

*Just Let God Love You*

The late Carl H. Stevens Jr. was pastor of the Greater Grace World Outreach in Baltimore, Maryland, until 2005, and he also founded thriving ministries in Maine and Massachusetts. Pastor Stevens' death in June 2008 marked the completion of a ministry that spanned four decades and included the establishment of Maryland Bible College and Seminary in Baltimore and the development of "The Grace Hour," an Angel Award-winning radio talk show that is still heard on Christian stations throughout North America and via the Internet.

This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

*All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.*

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# INTRODUCTION

What is the force that could heal us more than anything in the world? We do everything to be healed physically. We do everything to be well. But the greatest force for healing is so misunderstood.

The first need in everyone's life is this: to be loved by God. Do you know what the second need is? I'll tell you: It is to be loved by God. And I will tell you what the third need is. It's to be loved by God.

Have I made that clear?

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

"We love him, because he first loved us" (1-John 4:19).

I want you to know that God's love was here first, so the first need for every kind of healing is to be loved by God just as you are. God loves us just as we are, and He keeps on loving us just as we are. God's love also never demands a change; instead, it produces one.

If you can grasp what's being communicated in these pages, His love will make tremendous changes in your personal life, in your friendships, in your marriage, and in your family.

## *Chapter One*

# WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8).

Jesus Christ commended His love for us by dying for us. Picture that for a moment. He not only loved us, He did something about it. We didn't do anything. We didn't repent to make God love us. He loved us without our repentance. Am I suggesting that we can live in sin? No, I am not. I am saying that God's love produces a change but never demands it.

Be loved by God just as you are. Don't try to love God. Don't try to love others. The moment you try, you will fail. Just be loved by God. Receive a love that can never fail you, a love that will never change toward you.

### *He Rests in Love*

“The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee

with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17).

Jesus Christ shed His Blood and died on the Cross to pay for our sins. He was buried and He rose again and went to Heaven. Because of this, God now forever rests in His love toward us. That's why Romans 9:16 tells us that His love is not dependent on "him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." John 1:12 says, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." He begat us of His own will with "the word of truth" (James 1:18).

### *Bad Relationships Made Good*

Let me be very practical. How do I deal with a bad relationship? By worrying about it? By condemning myself? By feeling guilty about it? By making a fair display in my flesh (Galatians 6:12)? No. When a relationship is bad I simply let God's Word be true and let Him love me.

If I fail, I let God love me. I have no strength to change; I let God change me. Does His love fail? No, it does not. Will He change? No, He will not.

## *Chapter Two*

# JUST AS YOU ARE

A man recently called me. He's in a very bad condition, having tested positive for the virus that causes AIDS. He failed in his weakness three times in fifteen years. The third time he got HIV, and he wants to die. He was so ashamed when he told his wife about it.

What can he do? He already hates what he did. Right now, this man needs to let God love him as much as before he knew he had HIV.

Letting God love us doesn't produce lawlessness. To the contrary, it teaches us to deny ungodliness and to live quietly with the Word of God dwelling richly in our hearts.

The most beautiful thing is to let God love you just as you are. I have a reason for repeating that statement, because letting God love you is the only way the memory and the soul can be healed. The only way self-images and attitudes can be changed is by letting God love you. The reason some men cannot love their wives properly is very simple: they don't understand how to be loved by God.



## *Conformed to the Image of His Son*

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans 8:28-30).

In His foreknowledge, God knew that with my volition I would choose to believe on His Son. I was justified, sanctified, and glorified because God was always for me. And He rests in His love toward me because my sins were paid for by the Son.

A person from another church called me. He said, “I have attacked you, I have hated you, and I have fought God. At twenty-nine years old, I am dying and I want to repent.”

I said, “The only thing I am interested in is that you let God love you.”

He said, “I have AIDS. I’m going to die.”

“Just be loved, let God love you,” I told him. “In the state you are in, just be loved.”

He had done wrong, but the only thing he needed was to be loved by God. I visited him

every day and kept telling him, “Let God love you.” Within twelve weeks, that man was out of the hospital, and he was baptized in the church he hated in the past. God changed him. This man’s thoughts, emotions, and decisions were now being expressed according to the Word of God. His heart was changed, then his soul was changed, and then his mind was changed. He began to love the wife he had battled for many years, and he started to love his two daughters. As he began to love the church, he began to love the lost.

