

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

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Vol 18 • Issue 11

KINGS AND QUEENS

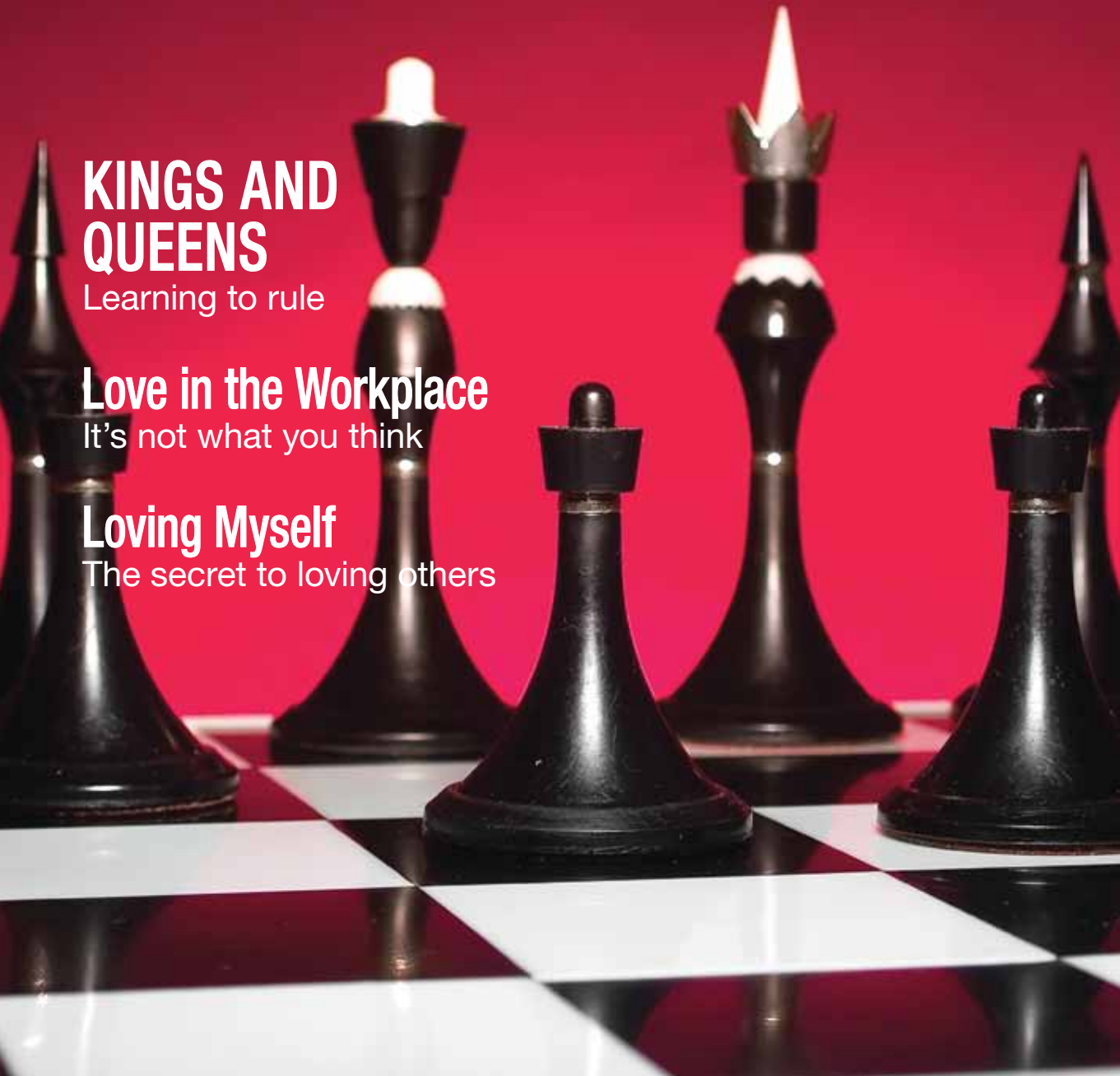
Learning to rule

Love in the Workplace

It's not what you think

Loving Myself

The secret to loving others





EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION FOUR LOVES

In modern English, the word “love” conveys a range of emotions, but the classical Greeks were more precise. They had four words that have all been translated as “love” in English:

Storgē roughly fits our English word “affection,” especially the type of affection within families. It can

also be used in a “put up with” type of way—and as most of us know, that is in fact the type of love many of us had for our siblings when growing up.

Phīlos was used for a general type of virtuous, dispassionate love—the type that inspires loyalty. Today, it’s an equivalent of “friendship.”

Éros was a passionate love, the kind that exists in a healthy marriage or intimate relationship. Socrates had a famous debate about *éros* with his students, which was recorded in Plato’s *Symposium*. Plato refined the idea to be not so much love of a person, but love of the beauty in a person. This is where we get the idea of a platonic relationship, which is a love relationship devoid of sexual overtones.

The Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament completed before the time of Jesus—used the verb *agápaō* frequently to describe all sorts of love, from divine pity to erotic passion. And it was in that same work that the derivative noun *agape*, the fourth word for love, made its first appearance in Greek literature to describe the deepest kind of love, such as in the *Song of Songs*, which is attributed to Solomon and thought to be evocative of the relationship between God and believers.

The New Testament writers used *agape* around 250 times to describe this highest ideal of love. In addition to the English word “love”—such as in *Theos agápe estin*, “God is love” (1 John 4:8)—the King James translators sometimes chose the English word “charity” (for instance in 1 Corinthians 13). This was meant to reinforce the idea that *agape* is a selfless, giving, and unconditional love.

Now we know what to strive for.

Samuel Keating
Executive Editor

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BY SALLY GARCÍA

LOVE IN THE WORKPLACE

Nowadays we think of a philanthropist as someone who donates big sums of money, yet the word is derived from two Greek words, *philos* (loving) and *anthropos* (man): loving man. All of us are capable of being philanthropists. We can give of ourselves.—Edward Lindsey

NO, I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT COFFEE BREAK ROMANCES, but rather about whether it's possible to run a successful business with love. An article in the *Harvard Business Review* suggests that it is.¹ It uses the analogy of the computer. Love should be the *operating system (OS)*, and the other business strategies—sales, marketing, distribution, etc.—the *apps*. The apps are the most visible working part of the computer, but they're only stable if there's a strong OS.

The famous Peruvian chef and restaurant entrepreneur Gastón Acurio says, "We don't want to be

the most avant-garde. We just want to make people happy."² Though Gastón has won international awards, he teaches his cooks not to only be goal-oriented. He believes that if his cooks enjoy their work, serve in love, and seek to make others happy, the customers will enjoy the results.

People know when they're genuinely cared for, and employees need to feel that their work is valued. We all do a better job when we're appreciated. Even challenging an unmotivated worker can be a type of "tough love," if it lets them know you trust in their abilities and believe in their potential.

Generosity is another attribute of love in the workplace. Among the many ways to express love in a professional setting, this is one that seems counterintuitive. One of the most common suggestions for achieving

your own goals is to help other people be successful in *theirs*. As we reach out to help others, our own world gets larger.

By endorsing Peruvian and Latin American ethnic foods, Gastón Acurio became well known for promoting his country's unique cuisine. As a result, Lima has become famous in recent years for its gastronomical tours. If Gastón Acurio had considered the other Lima restaurants only as competitors, his world might still consist only of his own local restaurant; but through his working with other chefs to promote Peruvian flavors overall, Lima's cuisine has obtained international fame, and so has he.

SALLY GARCÍA IS AN EDUCATOR, MISSIONARY, AND MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN CHILE. ■

1. "Can You Really Power an Organization with Love?" Duncan Coombe, HBR, August 1st, 2016
2. Interview with Bárbara Muñoz for *El Mercurio*, Chile, July 2nd, 2016



THE ART OF CARING

BY MARIA FONTAINE,
ADAPTED

MY PRAYER IS THAT IN ALL THE BUSYNESS OF LIFE, in the abundance of urgent needs and priorities, we don't lose sight of how important love is—both in the big picture and in our daily choices and priorities. Sometimes we forget that all our accomplishments are nothing without love. *“If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing.”*¹ If we don't have love, our sacrifice and hard work isn't worth all that

1. 1 Corinthians 13:2-3 NLT

much and won't bring forth the right results.

Learning to care for others is an art, and it's one that there is always room to grow in. For example, learning how to manifest love for others in the ways that they appreciate and need, how to nurse them when they're ill or afflicted physically, how to encourage them when they're discouraged, how to support them when they're busy, how to be a friend when they're lonely or a safeguard when they're weak; learning how to support others spiritually with faith and hope that overlooks their mistakes.


One of the beautiful things about love is that it adapts to the need. Depending on the occasion, love might mean being quiet and respecting someone's need for silence. At other times, it might mean being

more outgoing toward them and talkative. There's no set formula, so part of the work of loving is finding out what the need is and how to meet it.

It's motivating to think about what a commitment of love will do, and what a difference it will make for you personally, because you will be benefiting as well from God's love flowing through you. Your spirit will be strengthened and fulfilled in new ways. It will create a vacuum for God's blessings and miracles.

May God's love be with you today and always.

MARIA FONTAINE AND HER HUSBAND, PETER AMSTERDAM, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■



Sweeter than the perfume of roses is a reputation for a kind, charitable, unselfish nature; a ready disposition to do to others any good turn in your power.—*Orison Swett Marden (1850–1924)*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOVE

THERE'S AN IMPORTANT AND EASILY MISSED FORM OF LOVE that's manifested in the small matters. For example, helping a person in need, preferring them over ourselves, showing sympathy when someone is stressed or worried, offering a prayer, or being a listening and sympathetic ear.

