



"This book should be read by every single Christian teenage girl.... Brilliant!"

—Lysa TerKeurst, *New York Times* best-selling author of *Unglued*

Magnetic

Becoming the Girl He Wants

Lynn Cowell

Praise for
Magnetic

“This book should be read by every single Christian teenage girl (even girls past teen years who are single). It is brilliant in concept, full of scripture, easy to read, impactful, and will keep the short attention span of busy teens and college girls. I give my friend Lynn and this book my highest endorsement!”

—LYSA TERKEURST, *New York Times* best-selling author of
Unglued and *Made to Crave*, and president of Proverbs 31
Ministries

“The message of this book is exactly what I want my teenage daughter to hear: ‘You have a deep desire to be loved and admired, but focus on finding the love of Jesus first. Focus on developing and living out the fruits of the Spirit. And that is what will cause you to shine before a watching world.’ Thank you, Lynn, for this personal message that every teenage girl will find magnetic.”

—SHAUNTI FELDHAHN, social researcher and best-selling author
of *For Women Only* and *For Young Women Only*

“In a culture where teen girls are bombarded with false messages about what makes them attractive to boys, *Magnetic* offers a different and Jesus-honoring way. Lynn’s engaging ‘I’ve been there’ style will draw teens in as they encounter a mentor’s heart passionately poured out on the pages. Full of biblical truths tucked strategically inside relevant stories, and laced throughout with practical ‘apply it now’ tools, this book should be in the backpack of every teen girl you know!”

—KAREN EHMAN, Proverbs 31 Ministries speaker and author of
seven books including *LET. IT. GO.* and *Everyday Confetti*

“With the heart of a friend who gets you and a mentor who loves you, Lynn Cowell will help you (the girl God loves) become all He created you to be! In the powerful message of *Magnetic*, you will discover the balance between wanting the attention of a guy and embracing the unconditional love of the most important Guy! Learn how to laugh more and worry less about what others think, while developing irresistible beauty and investing in relationships that bring out the best version of the girl God created you to be!”

—RENEE SWOPE, best-selling author of *A Confident Heart* and Proverbs 31 Ministries radio co-host for *Everyday Life with Lysa & Renee*

“Every girl wants to be magnetic. Every girl needs to read this book. You’ll find it entertaining and full of endearing advice. Lynn Cowell has provided the total package in this book once again!”

—BEKAH HAMRICK MARTIN, author of *The Bare Naked Truth*

“My friend Lynn Cowell really knows how to tap into teen girls’ hearts. Her book *Magnetic* is relatable, memorable, and breaks the mold of typical teen books. This book will be on the must-read list for my three daughters!”

—NICKI KOZIARZ, writer, speaker, and Proverbs 31 Ministries online Bible study coordinator

“Lynn has a God-given ability to reach the depths of a teen girl’s heart with the message of love Jesus has for her. *Magnetic* is an invitation for teen girls to trade boyfriend-based identities for a forever *agape* identity in Jesus Christ.”

—ERIN BISHOP, founder and president of the Whatever Girls Ministry

“Every girl needs a mentor who points her to true north and helps her navigate the challenges of life. Lynn Cowell is that mentor. In a world that offers so many confusing messages for young girls, Lynn gives clear direction and profound wisdom along the journey. This is the book every teen girl needs to read!”

—JILL SAVAGE, CEO of Hearts at Home and author
of *No More Perfect Moms*

“In *Magnetic*, Lynn Cowell has done an amazing job of guiding the reader in how to put godly desires into action. Lynn challenges readers with these words: ‘Your choices today shape the woman you’ll be tomorrow. Who do you want to be?’ I believe this book will help young women understand how the fruits of the Spirit make them magnetic, shining in their hearts and showing through their actions.”

—SHARIE KING, wife of Clayton King and author of *True Love Project* and *12 Questions to Ask Before You Marry*

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Lynn Cowell



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Details in some anecdotes and stories have been changed to protect the identities of the persons involved.

