

LOVE

MADE VISIBLE



LOVE MADE VISIBLE

As adapted from Fireproofs The Love Dare

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 14:8)

Based on the bestseller "Fireproof" this Love Made Visible challenge is for every Christ-follower who would like to practice the disciplines of loving others well. Each day we will read a scripture that teaches us about God's love and then have a practical challenge for putting our love into action, building the habit over a couple of weeks.

DAY 1: LOVE IS PATIENT

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:2)

For this day, try and restrain all negativity in your speech. When you find yourself feeling negative, rather opt to say nothing.

Jesus said in Matthew 12:33-37:

“For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. ³⁵ A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

DAY 2: LOVE IS KIND

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32)

In addition to watching your speech today, find someone in your sphere to do an unexpected gesture of kindness to.

DAY 3: LOVE IS NOT SELFISH

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honour. (Romans 12:10)

No one is immune to selfishness. It is the great disease of our species. It is not natural to us to be unselfish, we have a natural instinct to preserve ourselves and put ourselves first. Unselfishness is something we have to learn. Today, find one moment or decision where you put the needs of someone else over your own.

DAY 4: LOVE IS THOUGHTFUL

How precious also are Your thoughts to me... How vast is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand (Psalm 139:17-18)

Think of people in your sphere. Contact someone who comes to mind as needing some encouragement and message them to see how they are doing and give some encouragement.

DAY 5: LOVE IS NOT RUDE

He who blesses his friend with a loud voice early in the morning, it will be reckoned a curse to him. (Proverbs 27:14)

Reflect on your home life, your family life, your friendships. Is there someone you can ask for honest feedback on something that makes them uncomfortable or irritated with you? Listen openly and without defensiveness or justifying your behaviour. Learn from this feedback.

DAY 6: LOVE IS NOT IRRITABLE

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city. (Proverbs 16:32)

Make a concerted effort in your meetings, work time, after hour activities to choose not to get irritated. Work on bringing a positive energy and focus to your times with other people today, despite the attitudes they might bring.

DAY 7: LOVE BELIEVES THE BEST

(Love) believes all things, hopes all things. (1 Corinthians 13:7)

While love is not naïve, this suggests we go into every situation, approach every person, with the readiness to believe the best about that person. Make the effort to not focus on the negative of any person you encounter today, but list all the best attributes you notice about them to yourself as you engage with them. Avoid being drawn into conversations others are having where they are not focused on the best of that individual.

DAY 8: LOVE IS NOT JEALOUS

Love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like a blazing fire. (Song of Solomon 8:6)

Michael Eaton points out that there is a spirit of rivalry deep in the nature of all of us. It is a sin affecting close relationships that we often fail to see in ourselves and hate to admit. What love does is faces the evil and overcomes, finding contentment in Christ. Find successes that others are celebrating and celebrate them with them.

DAY 9: LOVE MAKES GOOD IMPRESSIONS

Greet each other with a kiss of love. (1 Peter 5:14)

The instruction here was for that culture. It meant that we should greet everyone warmly and authentically. Make a point today to focus on how you greet and engage with those you come in contact with. Take notice of them, have eye contact, and greet them warmly.

DAY 10: LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL

God demonstrated his love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Do something out of the ordinary for someone in your sphere – be it at home, at work, at church. Do something that blesses them unexpectedly. Wash the dishes at your digs / offer to help a colleague on something they are struggling to get done.

DAY 11: LOVE DOES NOT RESENT

In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

We inevitably are going to get hurt, irritated or angry with people around us. But when we let this linger, it festers and becomes resentment. Reconciliation is the great enemy of resentment. Find one person where you feel you have an unresolved issue and approach them lovingly and talk it through with them.

DAY 12: LOVE LETS OTHERS WIN

Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (Philippians 2:4)

Demonstrate love today by putting someone else's preferences above your own.