When we choose to take the time to stop and help someone in need, when we show love and concern for someone hurting, when we give of what we have, we become more loving. We leave a legacy of love behind us as we pursue our path of life.

On the other hand, when we choose to focus only on our own goals, responsibilities, and concerns, ignoring the people around us, we become more self-centered and isolated, and we can end up wandering

aimlessly about in our own universe. In the end, we're the sum total of the choices we make on a daily basis.

Each of us has opportunities to make choices based on love for others, on wanting to help humankind. Each day, we can do kind deeds. Putting ourselves in others' shoes and taking time to think about why people do what they do is a lot more fulfilling than criticism, and it breeds sympathy, tolerance, and kindness. As a wise man once said, "God Himself doesn't propose to judge man until the end of his days. So why should you and I?"

There are many ways of showing love, and it will be up to each of us to take the time to reflect on how we can personally show more love. We may want to get a notebook or journal and ask ourselves a few questions, such as:

How much love and self-sacrifice do I show on a daily basis? Do I stop and show love to those who need it?

If God asked me to make a sacrifice, big or small, out of pure love and unselfishness, and I knew there would be little or no return, would I do it?

When I don't feel like stepping out, when I feel the other person should be the one reaching out to me, am I still willing to take the first step?

Am I willing to listen to others and show concern for their thoughts, ideas, and preferences?

How can I reach out more to others and add meaning to their lives?

THIS ARTICLE WAS ADAPTED FROM THE *ROADMAP* SERIES OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP ARTICLES. ■



GOD'S TOUCHES

BY GABRIEL GARCÍA VALDIVIESO

NOT LONG AGO, SOME FRIENDS OF OURS wanted to move to another country to explore new work possibilities and be closer to their family. Though they had countless difficulties throughout their preparations, including a last-minute complication at the airport, with the support of friends and the power of prayer, their move was a success. They reached their goal and now are trying their wings on new horizons. I've often told my friends and acquaintances who long to travel or live some other dream: put your desires in God's hands, because He knows your heart and delights to see you happy.

This summer, we were puzzling as to how to receive our daughter and her family to spend summer vacation with us. Several unexpected inconveniences had arisen in our condo and we had no space to receive them. We committed the problem to God, and suddenly the answer seemed to fall from the sky: a neighboring couple moved and left an empty bungalow just meters away from our home. It was a sign of God's love in answer to our prayers. We had a marvelous visit and a great summer.

Sometimes God uses the most unexpected means to help and encourage us. We had been praying for a friend, who after several romantic disappointments fell into a

deep depression. One day as she was walking close to the university where she works, she found an abandoned dog. She heard an internal voice urging her to pick it up and she decided to adopt it, even though she lived in a cramped apartment. This dog turned out to be a precious unexpected gift from God and has played a decisive role in her emotional healing.

We recently discovered that my wife, Sally, had a breast tumor. As soon as we found out, we began a prayer chain and received tremendous emotional and spiritual support from our friends. From every corner of the world came manifestations of kindness, solidarity, and support in prayer. The tumor was removed and Sally recuperated quickly. Every step of the way we felt the company and loving presence of Jesus who smoothed the path before us.

I believe that it is through the tests of life that we can perceive more clearly the divine love of God, and that He works through many different channels to show His care. "We know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."¹

GABRIEL GARCÍA VALDIVIESO IS THE EDITOR OF THE SPANISH EDITION OF *ACTIVATED* AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL IN CHILE. ■

1. 1 John 4:16 NIV

BY EVELYN SICHROVSKY

LOVING MYSELF

ONE OF MY CHERISHED CHILDHOOD MEMORIES is of my older sister reading my favorite Bible story—the Good Samaritan¹—to me from a picture Bible. I’ve never forgotten that “my neighbor” is not only the person who lives next door but also anyone whose path crosses mine.

Yet it was many years before I began to fully grasp what Jesus meant when He said to “love your neighbor as yourself.”² I focused so much on the first part of the sentence that I sometimes forgot it had a second part at all.

One day, when I was going through a prolonged period of discouragement and self-doubt, a close friend who sensed something of my state of mind said: “If you loved your neighbor as you ‘love’ yourself, no one would want to be your neighbor.” Her words surprised me and made me ask myself an honest question: Do I love myself? My answer was a resounding no, which prompted another question: Why not? *Well, it’s obvious!* I immediately began reviewing my lengthy private list of failures and flaws. But in the midst of my negative barrage, an unexpected question came to mind: Does Jesus want me to love myself?

