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LOVE

IS THE

POINT

100 DAYS

OF GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU
AND HOW TO SHARE IT
WITH THOSE AROUND YOU

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

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LOVE CHALLENGE

PRACTICE HOSPITALITY

Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed.”

—LUKE 14:12-14

In Hollywood, everyone’s trying to get with—and be seen with!—the rich, successful, beautiful, and famous people. But throughout the Gospels Jesus challenged us to welcome folks into our homes who are down and out: the ones without money, without success, without healthy bodies, without notoriety. And when we open our eyes, we might notice that these beloved ones are not so far away.

Ask God to show you the person or people you can love well by inviting them to share a meal in your home. To help you brainstorm who to invite, complete the following list. (If you know the name of each person, write it beside the prompt. If you don’t, learn it!)

Someone who cleans your home _____

Someone who maintains your yard _____

Someone who bags your groceries _____

Someone who picks up your trash _____

Someone with a physical disability _____

Someone with an intellectual disability _____

Someone who lacks financial resources _____

Someone at church who may be lonely _____

Three people I could show hospitality to are . . .

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

LOVE CHALLENGE

BE HOLY

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

—PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9

While your particular temptation might not be porn, we all have vices, habits, sins, and temptations that hinder us from loving God and loving people. And we're all different. For some, being active on social media won't affect other areas of their lives. But for others, the constant attention to social will distract them from people and from God, keeping them from loving well. Quiet your heart and ask God to open your eyes to the behavior in *your life*—not someone else's—that keeps you from loving well. We've included the following checklist to help you. Ask God to give you one practical strategy to find freedom this week.

What distracts me from people and from God?

- ☐ Gaming
- ☐ Chasing perfection
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Eating
- ☐ Comparing yourself to others
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Shopping
- ☐ Work
- ☐ Desire for the next thing

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

LOVE CHALLENGE

CARE FOR OTHERS WHEN IT COSTS YOU SOMETHING

Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

—PHILIPPIANS 2:2-4

Paul's letter to the church in Philippi underscores Jesus' call to love others by challenging us to value others *above* ourselves. Awesome, right? So we want you to try a little experiment with God. Name the three moments or situations in your life when it would be most inconvenient to love others. Like, oh, the season finale of *Stranger Things*. Then give those situations to God and commit to Him that you will love, even if it's an inconvenience to you.

Which of the below scenarios is most difficult for you to show love in? (Obviously, don't jeopardize anyone in the process. But do make it hurt a little.)

- ☐ When I'm spending time with God
- ☐ When I'm on break at work
- ☐ When I'm asleep or nearly asleep
- ☐ When I'm in the middle of exercising
- ☐ When I'm cooking
- ☐ When I'm doing my favorite hobby
- ☐ When I'm watching my favorite show
- ☐ When I'm on vacation
- ☐ When _____

LOVE CHALLENGE

USE YOUR GIFTS TO SERVE OTHERS

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

—GALATIANS 5:13-14

In this season of your life, how are you serving your community? Maybe you were required to volunteer when you were in high school or as part of a fraternity or sorority in college. Or you might have gone on a mission trip with your church in high school. But how are you getting outside your comfort zone *now* to love and serve others?

What’s cool is that God has given you unique gifts—like a passion for stray-wire management—to serve others. Take some time to notice what gifts God has given you and then ask God to show you where you might share those with others.

MY GIFTS

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

LOVE CHALLENGE

TRUST GOD WITH THE STUFF IN YOUR LIFE

This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it—the LORD is his name: “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

—JEREMIAH 33:2-3

Some people think that prayer is just mumbling the words of the Lord’s Prayer in church on Sunday morning. Others might pray religiously, spouting words to God every day in monologue fashion. We’re confident, though, that God not only hears us when we turn to Him but also *answers*: through Scripture, a still small voice, another person, or a circumstance. God answers prayer. Take time to talk to God about all the things that concern you. He cares.

List the things that concern you most in each of the following categories. Then start bringing these to God in prayer!

