

# Reflections #9: His Love Trumps Hate Podcast



*Thank you for joining us for Reflections, short meditations on scripture intersecting life*

1 Corinthians 13

The #LoveTrumpsHate is being bandied around lately. I see it on signs, blog posts, Facebook, and Twitter. But it's often accompanied by words and actions that aren't so loving. No matter whom you supported in the election, both sides are slinging nastiness back and forth. Clearly the love is missing from this hashtag.

**Why? It's certainly a good intention.**

To find out, let's look to the Lord, the One who gave us the manual on love, 1 Corinthians 13. Join us for a short discussion on what this kind of love looks like.

Be sure to write down your reflections and keep the

conversation going with God throughout the day. May your soul's meditations be fuel for Spirit-led actions today!

To listen, just click on the triangle below. You can also [subscribe to the Only By Prayer podcast](#) on iTunes. You may also want to read Mary's blog post on [His Love Trumps Hate](#).

Pray on!

*Jane*

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## Safe in the Tunnel

Mark and I were cycling recently on a muggy, Sunday afternoon. I couldn't wait to enter the shade of a tunnel just ahead of us. We rode into the cool, dim passageway, and I could barely see a little boy of about 6 racing toward us on his bike from the other end, his dad just a little behind him.



"Daddy, I love youuuuuuuuu!" he yelled, delighting in the echo his voice made as it bounced off the walls. "And I love you, bud!" his dad yelled back.



# Freely Give by Kelsey Williams



I recently spent two weeks in Uganda, Africa on a mission trip. Being my third trip to Africa, I have seen more poverty than I imagined existed in this century. I have watched women bake rolls in an underground oven lined with handmade bricks. I have also had the humbling privilege of helping place brand new Bibles in the hands of nearly 200 Africans. Before we gifted the Bibles during my latest trip, my team leader asked if any of them already had

a Bible of their own and, out of forty kids, only two raised their hand. When they bowed to thank us, their knees nearly touched the ground.

## **Humbled. Privileged. Blessed.**

These words have shaped my life since my first trip to Africa. My heart aches and my eyes burn with tears even as I write this. Even so, pity is not in their vocabulary. They are a strong, beautiful people who trust the Lord to provide for their needs even in the midst of their trials and hardships, like maybe getting one meal a day. They believe fully in God's faithfulness even as they watch their parents, siblings, and friends die of AIDS and other diseases. God has shown me many new facets of His love through these orphans. They have shown me how to love freely and unconditionally under the conditions of losing loved ones and suffering from many broken hearts. These children hold nothing back from each other. They share every material possession that they have to the point that you truly do not know to whom it belongs. They surround each other in such a way that you would think they are *all* brothers and

sisters.

## Loving Hearts

Something the Lord revealed to me through their love for each other is how much more closed off I become to people with each scar a person leaves on my heart. I quit giving freely because I want to protect myself. These orphans *expect* to lose the people they love but I have never seen it hinder the way they surround each other and continue to give freely from their heart in spite of the hurt to come. The Lord has been whispering to my soul, "I am your strength and defense (Psalm 118:14). You have nothing to fear (John 14:27) for fear cannot coexist with love (1John 4:18). Now give My love freely (Matt. 10:18)." This calls for a complete shift in my own actions as Jesus said His disciples would be known by *love*. And Jesus' example of love was not cheap or convenient; it was costly and sacrificial.



During my time in Uganda this past August, the Lord showed me how He is a Father to the fatherless and His heart is for such as these. Satan, from the very beginning, has been trying to destroy God's family, and he's trying especially hard with the AIDs pandemic in Africa. Praise God that the story doesn't end there, though, and we have hope for us and hope to offer the orphans. God has defeated Satan and is gathering His family together as a mother hen gathers her chicks. John 14:18 says, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."