The longer I reflected, the more surely I knew that Jesus *does* want me to love myself. Why? Because I am His child whom He loves and gave His life for.³ Because I am



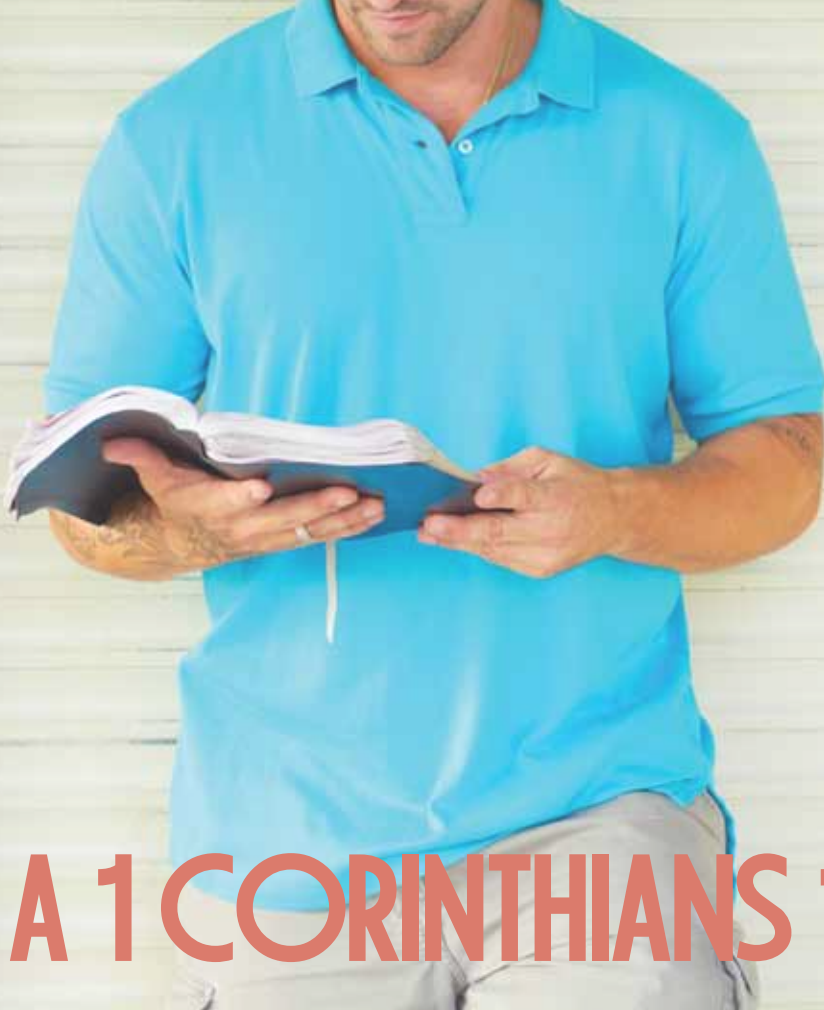
His creation, formed uniquely and wonderfully in His image.⁴ He knows all my faults and flaws,⁵ but He also celebrates my life,⁶ values my qualities and personality, and sees unlimited potential in me.⁷ He loves me as I am. It dawned on me that He wants me to see myself as He does, to exchange my self-recrimination and self-criticism for self-acceptance and self-care, to—daunting as it sounded—love myself.

The more I have a healthy love and respect for myself, the more fully and freely I love others. The self-love of the Bible isn’t an inflated, narcissistic self-love that focuses on ourselves to the exclusion of others. It’s an honest, restorative self-love and self-respect for us as bearers of God’s image, redeemed sinners, and adopted children of God. Its results are inward contentment and peace, outward kindness and generosity, and upward gratitude and devotion.

Love for God, love for others, and love for ourselves, these three bring us wholeness and true joy.

EVELYN SICHROVSKY IS A CONTENT CREATOR FOR CHILDREN’S ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL BOOKS AND MATERIALS. SHE LIVES IN SOUTHERN TAIWAN. ■

1. See Luke 10:25–37.
2. Mark 12:31
3. See Ephesians 5:2.
4. See Psalm 139:14
5. See Psalm 139:1.
6. See Zephaniah 3:17.
7. See Jeremiah 29:11.



By CHRIS MIZRANY

A 1 CORINTHIANS 13 LIFE

I WAS READING 1 CORINTHIANS 13 TODAY, and meditating on the practical application of the verses. I wrote down my thoughts and hope they'll be an inspiration to you.

THOUGH I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS, BUT HAVE NOT LOVE, I HAVE BECOME SOUNDING BRASS OR A CLANGING CYMBAL.

I've recently been trying, again, to learn another language. My goal

1. 2 Corinthians 1:4 CEV
2. Romans 5:8
3. 1 Peter 4:8 NLT
4. See John 15:5.

is to practice a little several days a week, and I'm progressing. But there's still a long, long way to go before I feel fully comfortable and become fluent. Now, I'd love to tell myself that if I could speak with all the tongues of men and of angels, I'd be doing pretty well. I might even pat myself on the back a time or two. Realizing this made the verse have so much more meaning to me—showing how truly important love is above all accomplishments.

