

HEART-TO-HEART

We are reminded that Christ is in our hearts and we are in His and that love connects us all in unity.



*The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written.
Melody Beattie*

Commitment

At the beginning of each new year we make resolutions to commit ourselves to improvements - improving our health, improving our finances, improving relationships, and the list goes on. How did that turn out? How many of us stuck to our resolution and had it result in improvement? Or worse yet, how many of us made the commitment but it didn't result in any improvement?

Timothy Keller said, "Our job is to

love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy." What if our resolution this year was to practice loving others? Could we commit to it and have it become a habit? If so, imagine what a better place this world would be.

What's your resolution for this year?



"Nothing shapes your life more than the commitments you choose to make."

Rick Warren

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Love Will Keep Us Together

by Jeanne Nagatani

Charles F. Stanley wrote a devotional that spoke to me:

“He who loves God must love his brother also. 1 John 4:21

The way you feel toward another person is not an automatic consequence of what that person did – it is a matter of what you have allowed yourself to feel.... The truth is we all are different human beings with differing perspectives...but those differences should not cause brokenness among us. We should be able to live in peace with each other. One valuable trait that will enable people of differing values to have satisfactory friendships with each other is if they have loyalty toward each other. Loyalty allows us to disagree on certain things and yet be committed to our friendship and a long-term association.”

As a believer, I think it's true, but I think that it also depends on how committed you are to the relationship. If it's a take-it-or-leave-it kind of friendship, then there's no loyalty to the person so it's easy to dissolve the relationship. But it could become a lasting friendship if both parties worked at it. It takes a lot of work to build a lasting relationship with someone. It could take years, but it would be worth it. This is where transformation for each of us starts.

Relationships promote unity in the church. We may be different, but loving God, loving one another and working together is what God wants us to do.

*“If love is the soul of Christian existence, it must be at the heart of every other Christian virtue. Thus, for example,
justice without love is legalism;
faith without love is ideology;
hope without love is self-centeredness;
forgiveness without love is self-abasement;
fortitude without love is recklessness;
generosity without love is extravagance;
care without love is mere duty;
fidelity without love is servitude.*

Every virtue is an expression of love. No virtue is a virtue unless it is permeated, or informed, by love.”

Richard Rohr



*“How good and pleasant it is when
God’s people live together in unity!”*

Psalm 133:1

Trust the Journey

by Julie Morita

I read a quote on Pinterest by Brittney Moses that caught my attention:

“Many times when God isn’t changing your circumstance it’s because He’s mostly concerned with changing YOU within the circumstances. Your character, your inner strength, your integrity matters to Him because they are everlasting qualities. The wisdom, the strength and the maturity that grows within you are all things you’re going to need to sustain the calling God has on your life. Know that there is a purpose in your pain.”

We often pray for positive situations, blessings, and deliverance from negative situations. How often do we pray as Jesus did that God’s will be done and accept the negative situation we’re in? How often do we recognize that it’s our failures and those negative situations that may have resulted in the greatest lessons learned?

In thinking about what it means to follow Christ, I have to accept that, as self-centered as it sounds, it is about me. Christ wants me to change my attitude, my behaviors, my words, my heart - to be more like Him. Being a follower of Christ means that my intentions and motivations are at the center of my actions. Jesus also wants me to understand that serving and loving others comes from within. It’s not a box to be checked off that the requirement is met. It’s supposed to be from the heart because Jesus’ love flows through me, allowing me to freely give of myself to others.

Lao Tzu expressed it effectively:

*“Watch your thoughts, they become your words;
watch your words, they become your actions;
watch your actions, they become your habits;
watch your habits, they become your character;
watch your character, it becomes your destiny.”*

Self-improvement takes time. It’s a journey. There is progress and setbacks. Jesus didn’t say that it’s going to be easy, but He did promise that He would be with us all the way. So, let’s commit to this journey and see what God has planned for us.



“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11

Word Search

F R J P K U A I N K N U R N Y
N A M V H I L W U D X L E H O
E E I I T G N A E R P Y L L A
K P P T C O Z D E O T T A L C
H G I A H P L O N M E A T M F
Z Z E Y T F S C Y E E C I L V
M G F N Q I U S Q N S Y O O H
D Y F C E Z E L R K J S N V D
L R A J B R U N N O O L S E C
R D I P W X O D C E Y Z H Q N
P Y T S N A G S X E S Y I D I
V C H S J D S N I N T S P M O
B H O P E P Q E L T D F S L A
K V L P R A Y E R Y Y S F T H
X G O O D N E S S P G I M H K

relationships
goodness
prayer

faithfulness
kindness
hope

generosity
patience
love

faith
joy



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Your mind is a powerful thing. When you fill it with positive thoughts, your life will start to change.

*Please feel free to contact:
Alli Oshiro or Julie Morita
about this newsletter or to
submit an article.*