The Really Big Personal Stuff (e.g., marriage, children, divorce, illness, addiction, infidelity, trauma, finances, salvation)

The Really Big World Stuff (e.g., war, peace, justice, hunger, pandemic, those in positions of leadership)

The Stuff of Daily Life (e.g., job, school, home, vacation plans, community, friendships)

LOVE CHALLENGE

LOVE YOURSELF LIKE JESUS DOES

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

—1 CORINTHIANS 6:19–20

When Paul reminded believers that we were “bought at a price,” he was explaining that since Jesus paid such a high price to redeem us, *we matter. You matter.* Do you value yourself as much as God values you? Or are you running on empty because you put everyone else first? You demonstrate love for God when you honor Him with your body, mind, and spirit.

Pray about the following questions and make notes of ways you feel led to respond. Give yourself time to be silent and listen for God’s leading.

God, how can I honor You in the way I eat?

God, how can I honor You in the exercise I get?

God, how can I honor You in the other ways I use my body?

God, how can I honor You in the way I rest?

God, how can I honor You in the way I feed my mind?

God, how can I honor You in the way I nurture my spirit?

God, how can I honor You by tending to my emotional health?

LOVE CHALLENGE

GIVE BIG

As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. “Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”

—LUKE 21:1-4

Whether you’re rolling in money like Scrooge McDuck (please tell me you guys know this reference—if you don’t, look it up!), or you’re living paycheck to paycheck, God wants you to be a giver. We don’t completely understand it, but again and again we’ve seen that when we’ve been generous, when we’ve *given* big, God has met all our needs. Is it scary sometimes? Yes. Absolutely. But God is faithful, and when we take the risk of giving big, we also get to see how He provides big. We want to challenge you to trust God by giving beyond what is comfortable. Spend time asking God for guidance as you consider where you are being called to give financially.

- My church

- A ministry or organization I already trust and support

- A ministry or organization I've been wanting to support

- A family member with a financial need

- Someone else with a particular financial need

- Other

LOVE CHALLENGE

SHARE CHRIST WITH OTHERS

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

—1 PETER 3:15

Some people get squeamish about sharing their faith in Christ with others. They don't want to come off as pushy, like a street-corner evangelist. Others fear they won't be able to answer questions someone might have about faith. But sometimes we make it more complicated than it needs to be. Spend some time rehearsing by just writing down the reasons that you trust Jesus! Then list the names of the people God places on your heart who need to hear some good news.

My Faith Story

People I Know Who Don't Yet Know Jesus

LOVE CHALLENGE

SHARE FROM WHAT YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

—2 CORINTHIANS 9:7-8

God gives to you so that you can give to others. And what's cool is that sharing doesn't always mean giving dollars. When Krizia paused to care for a man at the side of the road, she didn't have much money. But she had time. She had a watermelon. She had a sweatshirt. And God used exactly what she had. The same is true for you! Do you have the gift of hospitality? Are you handy with tools? Do you enjoy caring for kids? Are you a good teacher? Take inventory of what God has given you.

Skills You've Learned

Talents You Possess

Services You Can Provide

Resources You Can Offer

Passions You Can Share

Gifts You Can Give

Other . . .

As you look at what you wrote, ask God to show you *one way* you can use what you've been given to love others.

LOVE CHALLENGE

LOVE SMALL

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

—MATTHEW 25:35-36

When Jesus invited us to love our neighbors, He didn't insist that we build an orphanage, or fund a hospital, or end war on earth. (Though if you're doing those things, don't stop.) He actually made it pretty simple: food, drink, shelter, clothing, care, company. When we love those around us in these doable, practical ways, we're also loving Him. Quiet your heart and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to the name or face of someone who needs what you've got to give.

Food _____

Drink _____

Shelter _____

Clothing _____

Care _____

Company _____

And here's the big win: Don't try to do everything. That's too much.
Just do the *next* thing.

Who can you love this week in a small, practical way?

LOVE CHALLENGE

MAKE AMENDS

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

—MATTHEW 5:23-24

We have both experienced broken relationships in our families and in our friendships. Some of those have been restored and in others we're still seeking God's healing. When Carlos came to know Christ, he immediately knew that God was asking him to repair broken relationships. He did the thing that Jesus commands: be reconciled to the person who has something against *you*. So this isn't about calling other people out—it's about confessing and asking for forgiveness when *you've* hurt others.

Who is the person, or people, in your life with whom you're not reconciled?

The person God is showing me I need to reconcile with is

The offense I committed against them is _____

Then make reconciliation actionable. Offer this plan to God, asking for His help.