AND THOUGH I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY, AND UNDERSTAND ALL MYSTERIES AND ALL KNOWLEDGE, AND THOUGH I HAVE ALL FAITH, SO THAT

I COULD REMOVE MOUNTAINS, BUT HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM NOTHING.

I'm so thrilled to be able to hear personal words from Jesus when I need guidance. I also really enjoy that feeling when God does a miracle and my faith grows, so that the next time, I'm more confident that He's going to handle it. I can see, though, that intrinsically tied in with these gifts is God's great love that makes it all work.

AND THOUGH I BESTOW ALL MY GOODS TO FEED THE POOR, AND THOUGH I GIVE MY BODY TO BE BURNED, BUT HAVE NOT LOVE, IT PROFITS ME NOTHING.

I'm part of Helping Hand—a busy missionary and humanitarian project in Cape Town, South Africa. We distribute a lot of goods to the poor, and sometimes during those early mornings or late nights, I do get a little burned out. This verse reminded me that it's only love that is our motivation—the unending love of Christ that “comforts us when we are in trouble, so that we can share that same comfort with others in trouble.”¹ That's what keeps us going.

LOVE SUFFERS LONG AND IS KIND; LOVE DOES NOT ENVY; LOVE DOES NOT PARADE ITSELF, IS NOT PUFFED UP; DOES NOT BEHAVE RUDELY, DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN, IS NOT PROVOKED, THINKS NO EVIL; DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH; BEARS ALL THINGS, BELIEVES ALL THINGS, HOPES ALL THINGS, ENDURES ALL THINGS.

Well, that pretty much speaks for itself. I'm no model example of suffering long and being kind, or behaving right always, or being unselfish, or not getting provoked, or always focusing on the truth, or enduring all things. Sometimes I'm ... well, quite the opposite.

Here's something powerful to remember, though: Love even works

to cleanse what isn't loving. “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”² “Love covers a multitude of sins.”³ So while I do want to continue striving to have that love that these Bible verses mention, I know that even when I don't, Jesus does. He *is* love. He is the truest example of love the world has ever seen. And if I stay close to Him, His love will rub off on me more and more.⁴

LOVE NEVER FAILS. BUT WHETHER THERE ARE PROPHECIES, THEY WILL FAIL; WHETHER THERE ARE TONGUES, THEY WILL CEASE; WHETHER THERE IS KNOWLEDGE, IT WILL VANISH AWAY. FOR WE KNOW IN PART AND WE PROPHECY IN PART. BUT WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT IS COME, THEN THAT WHICH IS IN PART WILL BE DONE AWAY.

How true that love is the easiest thing to understand. Even a baby understands love. Love is really our foundation and our priority, because all those other things base off of and grow from love—both for God and for others.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I SPOKE AS A CHILD, I UNDERSTOOD AS A CHILD, I THOUGHT AS A CHILD; BUT WHEN I BECAME A MAN, I PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS. FOR NOW WE SEE IN A

MIRROR, DIMLY, BUT THEN FACE TO FACE. NOW I KNOW IN PART, BUT THEN I SHALL KNOW JUST AS I ALSO AM KNOWN.

When I arrive in heaven, I know I'll be awed at the results of the little loving deeds I've done here. I'm sure I'll wish I'd done more, but the wonder of seeing how the results have spread far beyond my region, work, and life, is a thrill I'm looking forward to!

AND NOW ABIDE FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

How many songs, books, poems, and letters have been written about love? More than we can imagine! And yet, there's a single act that forever defines love—the voluntary, humble, forgiving, and eternal love of God in Jesus when He died a terrible, difficult, unfair, and mortal death, so that *we* would never have to face a loveless end. We've been made heirs to heaven by faith, and that's where our hope lies—in His unailing love.

CHRIS MIZRANY IS A WEB DESIGNER, PHOTOGRAPHER, AND MISSIONARY WITH HELPING HAND IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA. ■

AN ENDURING ROMANCE

BY MARIE ALVERO

I RECENTLY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to be around a couple who had 35+ years of marriage under their belt. Watching the way they interacted with each other raised the marriage bar for me.

As we gathered to enjoy a meal outside, Jen came to the serving table to get a plate for Greg. “Greg loves asparagus!” she said, excited to be serving him something he enjoyed.

Later in the evening, Greg brought up Jen’s passion for gardening. “Jen, tell them about the fabulous vegetable garden you grew last year!”

Over the few days they visited with us, they carried on in this way, check-

find out their secret. Could my marriage look like that after thirty-some years? Please tell me how!

I finally got a moment alone with Jen. “I can’t help but notice,” I said filled with curiosity, “how happy you and Greg are together. How do you keep your marriage so strong?”

She smiled. “Yes, things are pretty good with us! I can’t tell you any one secret to keeping a marriage strong and happy, but I can tell you that we started out like most other couples, madly in love, and then disappointed when the daily grind of marriage wore away at our happiness. We fought and struggled for a while. Things weren’t

down one’s life for one’s friends.”¹ This verse usually made me think of stories like Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*, or even Jesus dying on the cross—not married love.