The key with this man was that he did not love himself. Inwardly, he couldn’t love himself, and he didn’t think God loved him. He testified in church that his body was healed. Love can do that in the will of God. The Lord didn’t demand a change, but He produced one with His love.

The more I let God love me without putting myself on trial, the more I let God love me without fear of failure, the more I let God love me without being resentful and angry toward others, then the more everything in my life becomes healed. In the sovereign will of God, I will be healed, no matter what the problem is. My heart, my soul, and my emotions will be healed by just letting God love me.

## *Chapter Three*

# LOVE MAKES NEW BEGINNINGS

A twelve-year-old girl came to me about her terrible home life. The parents were seldom home; one would leave on the weekends. There was screaming and fighting. There was alcoholism. She said to me, "I'm afraid to go home because I don't know what to do. You're my pastor, could you come to the house?"

I went to the house. Very uniquely, the girl said to her father: "I want you to listen to the pastor." So I began to talk to him. "Do you know that thousands of years ago, Jesus knew that I would be here today as a servant of God?" I told him, "Sir, if I could put into words how much God loves you right now, I would. If I could put His love into words and if you could possibly believe it, things in this home would be changed."

He told me how dysfunctional and destructive the family was. "That's true," I said. "But first I want you to let God love you, without condemnation. I'm not even going to ask you to change your drinking habits. Just let God love you." He cried like a baby right there.

That night, after church, we went out and the man accepted Jesus Christ. He never took an-

other drink. Later, his wife accepted the Savior. They were baptized together and that twelve-year-old girl had the day of her life. The family had its picture taken and gave it to me. What a testimony of what letting God love you can do.

### *Forgetting the Past*

I didn't go to that home to discuss how bad the father was. Genetically, psychologically, and emotionally, we could have found all kinds of reasons for the way things were. But I went there to say that God created this man in His own image and to tell him how much God was in love with him at that moment. There was no discussion of sins. I allowed the love of God to produce repentance. That little girl's daddy was changed and given a brand-new beginning.

The love of God produced a new self-image.

The love of God produced a new awareness.

The love of God produced faith.

The love of God produced hope.

The love of God revealed mercy.

The love of God revealed grace.

These parents personalized His love. They internalized it. God's love was imparted to them, and it became a part of them. Is it any wonder that 1 Corinthians 13:8 says that love never fails?

## *Brought Forth into Light*

“I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness” (Micah 7:9). Micah the prophet was feeling down when he wrote this. He had sinned, but he understood God’s love for him. He knew that God was right down there with him. Micah knew that he was going to come back because of the light of love, and he would receive forgiveness.

The love of God guarantees that God loves you as you are, as a sinner without strength. It justifies you while you are ungodly (Romans 4:5). It makes you righteous apart from the law and works (Romans 4:6). It sanctifies you. By His love, Jesus is made unto you “righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). The love of God guarantees that you will never be charged with another sin. It also guarantees that if you do continue in sin, the love of God will discipline *because* of love, not outside of it. The discipline comes to protect, to provide the mind of Christ, and ultimately to bless.

## Chapter Four

# NO 'IFS' IN THE LOVE OF GOD

"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3).

When God said this, the nation of Israel was worshipping idols. He did not say, "I will love you if you get right." He did not say, "I will love you if you stop worshipping idols."

No, God said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." There are so many "ifs" in our relationships—so many ifs that hinder mental and emotional healing, and that sometimes stop physical healing. But God doesn't say, "I will love you *if*...." He says, "I have loved you, even while you were 'out there.' "

Didn't the father love the prodigal son while his son was "out there" in the far country just as much as when he was right at home? Yes, he did. The father's love didn't change when the prodigal was living in sin. His love just waited patiently to give his son grace. When his volition decided it was time to go back home, just as he was, the prodigal received forgiveness and cleansing. The father gave him a ring, a robe,

new shoes, and a welcome home party. They killed the fatted calf for the celebration, and it all happened because the son came home just as he was (Luke 15:11-24).

Think of all that has happened in society. Consider the depths of sin going on today. Consider the terrible dysfunction in families and individuals. With all that goes on, the greatest thing the human race needs is to understand how much God loves us. Dealing with sin isn't the great issue. Deal with how much God loves you, and God's love will deal with the sin. The love of God will produce the change.

### *Shed Abroad in the Heart*

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy [Spirit] which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

The Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in the heart, and love is the fruit of the Spirit. When I receive His love, dealing only with Him loving me, then God's disposition takes over. His temperament comes in. I may not even realize it, but I am receiving it as His nature comes in and begins to commune and fellowship with me. And God's nature doesn't sin.