**I will reach out to seek forgiveness (if possible, face-to-face) by
this date:_____**

LOVE CHALLENGE

CHOOSE YOUR YES AND YOUR NO

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

—COLOSSIANS 3:17

If you're a people pleaser—as Lex once was—you might say yes to other folks' requests a lot more than you say no. And while that sounds relatively harmless, saying yes too often when an opportunity is not a good fit for you means that you're unavailable for what matters most. We encourage you to be intentional about what you say yes to and what you say no to.

Begin a list of the types of opportunities that do and don't have your name on them. Choose from these ideas and add your own!

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Cooking | ☐ Yard care |
| ☐ Housecleaning | ☐ Respite for a caregiver (of a child or of an elderly or sick person) |
| ☐ Laundry | ☐ Helping someone financially |
| ☐ Childcare | |
| ☐ Home maintenance | |

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Serving folks on the world's margins | ☐ Offering rides |
| ☐ Cross-cultural mission work | ☐ Using your creative gifts |
| ☐ Sharing the gospel | ☐ Writing a letter of care |
| ☐ Tutoring | ☐ Praying diligently |
| ☐ Coaching sports | ☐ _____ |
| | ☐ _____ |

Opportunities with My Name on Them

Opportunities That Don't Have My Name on Them

Opportunities Requiring Discernment (May or May Not Have My Name on Them)

LOVE CHALLENGE

SHARE OTHERS' JOYS AND SUFFERING

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

—ROMANS 12:15

We both know what a gift it is to each other when one of us notices that the other is suffering, hurting, aching, struggling. In fact, we believe that God cares for us through those who really see us and hear us: family, friends, pastors, therapists, and others. What is true of suffering is also true of our joy. It's a great gift when someone can really celebrate the things in our lives worth celebrating.

Just like Jesus wept with His friends Martha and Mary at the loss of their brother, we're made to share the suffering of others. And just like Jesus celebrated with a bride and groom on the day of their wedding, we're made to share the joys of others. Intentionally notice the people in your life with whom you may be called to rejoice or to mourn.

PEOPLE WHO ARE SUFFERING**PEOPLE WHO ARE REJOICING**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

After pausing to notice the people God has given you to love, ask Him to show you one particular person from each list to reach out to, in love, this week.

Someone who is suffering: _____

Someone who is rejoicing: _____

LOVE CHALLENGE

HAVE FUN

So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.

—ECCLESIASTES 8:15

Some of our best memories from childhood are the times we got to be silly, have fun, and cut loose with the people we loved. For Lex it was playing with her sisters on a horse ranch in Florida and break-dancing with other kids on the set of *Spy Kids*. For Los it was making home movies with his brothers where they would be bad guys and good guys dueling it out. And too often that kind of unbridled joy gets lost once we start becoming concerned with earning impressive test scores, getting the next bonus at work, or capturing the perfect sultry selfie for a dating app.

Think of someone in your life who would be blessed by some good old-fashioned fun. Then brainstorm. Consider enlisting a partner-in-fun to execute Night-o-Fun for someone who's long overdue for fun!

Ideas for that Fun Extravaganza

Visiting a theme park or water park
Planning a game night of charades and other goofy games
Getting “disguises” at a thrift store and trying them out in public
Bouncing at a trampoline park
Watching a corny old movie from childhood
Painting fingernails and toenails in funky colors
Jamming to oldies at a local roller-skating rink
Filming fun videos and then watching them in reverse
Having a water balloon fight
Enjoying an evening at a comedy club
Kidnapping a friend to go get ice cream

Someone who might need to have fun is

LOVE CHALLENGE

MAKE A SPACE FOR GOD

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. . . . Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

—JAMES 4:7–8, 10

Did you know that the average American spends over seven hours a day looking at a screen? *Yikes*, right?! One of the results of our media-saturated culture is that our attention spans—for reading books, for stillness, for being quiet with God—have been reduced. And so we can miss the deep joy, peace, and satisfaction available when we carve out time to spend with God. That’s why we want to encourage you to create a space—and a time—where you look forward to being with God. Even if you share your home with others, you can create a special space.