She continued, “When we decided to apply that verse to our marriage, we both looked for ways to give of ourselves, even to sacrifice. It was in the little things, like making his favorite meal even if I was tired, him stopping at the store for a few items when all he wanted to do was get home. Holding our tongues when we had a nasty comeback.

“It was also in the bigger things, like letting go of some of our personal endeavors in favor of a family goal, or getting behind each other’s personal dreams. When you think about it, there are endless ways to give.”

And so I did think about it, and I saw a lot of room for improvement in my relationship with my husband. It takes effort to make someone else happy, to show that “greater love.” But I like that the trend of my marriage is changing. Our decision to try to give more than we take has set us on a path to deeper love and greater happiness.

MARIE ALVERO IS A FORMER MISSIONARY TO AFRICA AND MEXICO. SHE CURRENTLY LIVES A HAPPY, BUSY LIFE WITH HER HUSBAND AND CHILDREN IN CENTRAL TEXAS, USA. ■

ing on each other, serving each other, laughing together, and thoroughly enjoying each other. All around were drawn into their circle of warmth and welcome. I was fascinated. I had to

terrible, but they weren’t great. We gathered some great tips here and there, but”—she paused and put her hand on my shoulder—“the real breakthrough came from John 15:13.”

I was familiar with that scripture. “There is no greater love than to lay

1. NLT

THE ECCENTRIC COUPLE

BY ANNA PERLINI



I FIRST MET DANICA AND MILIC OVER 13 YEARS AGO.

They were already affectionately known as “the grandparents on the mountain,” because the name of the small village where they live, Suhodol, means “dry hill.” To reach it, you have to drive on a steep trail, and during harsh winters, there’s no way to get there by vehicle. They don’t have running water or indoor plumbing, and like many people in the area of Croatia bordering Bosnia, they have a sad story of fleeing from war and destruction, living in refugee camps, and finally returning home to their village and their burned-down house and having to start building a life again at an age when people usually retire.

In spite of hardships, their spirits are always high; and of course, they

look forward to our visits, as these days very few people live in this isolated village. Once, we came across them washing their clothes in a freezing stream and gave them a ride back home. When they entered our van, we jokingly asked: “Where would you like to go? We can take you anywhere” “To Suhodol,” they proudly answered, “the best place in the world!”

Danica is feisty, Milic is meek, and together they are a funny, entertaining, eccentric and lively couple. Despite being in their eighties, whether there be rain, sunshine, or snow, they’re busy tending to their land and sheep. I visited them countless times with other friends and volunteers, bringing them food and other necessities, but always leaving with more than what we brought in terms of priceless lessons and values.

A young girl was profoundly impressed by them and shared:

“I hope that one day I can build something as valuable as they have.” At first, I was a bit puzzled at this comment, as Danica and Milic have hardly anything of any value, as much of what they owned was irredeemably lost. I wondered if she really understood their condition, and if so, what she meant.

She explained that what mostly impressed her was the love she saw in their eyes after so many years of being married and facing together all kinds of hardships and difficulties.

