial superman to bring stability and prosperity, and when the Antichrist comes on the world scene and appears to do just that, they will hail him as a hero and welcome his rule and new economic system. He will “rescue” them from the economic ruin he led them into, and his plan will have succeeded—for a time.

—

The time to get ready for these soon-coming events is now, and the best place to start is by receiving Jesus as your Savior, if you haven’t already. Then learn to stay connected to Jesus in prayer so He can guide you and provide for you in the troublous times to come. Study what the Bible has to say about the coming Antichrist world dictatorship and other Endtime events so you won’t be caught by surprise when they happen, or duped into following the Antichrist. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Jesus has promised, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ... I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe” (John 14:27,29).

¹ Cartledge, D. n.d. Eschatology, p.132. Rhema Bible College, Townsville.

COMING NEXT

THE BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND

The Devil would like nothing better than to get our minds off of God and all the good things God has in store for us if we let Him direct our thoughts and actions. The Devil's ultimate goal is to get us to crowd God out of our lives completely, but he needs to start somewhere. He needs to gain a foothold, a point of entry, and the first place he tries is in our minds.

He will use the indirect approach if he can, because he knows that if he can simply get us to waste the minutes, hours, and days that make up our lives, he will win without so much as a fight. And so he tries to fill our minds with frivolous and unprofitable thoughts—time wasters that sap our spirits and distract us from what's really important in life. If that doesn't work, he tries to get us to doubt God's love and goodness. In place of faith, hope, and God's wonderful promises, he tries to fill our minds with discouragement, and his own lies—anything to turn us from the Lord.

How can you guard yourself against such attacks?—The best defense is a strong offense! To find out how to go on the attack, win the battle for your thoughts, and come through life victoriously, don't miss the next issue of *Activated*.

LIVING IN THE LORD'S LOVE

Love is like a stream. Some days it flows and rushes, for there is plenty. On other days it trickles and you can see it bouncing against the unseen rocks. But even when love is dry and has lost its flow and lies nearly empty on the muddy bottom, there is more love to come.

We remember how Jesus loved, how He forgave, and how He reached out to show He cared. By using Jesus as the Source of love, we can fill up the stream again. Life has the extra dimension found in Jesus Christ. He is the Authority on love. Jesus loves when love is hard. He loves when love is rejected. He loves when love makes little sense. Jesus loves when others would quit. Jesus loves when others are ugly. Jesus loves when others are cold. Jesus loves when others are unworthy.

And when we feel that love has dried up, we reach out to Him, and learn to love again.

—Author unknown

FEEDING READING



FIRST PLACE

The Lord wants first place in our hearts.

Matthew 22:37–38

Exodus 20:3

What it means to love and desire the Lord above all else:

Psalms 27:4

Psalms 42:1–2

Psalms 63:1,8a

Psalms 73:25–26

Psalms 84:2,10

Isaiah 26:8–9a

We should love Him in thanks for all that He has done for us.

Psalms 116:1–2

1 John 4:19

Revelation 5:9

How to make the Lord a presence in our lives:

Proverbs 8:17

Psalms 143:8

Lamentations 3:41

Ephesians 5:18b–19

Hebrews 13:15

He blesses us for putting Him first.

Matthew 6:33

Psalms 16:11

Psalms 37:4

Psalms 91:14–15

John 14:21,23b

James 1:12

EACH STEP OF THE WAY

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE



The road I have for you two to walk together is a road of love. It's a road I want you to embark on with thanksgiving and joy, but also with the understanding that it can only be safely traveled with Me.

I must be your focal point, that tie that binds, that living link, the channel through which My life and My love can freely flow between you.

I love you and delight to travel this road with you, but you also need to remember to hold on to Me. This road will not always be smooth. It will have its costs, its tests, its difficulties, its sacrifices, but these are designed by Me to help you mature and grow in love, in depth, in giving, and in learning what real love is. They are designed to draw you closer to My heart.

Sometimes you won't be able to see the road ahead, but I want you to trust Me anyway. Always give Me first place in your lives, and I will greatly bless, protect, and keep you. The road will take some turns you're not expecting or prepared for, but I will be with you each step of the way.