Which of the below could you use to create a space for alone time?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Private room | ☐ Church, during the week |
| ☐ Walk-in closet | ☐ Other locations |
| ☐ Basement | _____ |
| ☐ Vehicle | ☐ _____ |
| ☐ Outdoors, near home | ☐ _____ |
| ☐ Outdoors, at a public space | |

What will be with you in that space to facilitate a peaceful time with God?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Bible | ☐ Blanket or pillow |
| ☐ Journal/notebook | ☐ Cup of tea |
| ☐ Pen or pencil | ☐ Other items |
| ☐ Candle | _____ |
| ☐ White noise app or gentle music | ☐ _____ |
| | ☐ _____ |

Based on your schedule, when is the best time for you to spend time with God in your sacred space?

LOVE CHALLENGE

GATHER YOUR COURAGE AND DO THE HARD THING

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

—EPHESIANS 4:15

Sometimes it's really *really* hard to do the right thing. When we know that an important conversation is going to create conflict, it feels easier to ignore it. To make up reasons why it would be better to mind our own business. But if others will be hurt by our silence or inaction, God's Spirit often nudges us to do the hard thing—when it's the *right* thing. Like when Lex made the hard phone call to her stepdad.

Sometimes we can walk around carrying these burdens for years without gathering our courage to do the right thing. Friend, now is your moment.

Is there a relationship in your life that is strained or broken and in need of repair? Have you been convicted to speak the truth in love to someone but have failed to do it? Is there a hard truth you need to share with someone that could potentially help them or someone else?

List the people and situations that need your attention and ask God to guide your words and actions.

LOVE CHALLENGE

MAKE ROOM TO LOVE OTHERS WELL

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

—COLOSSIANS 3:1-2

Just as it can be helpful to create a time and place to spend time with God, it's also useful to reduce the distractions that keep us from loving the people in our lives. It's no surprise that one of the key distractions for a lot of us can be our phones. And that's why we love the Bethkes' witness of getting unplugged. While our phones are a pretty common interference, we each have different temptations. One person might get lost in a romance novel while someone else can get lost to a Nintendo Switch, playing Stardew Valley for way too long—I (Lex) am guilty of that!

1. Ask God to show you what distracts from relationships with the people you've been called to love inside and outside your home.
2. Check the boxes of things that can be temptations for you.
3. After identifying the distractions that God is inviting you to reduce, create an action plan to dial them back.

☐ Bingeing books, shows, movies

☐ Gaming

☐ Social media

☐ Habits or addictions

☐ Unhealthy relationships

☐ Phone distractions

☐ Hobbies or pastimes

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

I can reduce my distractions by _____

LOVE CHALLENGE

NOTICE THE BELOVED ONES WHO SERVE YOU

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

—1 JOHN 4:7-8

A friend of ours was challenged to finally *see* the people in her life who are too often overlooked: *those who serve*. So at 5:30 a.m., when she hopped in an Uber for a ride to the airport, she made a point of learning the name of her driver. Twenty minutes later this random driver—who was finishing up his PhD in relational psychology—had helped her identify some of the reasons she was attracted to the wrong kind of guys on dating apps and how she could make better choices. Fantastic, right?! There is so much richness for us and others when we are intentional about *seeing* them.

1. Make a list of the people, in the course of a regular week of your life, whose role is to *serve* you.

Which of these folks do you call by name? _____

Who are the ones whose names you need to learn?

2. Learn the names of everyone on your list. Then express a genuine interest in learning about the life of *one person*.

Who is your one person? _____

3. Pray for this person and ask God how to nurture the relationship.

LOVE CHALLENGE

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PRAYERS

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

—PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7

One of the cool things about praying is that God is *really listening*. And we believe that God not only hears our prayers but also answers. God speaks. He intervenes. And one way to begin noticing what God is up to is keeping a record of your conversation with Him.

METHOD 1: PRAYER JOURNAL

Grab a notebook or a blank journal, and write your prayers to God: praise, confession, gratitude, and requests. Be sure to date each entry.

Then, when you read back through your journal, jot a note (with the date) about how God is answering your prayers.

METHOD 2: INDEX CARDS

Using index cards—in a box or on a ring—is also a great tool to keep track of your prayers. At the top of each card, list the name of a person or situation. Then, on the lines below, record and date your prayers and updates.

The method I will try is
