



Love out Loud

A Devotional for Loving God,
Loving Yourself,
and Loving Others

JOYCE MEYER

#1 New York Times Bestselling Author

LOVE OUT LOUD

365 DEVOTIONS
FOR LOVING GOD,
LOVING YOURSELF,
AND LOVING OTHERS

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Love Perfected

No man has at any time (yet) seen God. But if we love one another, God abides (lives and remains) in us and His love (that love which is essentially His) is brought to completion (to its full maturity, runs its full course, is perfected) in us!

1 JOHN 4:12

Do you know that love is intended to flow to us and then through us? It begins with God's love for us and is brought to completion when we learn to love one another. Being able to love is a process that I believe God has put in place, and it involves four steps. First, God gives His love to you. Next, you accept and receive that love. Third, you love God in return. And fourth, you allow God's love to flow through you to other people. Without all four steps, love is incomplete, so let's look at each one of them a bit more closely.

The first step is God's love for you. It all starts with Him, and it begins with the fact that He loves you unconditionally.

The second step is for you to respond to God's love. The only proper response is to receive God's love, knowing it's something He freely gives, not something you can earn or otherwise secure for yourself. His love is in you, it is yours, and you will learn that loving yourself properly is God's will.

The third step is to give your love to God. This includes worshipping Him with your life, spending time in His presence, studying and honoring His Word, praying, praising Him, and expressing gratitude to Him. Of course, the ultimate way we show God that we love Him, according to His Word, is to obey Him (see John 14:15).

The fourth step in love being perfected in you is to let it flow through your life to the people around you. Throughout this book, there are lots of ideas about ways you can do that. Plus, the spirit of God will lead you and prompt you to do things that will demonstrate love to the people around you.

Love God Today: Receive God's unconditional love, love yourself, love God, and let love flow through you to other people.

Seek God's Presence

I drove away from my mind everything capable of spoiling the sense of the presence of God . . . I just make it my business to persevere in His holy presence.

BROTHER LAWRENCE

One of the most important lessons we can learn is to seek God's face (who He is) and not just His hand (what He can do for us). Learning this is vital to our strength as believers and to our love walk with God.

This was a major lesson for me. I had to learn to enjoy God's presence, not focus on what He was doing or not doing for me. Making this transition took a while. But what an awesome difference it made in my spiritual life! Previously, I had always felt that something was missing in my walk with the Lord. I found it all in His presence, not in His "presents."

The Lord was doing a lot for me, yet I was still dissatisfied. God had established a relationship with me by doing things for me. Now it was time to take a step of maturity by seeking to do His will, not just seeking Him for what He could do for me. I was enjoying God's provision, but I had not learned simply to enjoy His presence.

I went through a time of testing in which I had to seek the Lord simply for Himself and not for anything He might give me. He once challenged me not to ask Him for one earthly thing again until He told me I could do so. Since that time my prayer life has been different. I do ask God for things I desire, but I spend much more time praising and thanking Him, loving and adoring Him, sitting in His presence and enjoying Him, than I ever do making personal requests. He knows the desires of our hearts, and as we delight ourselves in Him, He will give them to us, just as He promised in His Word.

Love God Today: "Lord, I will seek Your presence above everything else."

What God Wants

He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

MICAH 6:8 NKJV

Do you know what God really wants from you? We might think God requires us to do a lot of church work, read the Bible through in a year, or do a certain number of good deeds. Although all these things have their place, we may do them and still miss what God considers to be important.

God's requirements have a lot to do with how we treat people. According to today's Scripture, we are to do what is just, love mercy and kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

We should treat people justly and work to see that justice is done in their lives. Many people have been terribly mistreated and abused, and we have the opportunity to help them enjoy what Jesus died for them to have. We can help restore them to the knowledge of God and His love for them, as well as bring practical help.

God also requires us to love mercy. People do not need to be pressured to perform perfectly; they need to be loved and accepted. God is merciful and kind toward us, and He expects us to give to others what we have received from Him.

Finally, God wants humility. We should never view ourselves as better than other people.

Strive to give God what He truly requires, which is to do what is just, to love mercy and kindness, and to walk humbly with Him.

Love God Today: "Lord, help me to love mercy, to do justly, and to walk humbly with You."

Come As You Are

It is through Him that we have received grace . . . And this includes you, called of Jesus Christ and invited [as you are] to belong to Him.

ROMANS 1:5, 6

Not long ago I read today's Scripture and thought about how marvelous it is and what a message of acceptance it brings. It made me think of the fact that when we are invited to a party, one of the first questions we ask is, "How should I dress?" Most of us like it best when we feel we can go "as we are." We like it when we can relax and be ourselves.

God will work in you by His Holy Spirit and help you become all you need to be, but you can come to Him just as you are. You don't have to stand far off and only hear the music of the party; you are invited to attend.

