

Christ-Centered Change



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New Beginnings Coaching

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Radical Love Requires Radical Acceptance

In order to truly love someone you have to love them just the way they are - no conditions, no exceptions. Many times we think we know someone and commit to loving them only to find out that they have flaws we didn't know about. Does that mean we can reject them or require them to change?

Marriage vows usually include "for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health," but when it comes down to it - we tend to put conditions on our love for our spouses, our family members, and our friends.

What would it look like to really love and accept someone without condition? Are we capable of accepting others no matter what? Are we willing to embrace the whole person even when we see their worst qualities?

Often it is those who are the hardest to love who need our love and acceptance the most. And the amazing thing is - when we love them as they are, they tend to become more lovable. When we accept others with all their faults - even those that repulse us, they are changed. They begin to see themselves through our eyes of love. Radical acceptance and radical love create the environment people need to change into better people. Only when they feel that kind of loving acceptance, do they feel the freedom to be who they are and to risk being real. And then, as we sharpen one another like stones rubbing together, we change.

Jesus modeled this kind of radical acceptance and love. When a woman was brought to him by her accusers, he said: "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Even when being executed for a crime he didn't commit, Jesus prayed for those who nailed him to the cross. He risked loving the "unlovable" by healing lepers and forgiving prostitutes and blatant sinners.

If we are honest, we must see that we too are sometimes hard, if not impossible, to love. Only when we know we have been accepted, loved, and forgiven anyway, can we show the same radical acceptance and love for others. Jesus insists that we must forgive even as he has forgiven us. That's pretty radical - but with his help we can do it!

Bill