DAY 13: LOVE FIGHTS FAIR

If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. (Mark 3:25)

Work hard today at avoiding any conversations that cause division between people. Flavour your language with words that honour those around you and the institutions you are involved in.

DAY 14: LOVE TAKES DELIGHT

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour. (Romans 12:10)

There are friends in your life who have your back no matter what. Organise to spoil one of these friends. Take them for a coffee/send them a gift etc.

DAY 15: LOVE IS HONOURABLE

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (Ephesians 4: 29-32)

In the way you communicate today, make sure you honour and respect everyone in how you do so. Whether talking about someone, or the way you communicate to someone.

DAY 16: LOVE INTERCEDES

I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. (3 John 2)

Pray for 5 people who are closest to you. Pray for their occupation, their family and their ministry lives. Pray that they would move closer to God over this day.

DAY 17: LOVE PROMOTES CONNECTION

He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

Resolve to be someone who guards your friends. Be loyal in the way you treat their shortcomings. Don't bring them up in a mocking, unnecessary way. If there is something you feel a friend should work on, talk to them privately and lovingly.

DAY 18: LOVE SEEKS TO UNDERSTAND

How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gain understanding. (Proverbs 3:13)

When you engage with people today, make a special effort to listen and understand where they are coming from. Ask more questions than you would normally. Try not assume you get it first time.

DAY 19: LOVE IS IMPOSSIBLE

Let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7)

Reflect on some of the previous dares. Have there been any that seemed impossible? This is where we realise just how much we need God to change us from within to be able to love as he asks us to. Ask him to help you see this more, and to change you into a more loving person.

DAY 20: LOVE IS JESUS CHRIST

While we were helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (Romans 5:6)

Dare to take God at his Word. Dare to trust Jesus Christ for salvation. Dare to pray, "Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. But you have shown your love for me by dying to forgive my sins, and you have proven your power to save me from death by your resurrection. Lord, change my heart and save me by grace."

DAY 21: LOVE IS SATISFIED IN GOD

The Lord will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire (Isaiah 58:11)

Be intentional today about making a time to pray and read your Bible. Try reading a chapter out of Proverbs each day, or reading the Gospels. As you do, immerse yourself in the love and promises God has for you. This will add to your growth as you walk with him.

DAY 22: LOVE IS FAITHFUL

I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord (Hosea 2:20)

A faithful person stays on track no matter the obstacles. A faithful person forgives no matter how many times they're hurt. Faithfulness results in consistently being there for others when promised. Faithfulness is consistent even through the temptation to call it quits. Today, focus on your levels of persistence in your tasks and with those around you. Faithfulness takes practice too.

DAY 23: LOVE ALWAYS PROTECTS

(Love) always protects (1 Corinthians 13:7)

Look at things in your life that are hindering your ability to love others well. Look at things you give your time to. Do they help or hinder your love for God? Do they help or hinder your love for others?

DAY 24: LOVE IS FOREVER

The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:17)

Identify every object or attitude that you feel is affecting your relationship with God and others. Make a plan to get rid of it, or put boundaries in place to limit its impact on you. For example, maybe your cell phone needs to go off by 7pm at night.

DAY 25: LOVE FORGIVES

What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ (2 Corinthians 2:10)

Where are the areas of unforgiveness in your life? Unforgiveness is like living in a prison cell with the key on the inside. Choose right now to forgive those you need to forgive.

DAY 26: LOVE IS RESPONSIBLE

When you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things. (Romans 2:1)

Take time today to pray through your areas of wrongdoing. Ask for God's forgiveness. If you need to ask someone else's forgiveness, do it. Do it sincerely. Do it truthfully. Do it humbly. No matter how they respond, accept it by receiving it as counsel.

DAY 27: LOVE ENCOURAGES

Guard my soul and deliver me; do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in you. (Psalm 25:20)

Make sure that today, you encourage one person in an impactful and meaningful way.

