

“Loving Others from the Heart”

Acts 2:22-47

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Introduction:

How do I become a more loving person?

Who do I need to love well in 2010?

Observations from the Early Church:

1. Loving others was the overflow of their hearts.
(Acts 2:42-47)
2. Loving others didn't always flow from their hearts.
(Mark 15:6-15)

The process of heart-change involves:

1. An understanding of who Christ is. (Acts 2:22-36;
Colossians 1:15-18)
2. Repentance. (Acts 2:37-38)
3. Experiencing God's grace, love, and forgiveness.
(Acts 2:38-39; Colossians 1:19-22)
4. The work of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38-39)

“*This is His love-covenant with you.* It is the message of John 15:4: “‘Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me...’”

Service will be futile and burdensome unless it springs from an overflowing heart. Overflowing not with good intentions and condescending self-righteousness, but overflowing with the love of God. This you do not have of yourself, nor can you give, however much you might desire to do so. You will possess this love only as you wait upon Me [Jesus] and take time to absorb it from Me, like a quiet flower takes life from the warm rays of sun.

Your heart will be cold otherwise. For your ready ardor and natural sympathy, and common kindness will soon be cooled by the chill winds of ingratitude and others’ unlovely reactions.”

Frances J. Roberts, *Come Away My Beloved*,
Barbour Publishers, Uhrichsville, Ohio, 2002, p. 205.

“The character of a life is set in ten thousand little moments of everyday life. It’s the themes of struggles that emerge from those little moments that reveal what’s really going on in our hearts.

So, I knew I couldn’t back away from this little moment. I knew I had to own my sin. The minute I thought this, an inner struggle began. ‘I wasn’t the only one at fault. If he hadn’t said what he said, I wouldn’t have become angry. I was actually pretty patient for much of the conversation.’ These were some of the arguments I was giving myself.

Isn’t this interesting. Rather than appealing to the mercy of the Lord in the face of my sin, what I actually do instead is function as my own defense lawyer and present a list of arguments for my own righteousness. The theology behind the defense is that my greatest problem is outside of me, not inside of me. In so arguing, I’m telling myself that I don’t really need to be rescued by the Lord’s mercy. No, I’m telling myself that what I need to be rescued from is that sinner in the room who caused me to respond as I did.”

Paul David Tripp, *Whiter Than Snow*,
Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 2008, p. 21-22.

“It is only when you begin to accept that your greatest problem in all of life is not what has happened or been done to you that you begin to get excited about the rescuing grace of Jesus Christ. It is only when you begin to accept that your greatest need is something with which you came into the world that you will begin to hunger for the help that only God can give you. It is only then that you will begin to hunger for more than changes of situation and relationship. It is only then that you will begin to accept the most radical and personally liberating truth that you could ever conceive. What is that truth? It is that what you and I really need to be rescued from is ourselves! We are the biggest danger to ourselves. That is why God offers us the gorgeous promise of his grace which has the power to change us from the inside out.”

Paul David Tripp, *Whiter Than Snow*,
Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 2008, p. 39.