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*To my mom, Lila Martin Parker,
and
my mom-in-love, Annette Cowell.*



*Thank you for showing me through your daily walks with Jesus
what it truly means to be magnetic.*

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To all the guys who shared their stories and opinions for *Magnetic*, I couldn't have written this story without your words. Thank you for helping me to invest in girls!

And to my readers, both girls and their moms—thank you for your hearts to become the women He wants you to be! I know Jesus is saying, "Well done!"



The Power to Become Magnetic

The Captivating Characteristics That Make a Girl Gorgeous

*W*hy doesn't he like me? I just couldn't figure it out. *What is it about me that isn't as attractive as her? Am I not as pretty? Am I too loud? Are my friends not cool enough?* The questions gnawed at me, eating away at my confidence. He had liked me once; surely I could get him to like me again. There had to be a way.

I was determined to find out what was wrong with me.

Maybe it was my body. Once, when I was surrounded by people who already intimidated me, my "friend" Dave called out, "Hey, Lynn, why do you bother wearing a bra? You're so flat, you should just wear Band-Aids." If only I could have evaporated into thin air.

Then again, maybe it was my hair. Not only was it curly, it was out of control. Dave nicknamed me Lucy, as in Lucy from the cartoon *Peanuts*. Not exactly the image you'd find under *hot* on Wikipedia. I

wondered if her hair was the reason Schroeder, the piano dude, never asked her out.

Flat and frizzy...I convinced myself these were the reasons I couldn't attract Greg, the guy I wanted. Maybe I never would. It seemed I didn't have what it took to get this guy.



Do you ever wonder...

What does she have that I haven't got?

Why doesn't he ask me out?

What makes her so popular? Why not me?

What's wrong with me?

Do you sometimes feel as if your life's equation is Boy + Me = Valuable?

Invisible to Perfect Guy, it's easy to think, *The problem must be imperfect me*. Maybe you've even tried fixing "the problem":

Hair: new color, new cut. *Check.*

Clothes: cute outfit. *Check.*

Friends: do what it takes to become more popular. *Working on it.*

Body: join the gym. *Ask Mom and Dad.*

Yet, no matter how hard you try, it's never enough.

THE MAGNETIC ATTRACTION


Back in my own "wish I were dating" days, my highs and lows depended on whether or not I saw *him* in the hall; my happiness was determined by whether or not *he* noticed me. The crush I had was crushing me.

I wish there had been someone who could have helped me. Although maybe I wouldn't have listened. But I wish someone could have shown

me that the longing in my heart pointed not to my need for a guy, but to my deeper need for something even greater. That I was created to be loved perfectly and unconditionally, made to have my heart filled each and every day with love from the Perfect Man, Jesus.

I wish someone could have shown me I am valuable just as I am, created for an amazing purpose—and nothing on this planet should hold me back from my purpose, especially not some guy!

Then I could have spent my time, energy, and emotions, not on a guy I didn't have, but on the One I did. I could have moved from obsessing over why I wasn't wanted to becoming the type of girl a guy would want. Not just as someone to date but as the one he'd want to spend the rest of his life with.



Nothing on this planet
should hold you back from
your purpose, especially
not some guy!

I remember making the list, a gargantuan description of everything I was looking for in the guy I would marry one day. The more powerful list would have described the woman I wanted to become, the woman he couldn't resist!

What would happen if you made the switch now? Shifted your focus off a guy and onto the Guy?

What if, together, we discovered an irresistible beauty deeper than designer clothes, skinny jeans, and flawless skin? A confidence so attractive, nothing could cause us to lose it? A glamour simply magnetic?

In my quest to discover true beauty, I began to see *gorgeous* as much more than the face in my mirror. *Gorgeous* is not skin deep but heart deep, a beauty that develops as my heart discovers and returns true love.

This beauty, this attractiveness, is found in the girl who has what I call

captivating characteristics—what the Bible calls the fruit of the Spirit. These heart traits are described in Galatians 5:22–23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Let's unpack what the Bible means by the fruit of the Spirit. Picture a gorgeous piece of fruit, a luscious and juicy Florida orange. The bright and plump skin calls, "Peel me!" As you pull back the skin, juice squirts everywhere. This orange is just the kind Tropicana looks for!