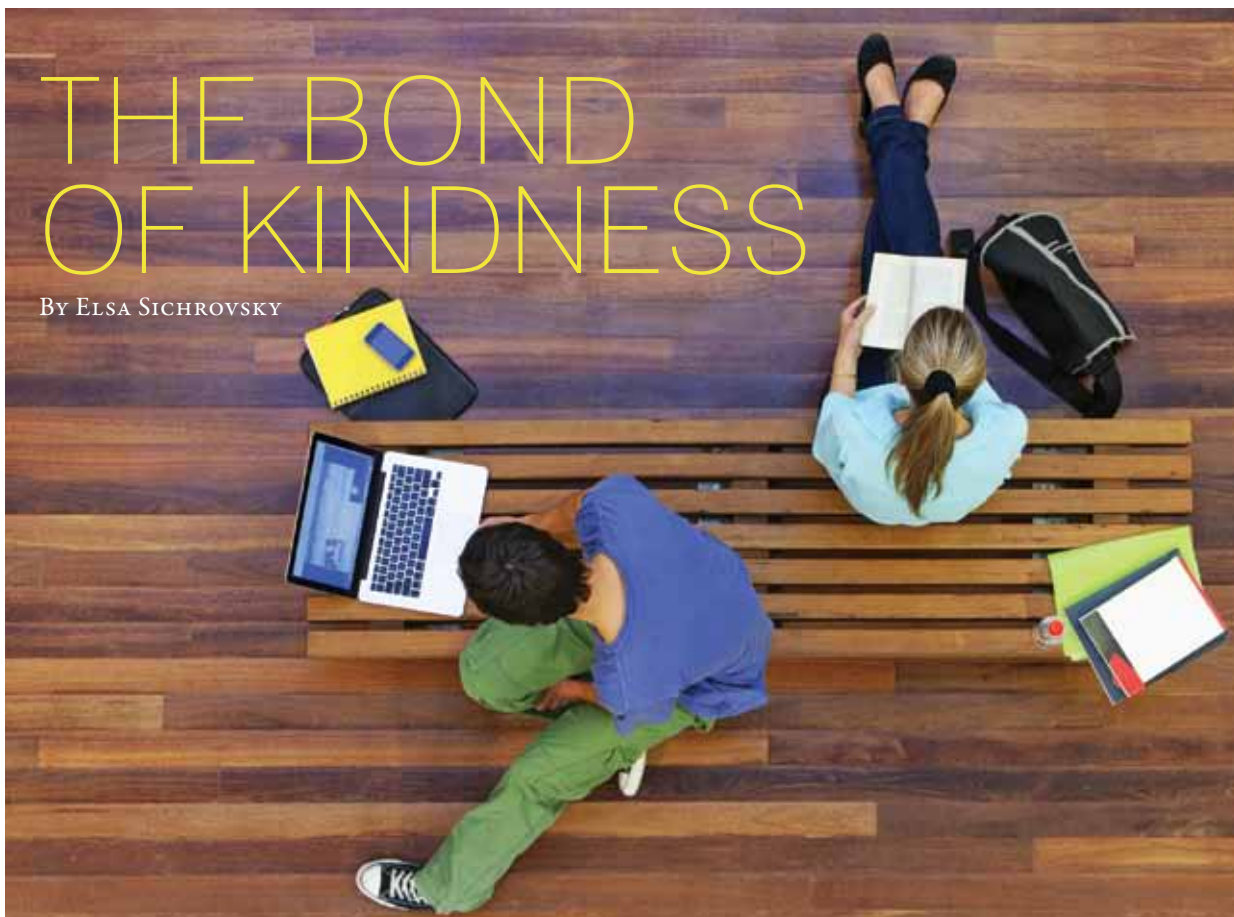
In a world where relationships are so volatile and commitments are easily broken, she considered that a most valuable accomplishment, and how could I not agree?

ANNA PERLINI IS A COFOUNDER OF PER UN MONDO MIGLIORE,¹ A HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION ACTIVE IN THE BALKANS SINCE 1995. ■

1. <http://www.perunmondomigliore.org>

THE BOND OF KINDNESS

BY ELSA SICHROVSKY



WHEN I THINK BACK on my unforgettable freshman semester in college, an image of a six-foot-five, lanky fellow with longish black hair comes to mind. Steve was a senior in my department, but we first met in a General Education course. He won my admiration by joining me in the front row, the spot avoided by most students. Although I barely recognized him, having only seen him a few times in the department office, he acknowledged me with a nod.

1. Proverbs 27:17 NLT
2. Colossians 3:14 NLT

I had a two-hour gap before my next class, so I headed to the nearby reading room to prepare for my upcoming quiz on the *Odyssey*. To my surprise, Steve was already there, settled down with a coffee and poring over *The Merchant of Venice*. Apparently he had the same two-hour gap. I sat down opposite him and took out my textbook, too shy to say anything, having already learned not to cross the divide between seniors and freshmen. Steve sometimes looked like he wanted to say something, but didn't, so a slightly awkward, but almost friendly, silence reigned for the next two hours.

For several weeks, every Tuesday the two of us would sit opposite each other, studying in silence. Still, his companionable human presence eased the lonely hours of relentless memorizing and analyzing every college student is subjected to. His consistently focused academic performance was an excellent example to me as I struggled with the distractions and excitements of the great and complex world of academia. As the proverb goes, "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend."¹ Finally, one hot day he wanted to turn on the electric fan in the reading

I would go to the deeps a hundred times to cheer a downcast spirit. It is good for me to have been afflicted, that I might know how to speak a word in season to one that is weary.—*Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892)*

The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.—*William James (1842–1910)*

Kind words do not cost much ... yet they accomplish much.—*Blaise Pascal (1623–1662)*

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.—*Leo Buscaglia (1924–1998)*

For one day, try to say as little as possible. Try to keep the focus away from yourself. Where you're tempted to tell a story, ask a question. Where you're tempted to say, "Oh, that same thing happened to me..." ask, "How did that make you feel?" ... At the end of the day, make a list of everything that you learned. How much would you have missed if you had spent the time talking about yourself?—*Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval, The Power of Nice (New York: Doubleday, 2006)*

room, and, being a gentleman, he first asked for my consent. In the conversation that followed, we discovered a shared love of Shakespeare, linguistics, and Mrs. Lee, the most popular professor in our department. He was glad to share helpful information on the freshman courses I was taking and recommended some interesting courses.


For the rest of the semester, our Tuesday study time was punctuated with light conversation and even jokes. We greeted each other in the hallways and took an elective together in the next semester. Steve

had little to gain by chatting with me, but I realized that he not only saw our shared passion for learning, but also had compassion on me as a clueless freshman he once had been, and he didn't let social convention keep him from reaching out.