# God's Heartbeat

There is so much that God revealed to me during those weeks about myself, about people, and about my passion for Africa but I consider the most precious what He revealed about Himself. The first morning in Uganda, He gave me an image of me sitting in His lap with my head against His chest, listening to His heartbeat. Generally we, as people, don't lay our heads on just any random chest but only on the chest of someone we love and feel deeply connected to and intimate with. I knew He was telling me that, unless I was that close to Him, I would never hear His heartbeat. It is not until we're able to hear His heartbeat that we'll know what it beats FOR. Since then, I've also realized He's trying to give me a heart transplant. It is an incredibly painful process that requires sacrifice and denial of self but a beautiful, genuine love is the outcome that can only take root in the fertile soil of God's heart in me. This is only the beginning of a



lifelong process, but I will consider the goal attained if He never stops breaking me apart and transforming me to be more like Him in all things. For it is in the places I feel the most broken apart that I feel the most alive in Him.

# Rivers of Life

Our heavenly Father yearns for us to curl up in His lap and listen to His heartbeat. He has made us to be bearers of His love and Jeremiah 31:3 says He has drawn us with love, and He wants to continue to bring us to Him through each other. There is a dried up riverbed inside of many of us because we have built a dam, hindering the water flow. At our request, the Lord is prepared to demolish the dam and allow His waters of

love to gush forth, up and out of us. He then nourishes our heart with His love; it flows freely into us and freely out as we begin to feel His heart beat. We have the humbling privilege and blessing of *knowing* what His heart beats for; we need only to start asking and listening.

*Today's guest post was written by Kelsey Williams, a college student studying nursing. She says, "The Lord has laid it on my heart to bring nursing skills into international missions and words cannot describe how passionate I have become about this calling on my life. In the mean time, I enjoy getting to know new people and letting them know how dearly they are loved by their Father in heaven. I also enjoy talking to people about my experiences in Africa and recruiting them to come with me."*

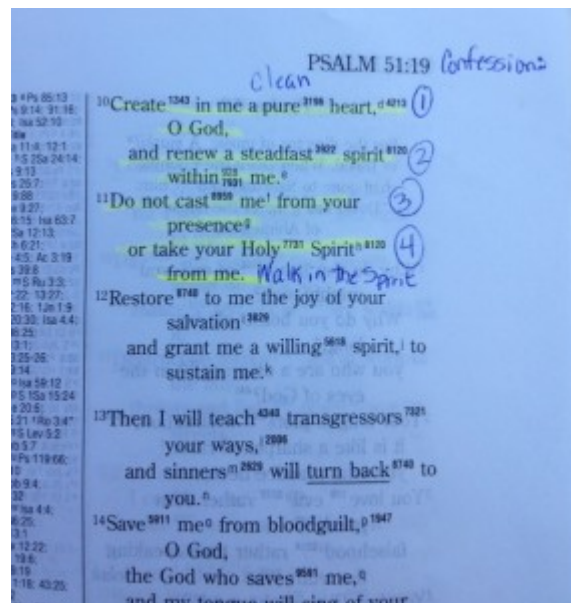
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## **My Failure, God's Forgiveness**

**Last week was not a week that I am**



proud of.



My attitude was weighing me down, becoming progressively worse as the week went on. If I am totally honest about it, I have to admit that I was mired in anger, frustration, and stress and really didn't want to listen to what God wanted me to do about it.

**The result being that by the time I was willing to listen, I was pretty much a mess.**

Had I just listened to God from the start, it wouldn't have been such a painful process to fix things, but my stubbornness got in the way, so I had to do things the hard way. As a result, I spent some time in Psalm 51, which is a panacea for sin. King David penned this prayer of despair and hope after he made a mess of his relationship with a married woman, Bathsheba.

As I read through his heartfelt plea, I added my own regrets to the Psalm and felt the refreshing words of forgiveness wash over my soul. I decided to write a **prayer** of forgiveness based on **Psalm 51** to help me truly remember this lesson. I share it with you in the hope that it will encourage another struggling soul. Feel free to share your thoughts and feelings in the comment section. Remember, forgiveness is just a prayer away~



(If you'd like to download a free Bible study on forgiveness, just click on [The Sinner](#) for a study by Mary Kane.)

Pray on!

*Jane*

**O merciful God,**

Once again I come to you humbly, asking for your forgiveness, that You will remember my sins no more.

You love me with a depth of love that is difficult for me to fathom. It is not based on me living up to my part of the bargain, because I can't do that. It is based on who you are and your unfailing love.