Then there is another orange. Puny and shriveled. Something on the tree went terribly wrong. Bugs, disease, lack of sun? Whatever the reason, the orange never reached its full potential. Dried up, the ugly fruit is no use to anyone!


What caused the drastic difference between these two pieces of fruit? One so beautiful, the other so...not? The juicy orange, pleasingly

healthy, drew in all it needed to reach its full potential. Sunshine, water, and nutrients from the soil nurtured the fruit into the fullness it was created for. The other orange did not absorb the nourishment it needed.

When you're planted in God, you become like the tangy, appealing fruit! He provides you with all you need to reach your full potential—to be the best *you* you can be!

That is one beautiful you!

Instead of chasing after the guy running from you, you're pursuing the One coming after you. In the process of seeking His heart, you'll become the amazing individual He



But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22–23, ESV

designed you to be, a girl who is irresistibly magnetic, beautiful inside and out!

Think of the two pieces of fruit. Which one attracts your interest?

The same is true for guys. They are drawn to you when you are at your best, your greatest potential! So the *you* you become impacts who you'll attract. If that guy you're crushing on is mature and solid in his faith, he'll be attracted to a girl who is mature and solid in her faith. Notice I didn't say that the guy you're crushing on is going to return the favor. I am saying that the type of guy who will be drawn to you is someone who shares your priorities and passions. A guy who is like you is the guy who will like you.

You're thinking, *Yeah right! I don't see this happening. You obviously haven't been to my school. You have no clue what guys are like; there aren't any of that type of guys, the godly guys, out there.*

I agree there aren't too many guys pursuing God. But check this out: there aren't too many girls pursuing God either! The few guys I have met who are running hard after Jesus, though, are keeping their eyes open for a girl who is doing the same.

GORGEOUS GLORIFIES GOD

Have you ever met a girl who has a genuine love for other people? Instead of being focused on herself, she focuses on others, making those around her feel wanted, special, valued. There is something so beautiful about her!

Think of a girl you know who's joyful. She looks on the bright side. You feel good just being around her! Who doesn't want to be close to a girl like that? She's more fun to hang out with than the one constantly complaining.

What about the one resisting the pull of girl drama, refusing to get

dragged into arguments or backbiting? She's peaceful, her calm outlook refreshing.

Got a friend who never uses the word *annoyed*? Patient with others, her time is your time. Every conversation doesn't have to be about her; she really listens and cares.

Think of a girl you'd describe as kind and good. Every person is important and valuable to her. She never says "I was only joking," because she doesn't have a rude comment to cover up.

Have a friend you can tell anything? Your secret's placed in a vault when you tell her. You have no fear of your secret slipping out; she's faithful. She'll be your friend through everything.

How about the girl who is gentle, not controlled by peer pressure, not obnoxious or attention seeking? Comfortable with who she is, she's intentional about her choices because her priority is honoring herself and her God.

A girl like that is magnetic. Who could resist wanting to be around her?

Guess what? You can be that girl!

How?

These magnetic traits are the result, or fruit, of the girl who has given her entire life to Jesus. She now spends her emotional energy allowing Him to live His life through her.



Now, you don't have to burn yourself out trying to become perfect. These gorgeous qualities will show up as you spend time with God and He pours His perspective into you!

GET UP AND GET GROWING

To help you toward your goal of becoming the girl He wants, we're going to investigate these captivating characteristics together.

Right now I'm picturing you joining me on a Thursday night when my living room is filled with a group of girls who love Jesus and are trying to figure life out. We've been getting together for about five years, learning more about God and ourselves. I know you'd fit right in!

If you don't have your own group, you can start one! Pull a group of your friends together, make a snack, and go through *Magnetic* together. Of course, it's also perfectly okay to do this with just the two of you: Jesus and you.

As you go along, you'll find questions to help you see how the fruit of the Spirit can grow in your life. You'll also find lots of insights from girls much like you as well as comments from godly guys about what they find attractive. I interviewed both guys who have found their own magnetic girl and those who are still looking. Their comments are really revealing!