In my sophomore year, he graduated and we lost contact. However, I will always be grateful to Steve for what he taught me through his example: when social norms conflict with kindness, let kindness have the final say. A social norm that promotes exclusion, like the division between seniors and freshmen in my college, must

be discarded in order to fulfill our responsibility to love those with whom we come in contact. Furthermore, those quiet Tuesdays showed that a good friendship is not necessarily built on gregariousness or outward charm. All that a good friendship requires is mutual respect, combined with shared interests, and what an apostle recommended: "Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony."²

ELSA SICHROVSKY IS A FREELANCE WRITER. SHE LIVES WITH HER FAMILY IN SOUTHERN TAIWAN. ■



There are no great things, only small things done with great love.—*Mother Teresa (1910–1997)*

Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.—*John Wesley (1703–1791)*

KINGS AND QUEENS

BY KEITH PHILLIPS

SOME YEARS AGO there was a popular song about righting all the wrongs in the world. I don't remember all the words, but the gist of it was "If I were king of the world, I would do things differently." There would be no more war, or hate, or suffering, or any of the other evils that plague our planet.

It was a noble thought, at least on the surface, but it failed to take into consideration one important factor: God has given each of us free will, free choice. In that sense, we are each "kings of the world." We may not rule over the whole world or be able to make a visible impact on the grand scheme of things, but it is given to us to rule our own personal world. Depending on how well we do at that, we may then be able to have a positive impact on the world around us.

As kings and queens we have both dominion and responsibility. Queen Elizabeth I of England said, "To

be a king and wear a crown is a thing more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasant to them that bear it." In other words, it's not always easy to rule, especially not wisely and righteously.

In fact, if you will take an honest look at your realm, I think you will realize that it's humanly impossible to always rule well. You can't always get it right, nor can you expect those around you to. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory [perfection] of God."¹

But the good news is that although we can't do it, God can and wants to do it through us.² That is not to say that we will be perfect from one moment to the next, but moment by moment He will give us the love, humility, wisdom, understanding, and everything else we need to "rule righteously" if we ask Him to.

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1. Romans 3:23

2. See Matthew 19:26; Philippians 4:13.



G L O V E D

POINTS TO PONDER

is

Dear Jesus, I want to know You.
Thank You for giving Your life for
me. Please forgive me for all the
things I have done wrong. I now
open the door of my heart, and ask
You to come in. Please give me Your
gift of eternal life and fill me with
Your love so I can love others as You
do. Amen.

GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT WEEK recently turned out to be an opportunity for me to reflect on God's love for me and my love toward Him. While I know that God's love for me is ever present and never changing, at times it seems that my love for Him is hinged on my circumstances and emotions. As a human being, my love is much less powerful than God's.

No matter what comes my way, no matter what I am faced with, God's love for me will always remain constant, regardless of my circumstances and emotions. He knows I sometimes fail to love Him the way He deserves, but even that doesn't stop Him from loving and caring for me. It's only what I allow to affect me that can make me feel further away and less loved by Him.

I know that what I'm reflecting on is a basic spiritual principle, but it's one that I easily forget when I'm going through a rough time or when I'm not feeling so close to God. May God help me to be fully persuaded, like the apostle Paul, that no matter what, Jesus loves me and will take care of me. Nothing is stronger than His love!
—*Toni Valera*



As high as heaven is above the earth, that's how large God's faithful love is for those who honor him.
—*Psalms 103:11 CEB*



God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.
—*Saint Augustine (354–430)*



God proved His love on the Cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and

died, it was God saying to the world, "I love you."
—*Billy Graham (b. 1918)*



Though our feelings come and go, God's love for us does not.
—*C.S. Lewis (1898–1963)*



There is no human wreckage, lying in the ooze of the deepest sea of iniquity, that God's deep love cannot reach and redeem.
—*John Henry Jowett (1863–1923)*



Love is the most durable power in the world. This creative force, so beautifully exemplified in the life of Christ, is the most potent instrument available in mankind's quest for peace and security.
—*Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968)* ■



MY LOVE

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

My love is patient and understanding in a world of intolerance. My love is tender and kind when people are callous or indifferent. My love comforts in times of sorrow. My love consoles the lonely. My love brings clarity of mind to those who are confused, rest to the weary, help to the helpless, and renewed strength to those who feel they can't go on. My love brings peace in the midst of life's storms.

My love can heal broken bodies; it can even soothe and mend broken hearts. My love melts away tension, worry, and strain. My love gives faith and courage in place of fear, hope in place of despair. My love is light and drives away the darkness. My love will descend to any depth to save, go to any length to rescue. My love knows no stopping place. My love can overcome any problem, no matter how insurmountable it might seem.

My love is My special gift to you. It has always been there for you, and always will be.