You have joy and peace today. You are redeemed, accepted, and made right with God because of the way He sees you in Christ. You are already loved and accepted by Him. Not "you will be someday."

You are destined to be molded into the image of Christ, and nothing can stop that from happening if you will simply cooperate with the Holy Spirit and spend time with God. You don't have to clean up your act first. You can come as you are, and God will make you what you ought to be.

There are stories all over the world of people who came to know God when they were in all kinds of bondage. Some were alcoholics; some were prostitutes; some couldn't keep their anger under control; and some were deeply wounded because of the pain of their past. These people are now completely transformed because they were willing to go to God as they were.

When people will come as they are, God will work miracles.

Love Yourself Today: You don't have to wait for *anything*; you can go to God just as you are.

Turn Your Possibilities into “Positivelies”

For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.

JEREMIAH 29:11

According to our verse for today, God has a plan for each of us, a plan that should give us great hope for our futures. The Bible says it's a good plan that will bring us “welfare and peace,” not a plan for evil. God's good plan is His destiny for our lives. It's what He wants for us; it reflects His heart and desires for us. However, His plan for us is a possibility, not a “positively.”

God's wonderful plan for us cannot and will not come to pass if we refuse to cooperate with Him. He will not force “welfare and peace” on us; He wants us to find them as we choose to follow Him. We have to participate in God's plan for it to come true. God is not likely to do anything in our lives without our cooperation.

We need to cooperate with God. Every day we ought to grow. Every day we ought to discover something. Every day we ought to be a bit further along than we were the day before. We should be “lifetime learners.”

We must understand that no one else can develop our potential for us. We must each discover our own God-given gifts and talents, and then put ourselves to the task of developing those gifts and abilities to their fullest extent.

God has a plan for each of us. It is a good plan, an uncommon plan, a great plan; it is not an average, mediocre plan. I encourage you to seek that plan and cooperate with God so that it will be wonderfully fulfilled in your life.

Love Yourself Today: “Lord, I commit today to cooperate with the good plans You have for my life.”

Give the Gift of Freedom

Then you recently turned and did what was right in My sight—every man proclaiming liberty to his neighbor; and you made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by My name.

JEREMIAH 34:15 NKJV

Have you ever experienced the wonderful feeling of being set free from something? Maybe someone has paid a debt for you or a boss has said, “Take the day off with pay.” Whether it happens on a large scale or a small scale, being set free from an obligation or a burden is a great feeling.

In today’s Scripture, the Bible says we can “proclaim liberty” to others. I encourage you to give the gift of freedom to others. People will love you for it, and it is a way you can show love to them. Obviously, this does not mean letting others do whatever they want to do. But it does mean that you stop trying to control people and situations.

For years I tried desperately to control and remold my husband and children, until I finally realized that my efforts were acts of selfishness, not love. I told myself that I simply wanted God’s best for them; however, I had decided what His best was and was trying to force it on them.

When we give God complete control, our joy increases and we can enter His rest.

Make sure the atmosphere around you is free and relaxed. When people make mistakes, do not make them feel rejected, but go the extra mile to make them feel forgiven, accepted—and free. Treat others the way you want to be treated.

Love Others Today: Relax. Loosen up a bit. Proclaim liberty, and give everyone around you the gift of freedom.

Be Friendly

Practice hospitality to one another (those of the household of faith). [Be hospitable, be a lover of strangers, with brotherly affection for the unknown guests, the foreigners, the poor, and all others who come your way who are of Christ's body.] . . . 1 PETER 4:9

I encourage you to show love for others by simply being friendly. Some people go through life with a lot on their minds—and they can appear to be rather unfriendly, intense, or even rude. I know; I'm one of those people, and maybe you are, too. You aren't unfriendly; you're simply focused on other things and not always mindful to smile and greet people when you see them.

Relationships—casual ones, intimate ones, and all the ones in between—are a large part of life. In fact, the Bible is a book about relationships: our relationships with God, with ourselves, and with others. As I've studied the Bible, one of the lessons I've learned is to take the time to smile at people, ask how they are, and find something friendly to say to them.

If we're too busy to be friendly, then we are out of balance and headed for relational disaster. But being appropriately warm and open toward others can put people at ease and is often the first step toward a good relationship.

It's easy to wonder how we will feel if we smile at people and they don't smile back; we don't want to be rejected or ignored. Most of us spend more time in life trying to avoid rejection than we do trying to develop good, healthy relationships. When this happens, we are missing the opportunity to touch people with the love of God through a smile or friendly word. When we give our smiles or a happy hello, we can make someone else smile, and that is one of the best gifts we can give.

Love Others Today: “Lord, please help me be kind and friendly to everyone I meet as a way of showing Your love to them.”