I love quizzes, so I've included one for each of the captivating characteristics. In the back of the book, you'll find a chart where you can record your score for each one. This way you can identify which of the captivating characteristics are your strengths and which are areas where you need to grow. You'll find the chart on page 187. Try folding down the corner of that page to make it easy to find quickly.

As we're going through *Magnetic*, sometimes you might feel like change in your life is coming fast. Then a bad day will trip you up and

you'll think, *I've not changed at all*. Not true! You are growing; you just had a setback. Get up and get going! Just keep on taking small steps, one after another, as Jesus leads you to become the girl He wants.

Grab your Bible and a journal, and let's do it! Let's learn what it means to be magnetic!



The fruit of the spirit is

Love

2

It's (Not) All About Me

Love Compels Confident Consideration of Others

Give up a Friday night? No way! The way Kalley saw it, the sweet-sixteen party invitation from Allie meant one thing: boredom! Even if Allie was one of her best friends, Kalley wasn't going to spend a Friday night hanging out with people she didn't like. *After being in school all week, I deserve to do what I want*, she told herself. *It's my weekend, right?*

So why did she feel sick when the invitation hit the bottom of the trash?

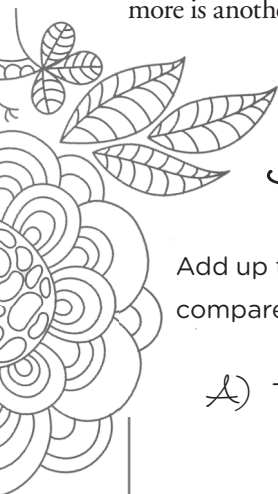


The choice: Do I choose to please me or please someone else?

I struggle with this constantly! My schizophrenic heart pushes one way, then pulls me the other. My thoughts toss me back and forth between *I could* and *I should*. Make time for my friend who needs a friend? Ignore the call because I'm feeling tired? Volunteer to help, even on my

day off? I wrestle with my wants. Deep down, I know the right answer is tied to *would*. What would love do?

How about you and your choices? Help with the laundry or watch TV? Sit with old friends or welcome the new girl? Go to the movies or help at the homeless shelter? The best answer for all these questions and more is another question: *What would love do?*



How's Your Love Life?

Add up the points for each answer you select and compare your total to the love scale at the bottom.

- A) The athletically challenged guy trips in gym. You...
1. reenact the scene for your friends who missed it.
 2. laugh to yourself.
 3. don't draw attention to him.
- B) A friend is spending the night when your crush texts. You...
1. spend the evening texting him and reading his every word.
 2. check in every thirty minutes to keep things rolling.
 3. text him to say, "I'm with a friend. Available tomorrow?"
- C) Your friends forget your birthday. You...
1. purposefully "forget" theirs.
-

To answer that question, first we have to know what love is. You love stylish boots, and you love your dog. You love your parents, and you love your boyfriend. Obviously, not all love is the same!

Love that is a fruit of the Spirit means “to cherish, esteem, or respect; to be concerned about, devoted to, and loyal.” How often would you say your choices are guided by *this* kind of love?

2. express your feelings clearly on social media.

3. believe they wouldn't hurt your feelings on purpose.

Ⓓ) You find out a classmate is pregnant. You...

1. say, “I knew she was that kind.”

2. whisper the news to another girl.

3. pray she has the strength to carry her baby.

How did you do? If you got...

10–12 points: Beautifully magnetic! You love others more than yourself.

7–9 points: Sometimes you put others first, but your “love life” needs some attention.

4–6 points: Ready to gain a better understanding of love?

Be sure to record your score in the back of the book, so you can identify your strengths as well as the areas where you need to seek God's help.



THE HEART AND SOUL OF LOVE

The girl who chooses others above herself is rare. She's hard to find but easy to spot. Showing love with her actions, not just a bunch of words, makes her stand out and causes others to want to be around her.