I know my sin all too well. Just when I think I have finally mastered it, it masters me. And I sin against you. From my earliest days, my soul has been marred by sin, yet you never give up on me. You continue to instill Truth deep into my soul and dangle tidbits of Wisdom for me to grasp until I am hooked by the absolute rightness of your way and the futility of mine.

I am sorry. Forgive me.

You scrub my soul with the hyssop of the blood of Jesus, making me whiter than freshly fallen snow. I draw a deep, life-giving breath and offer you my undivided attention, ready to learn from my mistakes, welcoming the joy and light back into my parched soul.

I ask to serve you with a clean heart and a spirit that is determined to cling to you. I need your presence with me and the Holy Spirit to guide my steps. Otherwise, I wander my own paths that lead to destruction and destinations far from you.

A broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart are the incense of my sacrifice to you. Released from guilt, my praises pour forth, and I am set free to proclaim all you are. You take my offering and heal me, one step closer to the person you made me to be.

Amen.

By Jane VanOsdol June 2013

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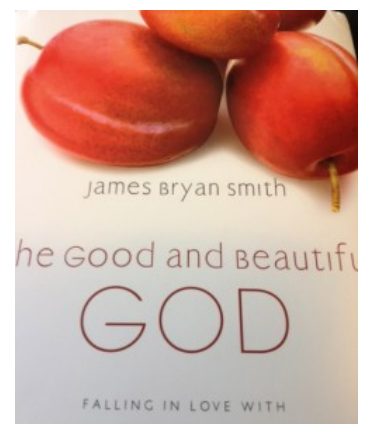
If you would like a nice, printable copy of this prayer, click on this link [My Failure, God's Forgiveness](#) for a pdf.

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# Do You Get This Simple Yet Profound Truth?

## Simple Truth

Sometimes you read something that just makes you stop and ponder. This happened to me last night. It's such a simple **truth**, yet it's so profound as to be life changing. I should already know this, be able to deduce it for myself, yet I've never thought of it in this way.



### What is it?

I'm reading the book *The Good and Beautiful God* by James Bryan

Smith. Chapter Three is entitled "God Is Trustworthy," and as you might imagine, it's all about why God is **trustworthy**. James makes the point that many people don't trust God. Unfortunately, there's nothing unusual about that. I know many people who don't know and trust God, and I'm sure you do too.

**What he said next really got my attention.**

He said that many people can't relate to God as Father because they had either mean, abusive fathers or absent fathers. Because of that they have a twisted version of the [truth](#) in their heads, and they want nothing to do with God. Many hate the idea of a father.

James said that this thinking pattern is entirely backwards.

## **Jesus Defines What Father Means**

We should not be using the template of earthly fathers as the way to view our heavenly father. No; rather just the opposite should be true. "God's fatherhood must define what human fatherhood ought to look like, and not the reverse," he says. "The better solution is to encourage [us] to let Jesus define what Father means and thereby come to know the God Jesus knows. In so doing, [we] might find healing."

The hope for healing for those who have experienced abusive parents lies in not letting those parents define God, but in letting Jesus define God. Jesus said in John 10:30 that "I and the Father are one." In John 14:7 Jesus talks about how if we know Him, then we know and have seen the Father.

Recently, I was **praying** with a person who has suffered for years from the effects of an abusive parent. This person was ready to let go of her idea of God as someone to be afraid of and to see [God as He really is](#). She was desperate to let go of her skewed idea of God and step onto the path of healing and truth.

# Grasping the Truth

How do you see God? If you had cold or abusive parents, you don't have to live in fear of a mean, distant God. Read the stories about Jesus in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and you'll have a clear picture of the **true nature of God**. He's waiting for you to allow Him to love you as He wants to.

The question is, will you let Him?

Pray on!

*Jane*



**[The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows](#)** By James Bryan Smith / IVP Books What does being Christlike really mean? Smith believes we need a pattern for transformation. He encourages us to re-examine what we think about God (our narratives), how we practice (the spiritual disciplines), and whom we interact with (our social context) to discover the life Jesus lived and grow in the knowledge of a good God. 232 pages, hardcover from InterVarsity.