## *Changing Course*

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

“*But God*, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:2-6).

What you are walking in doesn't matter. In time past, we all walked according to the course of this world. We were all controlled by the prince of the power of the air, as children of disobedience. But God, rich in grace, rich in mercy, has a *great* love “wherewith he loved us” (Ephesians 2:4). And by that love the changes come. For every believer, God's love was there for us. Getting to know how much we were loved led us to be saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. He came into our lives, and the love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit became internalized and personalized.



Waves of love can flow through the cells of your body every day. It is not human emotion; it's divine love.

"I have not done right," you say.

Just accept God's love for what you did wrong.

"I don't feel spiritual."

Accept love even though you don't feel anything.

Just receive His love, and it will produce not only love but also joy, peace, longsuffering, patience, divine goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance.

### *The Easy Yoke of Love*

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Do you know what His yoke is? It is love. When I take His yoke upon me, I am simply choosing to take His love upon me. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins....We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:10, 19). No wonder His yoke is easy. No wonder learning of Him produces rest unto

my soul. The Father is resting in His love (Zephaniah 3:17). I take the yoke. I let Jesus love me just as I am. And then He produces that change in me because of the power of love, the dynamics of love, the faith of love, the grace of love, and the presence of love. At last, the change comes and I am healed.

### *First Love Yourself*

There is an order to God's love. I am not to love others first; I am to love myself first. I cannot even love God unless I love myself. I must let God love me. That's the way it goes. First, I let God love me. Second, I love myself. Third, I love God and, finally, I am very free to love you and everyone else—even my enemies.

When you love yourself, there comes a new self-image, a new self-awareness. You receive a new sense of being special, a new sense of being made righteous before God because of sanctification by Christ's Blood. There's nothing between you and God. There's nothing between you and anyone else. You are loved and you love in the power of the Holy Spirit. I'm not talking about sentimentality or carnality, I am talking about what the Bible says about God's love for us while we are sinners.

Oh, is it any wonder that David said that the Lord's mercies are great (2 Samuel 24:14)? Is it

any wonder that Peter called Him “the God of all grace” (1 Peter 5:10)? Paul called Him “the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3).

“Abraham,” God called. “You haven’t spoken to me for thirteen years, but I love you.”

“Jacob. You have gone away and backslidden for twenty years. But I still love you and I will use you” (Genesis 32).

“Gideon. You’re hiding and you don’t want to be used,” He says. “But I love you right where you are. I will calm your fears and bring a great victory” (Judges 6).

“Samson. You did wrong with Delilah. But I love you. Now take back your power and destroy your enemies” (Judges 16).

“Peter. You denied me and even cursed while you were doing it. Publicly, you forsook me, but I love you. You will preach this great message to the multitude after the Holy Spirit comes upon you” (Acts 2).

“Paul. You murdered Christians. You watched as Stephen was stoned. Still, I loved you. I saved you and will use you mightily among the Gentiles” (Acts 22).

In John 13:1, the Bible says He “loved them unto the end.” What does this mean? The end? It means that nothing changed Jesus Christ’s love for His disciples. They backslid. They denied

Him. They forsook Him when He needed them most, but that didn't change His love. He loved them unto the end, so will He love you and I unto the end.

## CONCLUSION

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

If you are trapped in sin, let God love you where you are, and let Him produce a pure change in your life. The issue is just responding to His love, that’s all. My only hope is that these words have stimulated you to let Him love you and go on.

God is love. He is all forgiving. I have been forgiven, you have been forgiven. We have been cleansed, purified by faith. His love never fails and it never fails to change us. Beyond that, His love will never fail to change others through us. It’s the most dynamic force in this world, so let’s let it loose!



## *God Really Cares For You*

Jesus loves you deeply. However, the fact that all have sinned separates us from God (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Still, God cares for you and He provides a way to share His love with you.

Jesus Christ's love for man was so great that He came and died on the cross for all the sins of mankind. He shed His blood for you so you can be forgiven and have eternal life.

The only thing He requires of you is to come to Him in simple faith trusting His character and love for you, and accepting Him as your Savior. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21) .

Simply pray, "Dear Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I receive you as my personal Savior. Thank you for loving me so much that you died for me so I can have eternal life with you. Amen."

He promises that He will never stop loving you and that He will never leave nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). Develop your relationship with Him by reading the Bible, praying, and attending a good Bible-believing church.

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