Adam's story reveals how attractive a girl becomes when she's all about giving love instead of getting love. "I was first attracted to Lindsay because of her smile and eyes. What attracted me the most," he continued, "was how Lindsay wanted to listen when I talked; she was engaged in our conversation. Those conversations were meaningful; she wanted more in life. I was drawn to the heart and soul behind the smile and eyes. Because Lindsay isn't wrapped up in talking about herself all the time, she pulls out of me what no one else can."

Since Adam sometimes led worship in church, he often felt girls were interested in him because of what he did rather than for who he was. But through her genuine interest in him—her choice to esteem and respect him—Lindsay showed Adam true love. True love is about seeking the best for another rather than getting something for ourselves. Adam recognized a difference between Lindsay's behavior and the interest he'd previously gotten from girls, whose primary concern was drawing attention to themselves.

So where did Lindsay learn this unselfish sort of love—and how can we get it too?

It begins with the love the Father has for us. He demonstrated unconditional love when He sent His Son, Jesus. He didn't just say He loved us; His actions also showed He cherished us and was concerned for our well-being. Even though we deserved to pay for our sins by being eternally separated from Him, God instead demonstrated unconditional love by sending His perfect Son, Jesus, to pay the price for our sins. He chose what was best for us, clearing the way for us to be together forever

with Him. First John 3:16 tells it this way: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.”

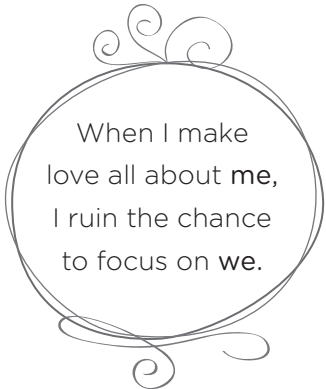
TRUE LOVE LAYS ASIDE SELFISHNESS

Have you ever thought, *I sure would look good next to that guy!* I have! My husband stands six foot two and has dark wavy hair. Need I say more? But if it’s all about how that gorgeous guy makes us look or feel, then ours is only selfish love.

Selfish love? Those two words seem like opposites. Can selfish love even exist?

Even though we know the word *love* can include lots of different emotions and feelings, the English language doesn’t give us a lot of options when it comes to describing all that variety. But the New Testament part of the Bible was written in Greek, which offers several words for *love*. Understanding these different types of love can help us figure out whether it’s even possible to experience selfish love.

Eros love is the one we see most often in the movies. Maybe your friend told you, “I’m in love! Every time I get around him, it’s like nothing I’ve ever felt before!” Your friend’s probably feeling *erao*, or *eros*, the Greek word for intense or passionate love. Much of the emotion associated with this love is based on sexual feelings. These feelings are powerful! You can often spot *erao* because it’s me centered, focused on how that person makes me feel and what I can do to feel that passion again. *Erao* can be thrilling—but when the excitement fades, so does this kind of love. When I make love all about *me*, I ruin the chance to focus on *we*.



When I make
love all about *me*,
I ruin the chance
to focus on *we*.

Storgeo love occurs naturally. Think family, how you feel about your mom and dad, your grandparents, and maybe even your little brother—when he’s asleep.

Phileo is friendship love. You feel love for your best friend because you like her; she’s creative, funny, a blast to be around! She gets you. You like how you feel when you’re with her.

Agape, the Greek word for the kind of love we read about in the fruit-of-the-Spirit list, stands apart from all other kinds of love. *Agape* is not shallow; it’s not wrapped up in my physical or emotional feelings. *Agape* is not all about me; it’s concerned about what’s best for the *other* person. Even if it’s not returned, *agape keeps giving*, which makes it powerfully attractive and unique. In *agape*, I deliberately make a decision to love another person, to value him not because of anything that person has done or can do for me but simply because that person is precious. I choose to prize him, to be devoted to, appreciate, and respect that human.



Have you ever experienced *agape* love? When?

.....

