



moms monthly

support encourage share grow

love

Describe the ways that you have given or received love in the past.

In what practical areas of your life could you benefit from the love of others?

What daily choices do you make to demonstrate your love through action?

How can you love others in a way that honours the way God loves you?

Stay and Snuggle

Sitting on my lap, one lazy afternoon, Gwyneth said, "I love you mommy".

I wondered what was going on in her little two-year-old mind.

"What do you think it means to love someone?" I asked.

"It means to stay...and snuggle."

I have never forgotten her definition of love. Sometimes we make love so complicated. We confuse it with things like lust and infatuation. The word itself poses a problem: we use it to express our excitement about a new lip gloss but we also use it to describe our undying devotion to our mates. It does seem like quite the discrepancy.

Maybe we do throw the word

around too much. Maybe we are careless with our declarations of love. Maybe we don't mean it when we say it. Maybe we don't say it at all.

On this particular day, I was reminded that in the purest sense, love involves staying power.

Gwyneth knew as a two-year-old that security is the foundation of love. It is when people feel safe that they can begin to experience true love. When we doubt the constancy of our relationships we find ourselves guarded and hesitant, unable to fully allow access to our deepest selves. When we are confident in someone's loyalty, we can freely give and receive love.

There is a pattern in our culture that says that love is disposable.

You don't have to look too far to see a broken marriage or an abandoned child. This throwaway mindset perpetuates the lie that we should follow our feelings and dismiss those we "loved" on a whim.

I don't think this is working. There is so much brokenness because of faithlessness and distrust. People don't know how to love through commitment and, as a result, they keep looking for the next relationship to feed an emotional high. Unfortunately, their misguided sensibilities and their lack of staying power leave many wounded hearts, including their own.

I think Gwyneth felt secure in my love for her at that moment. As her mother, I always want her to be convinced of my love. No matter what, I'm staying. The snuggles are just a perk.



All you need is love.

John Lennon



Coffee Talk

1. What celebrating did you do with your family this past month?
2. What memorable moments were you able to create and embrace since our last meeting?
3. How did you children respond to your choice to add more celebration?

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:8

Are we known by our love?

Jesus tells us that, "as [He has] loved [us], so [we] must love one another" (John 13:34). He says that his followers will be known by this distinct and divine love. He also states that the greatest example of love is found in service and self-sacrifice: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). When I think about the reputation Christians have in the world, I'm not convinced that love is at the top of the list: intolerance and hypocrisy perhaps, but rarely love. What are we doing to change this perception? What are we doing to show that Jesus' way is *the way of love*. We must begin to live out the love God have given to us in our families, our churches and our neighbourhoods in order to authentically reveal God's heart for his creation.



mommy moment: Take a moment to reflect on the things that make you feel loved. Write them down and talk about them with your spouse and your children. Sharing your own love “needs” will help your loved ones communicate their care and concern for you more effectively.

This Month With Ourselves:

EVALUATE:

EXPRESS:

EDUCATE:

There are four different types of love mentioned in the Bible:

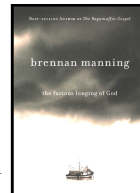
Agape (unconditional love, God’s love for human-kind), *Philia* (love that exists between close friends), *Storge* (love that grows between family members), and *Eros* (sexual, erotic love). How do each of these “loves” play a role in God’s plan of love for the world?

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 3:1

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. This passage challenges us to evaluate our definition of love. Insert your name into the passage wherever it reads “love” and see how loving you actually

are. How much does your love resemble God’s love? Consider specifically how loving you are in your family relationships. What areas need specific prayer and attention?



In your journal, write about where you feel you are in your commitment to love God. Are you able to care for, forgive and accept yourself because of God’s love for you? How can you grow in love both for God and for yourself? How might this help you to “love your neighbour”?

EXPAND:

Brennan Manning’s heartfelt experience of *The Furious Longing of God* is an excellent guide to help you understand just how deeply God loves you. Read it and rediscover the love Jesus has for you.

family fun: Conduct a “love languages” experiment: throughout the month, offer words of affirmation, little gifts, acts of service, quality time and affection to each of your children. Specifically note their responses to each “language” and try to guess the way that they receive love the best!



This Month With Our Kids:

MAKE A POINT:

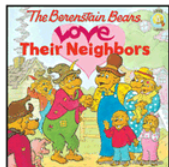
Read some verses with your kids about “loving one another” (1 Peter 1:22, 1 John 3:11,23, 1 John 4:7,11,12). Talk to them about ways that they can show love to each other. Ask them how they know that they are loved?

MAKE A PROMISE:

Love is a choice. Choose to love each of your family members with renewed enthusiasm from this day forward. When you wake up in the morning offer up a short

prayer asking God to help you respond in loving ways to each of the lives He has entrusted to your care.

MAKE A PLAN:



Make a poster with your kids with Mark 12:30-31 on it. Place your poster in the centre of your fridge or art wall. Write practical ways to show love on heart-shaped sticky notes or cut-outs and surround your poster with the ideas. Consider this a brainstorming activity and look to it for inspiration as you seek opportunities to show your love within your circle of influence.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

Love your neighbour as yourself.

Mark 12 :30-31

But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23

Love in Action: Mom to Mom

Share Your Thoughts: Mail a note of encouragement or thanks. Offer wise council. Recommend a helpful book. Work through a devotional or Bible study together. Share your expertise in an area of need. Begin an email correspondence. Help answer her questions.



Share Your Talents: Offer gifts of service: house cleaning, meal planning or preparation, babysitting, organizing, running errands, driving, party planning, wardrobe managing, personal training, or gardening.

Share Your Time: Spend time listening. Pray with her. Share a craft or a

hobby. Play with her kids. Keep her company. Read to her. Take her to a concert. Do dinner and a movie. Plan a girl’s night out. Try something new together: a class, a club or an adventure.

Share Your Tokens: Offer her an extra item from your home or wardrobe for her personal use (if she is interested). Freely lend from your tangible resources as you are able. Give her a thoughtful gift. Contribute (time or money) to her charity.