DAY 28: LOVE MAKES SACRIFICES

He laid down his life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers. (1 John 3:16)

What are some of the most obvious needs in those around you that you come into contact with every day? If appropriate, see if you can help to meet someone's need.

DAY 29: LOVE'S MOTIVATION

Render service with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not men (Ephesians 6:7)

Before you start your day, pray that today you would have the attitude that everything you do today will be for God and not for others.

DAY 30: LOVE BRINGS UNITY

Father, keep them in your name, the name which you have given me, that they may be one even as we are. (John 17:11)

We are called to live unified. We are all different but we have one Father, one God, one mission. Pray that today you see yourself in that light. Pray for your community and the people you work with in advancing God's Kingdom through your work, your church, your small group.

DAY 31: LOVE KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONG

Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

Are you someone who easily remembers faults and offenses? Friendship, as the Bible defines it, suggests that true love, true friendship, happens when forgiveness abounds. Just think of the offenses you have been forgiven by Christ. Resolve that today you will not be offended easily but will quickly forgive and move on. If you need to have conversations with friends who have wronged you, do so. If you don't, then forgive and love them like Christ has called you to.

DAY 32: LOVE SURPASSES CIRCUMSTANCES

A bowl of vegetables with someone you love is better than steak with someone you hate. (Proverbs 15:17)

The love of God is better than life. True love cannot be purchased and is life's richest blessing and cannot be lost. This we should pursue, rather than earthly riches. Happy, loving relationships are more desirable than a great meal where there is hatred. Try and organise a meal with a friend who you would like to get to know better.

DAY 33: LOVE BRINGS COMPLETION

Love comes from God. (1 John 4:7)

At the end of everything, Christ's love is ultimate. It is the foundation for all. His love can be like a wave that floods the hard ground of the heart, or like the soft rain that permeates the ground. His love enables all forms of human love to grow. Our lives will never be completed by anything except ultimately, Christ's love. Reflect on this truth today. Allow this truth to realign how we see our relationships, priorities, identities.

DAY 34: LOVE CELEBRATES GODLINESS

Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth. (1 Corinthians 13:6)

Encourage someone who speaks into your life spiritually about some character of theirs that has impacted on you.

DAY 35: LOVE IS ACCOUNTABLE

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. (Proverbs 15:22)

Find a mentor, someone who is a strong Christ-follower and who will be loving and honest with you. Ask God to direct your decisions and discernment.

DAY 36: LOVE IS GOD'S WORD

Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)

Commit to reading the Bible every day. Find a devotional book on the CGC website under resources if you're looking for some options.

DAY 37: LOVE AGREES IN PRAYER

If two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by my Father. (Matthew 18:19)

Prayer is vital to the life of the Christ-follower. Start trying to attend your congregations prayer times. Ask some close friends to pray with you more regularly and use this time to commit your concerns, disagreements and needs before God. Thank him for his provision and blessing. Pray daily in your own devotion time too.

DAY 38: LOVE FULFILLS DREAMS

Delight yourself in the Lord; and he will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)

Spend some time with God today and pray about your dreams. Start mapping out a plan for meeting some (if not all) of them and commit these plans to God.

DAY 39: LOVE ENDURES

Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:8)

Spend some time reflecting on God's love for you, what he has done for you and the goodness he has shown you. Thank him for the profound ways he has proved his love for you. Ask him to help you to reflect that type of love to the people around you.

DAY 40: LOVE IS A COVENANT

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. (Deuteronomy 7:9)

God has promised his love for us. He made a covenant with all who call on him as their Lord. This covenant speaks of God's great love for us. A love that ultimately demonstrated itself in that while we were undeserving of it, Jesus died in our place in order to restore our relationship with the Father. This is a great thing! Spend some time today reflecting on the implications of receiving this love on how we treat others. Ask God to permeate his love and truth deep in you and help you become a more loving person.

For more information visit: <http://thelovedare.org/>