

Love Dare – *Daring to Love Your Parents* – Day 9

“Love Makes Good Impressions”

I want to encourage you to keep going in this process of transforming the way we think and treat our parents. There are lots of vital things yet to learn that will make a big difference in your relationships with your parents and others.

How do you greet your parents on a daily basis? This may seem like a very little deal and not worth our time talking about, but it will make a huge difference in how the rest of the conversation goes. You can tell a great deal about the state of a relationship by the way people greet one another. You can see it in their expression and countenance, as well as how they speak to each other. So how much importance should we give to a greeting?

How do you greet your teachers, friends, coaches, coworkers, and neighbors? How about strangers and people you meet for the first time? Most of the time we greet them with much more respect and enthusiasm than we do our parents or siblings!

You may even encounter someone you don't necessarily like yet still acknowledge them out of courtesy. So if you are this nice and polite to other people, don't your parents and siblings deserve the same? Times ten?

It's probably something you don't think about very often – the first thing you say to them when you wake up in the morning, the look on your face when you get in the car, the energy in your voice when you speak on the telephone. But here's something else you probably don't stop to consider – the difference it would make in your parent's day if everything about you expressed the fact that you were really, really glad to see them.

When someone communicates that they are glad to see you, your personal sense of self-worth increases. You feel more important and valued. That's because a good greeting sets the stage for positive and healthy interaction.

Think about the story Jesus told of the prodigal son. This young, rebellious man demanded his inheritance money and then wasted it on a foolish lifestyle. But soon his bad choices caught up with him, and he found himself eating scraps in a pigpen. Humbled and ashamed, he practiced his apologies and tried to think of the best way to go home and face his father. But the greeting he was expecting was not the one he received. “While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him” (Luke 15:20).

Of all the scenarios this young man had played out in his mind, this was likely the last one he expected. What do you think it did in their relationship?

What kind of greeting would make your parents feel like this? How could you start the conversation out in a positive way just by your tone of voice or a positive word? Think of the opportunities you have to greet each other on a regular basis. When coming through the door. When getting picked up at school. When saying good-night. When talking on the phone.

Love Dare Challenge: Think about your greeting. Do you use it well? Do your parents feel valued and appreciated? Do they feel loved? Even when you're not getting along too well, you can lessen the tension and give them value by the way you greet them.

Remember, love is a choice. So choose to change your greeting. Choose to love.

Pray: Pray that your greeting would lift others up and encourage them instead of them thinking “Here we go again.”