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Agape is the true love God modeled when He sent His Son, making up His mind to choose us, to put our need for love and forgiveness first. Love is the core of who Jesus is. Since we are His, love should be who we are too! For example, if Kalley’s goal is to become magnetic, she needs to decide what action shows *agape* love to Allie: going to the party or going her own way. Her decision shows whether or not she truly appreciates her friend. With the power of the Holy Spirit, she can choose unselfish love.

With Jesus’s love, there are no strings attached, no hidden motives,

no keeping score. And understanding His love helps us become the girl He wants us to become. Before we can love someone else, we need to be filled by His perfect love. When we understand it, we can show it. Consider Paul's prayer in Ephesians:


And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17–19)

A LOVE THAT NEVER LETS GO

When we are filled with God's perfect love, we can't help but love others the same way.

If we don't first let His love fill and satisfy us, though, we'll keep looking to others to fill our empty hearts. We'll take risks in the hope of getting love and hanging on to it—hoping this time we've found someone who will always love us, never leave us, never reject us. We gamble our hearts, and we usually lose.

As a magnetic girl, you don't have to wait for a guy to fill your need for love and you don't have to live in fear of rejection. God's deep love ejects fear, bringing you supernatural confidence—confidence based not on your brains, your looks, your achievements, or your ability to attract a guy. Your confidence is



There is no fear
in love. But perfect
love drives out fear,
because fear has to do
with punishment. The
one who fears is not
made perfect in love.

1 John 4:18

built on His love, which never lets you go. Which means you can leave insecurity behind. There's no need to draw attention to yourself; in fact, you shift your attentions to others!

Here's a great verse every girl should have within reach. I memorized it so I'd have it whenever I need it! Put this one on your phone, in your agenda, or on your mirror. Let it soak deep into your heart:

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37–39)

None of the things Paul listed can pull us away or come between us and God's perfect love for us. Not anything happening in our lives today or anything that will happen in the future has enough power to separate you and me from the love of God. What a confidence builder!

Ever seen a girl soon after she gets a new boyfriend? A permanent smile's on her face.

But what happens when the boy moves on? So does her confidence.

Not so with Jesus; He never moves on! He will always and forever be wild about you!

Lindsay totally gets this. She knows Jesus adores her, and since that's where her confidence is, she has been able to love Adam without fear of rejection. God's perfect love inside of her erases fear.

If you struggle with fear of others' rejection, there's still room for more of God's love in your heart! Fill up with the truth of how much He adores you! Then with the confidence of God's love, you, like Lindsay,

can fearlessly take the risk of loving others. When His love naturally oozes out of your heart, you become simply irresistible! Others are naturally attracted to love.

THE LOVE CYCLE

As you get love from God, you can give love back to God and pass love on to others. It's what I call the love cycle. Jesus explains it in Matthew 22:37–39: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Lindsay understood the love of God. It filled her heart, allowing her to follow God's first command. And her love for God spilled over into love for others, including Adam. Lindsay chose to love Adam, not to see what she could get out of the relationship for herself but simply because she had love to share. Overflowing love cycled from God to Lindsay and then from Lindsay to God and to Adam. And this godly guy was irresistibly drawn to the fruit of the Spirit he saw blossoming in Lindsay. “Without love, none of the other fruits of the Spirit exist in the same way,” he told me.

This all might feel a little strange to you if you've only experienced conditional love, the kind that waits for the other person to act first or that gives in order to get. To love without any expectation of return may sound like a good way to get your heart crushed. Won't constantly pouring out love on others leave you empty? Nope. Not if you're continually going to God as your source of love. God's love never runs out, so it can flow through us in a never-ending supply. “And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16).

WEAR LOVE

For the girl who wants to be lovely, gorgeous, and stunning, the Bible tells us exactly what to wear. Check out Colossians 3:12–14:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

When I am packing for a trip, I take my time! I've only got one shot to pack, so I want to select the perfect outfits. Shouldn't we take that same care when choosing how to dress our hearts? Paul says the perfect outfit is a combination of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and most important, love!

What is your favorite item in your closet? A pair of shoes? A comfy sweatshirt? A beautiful skirt? Jesus can work in us so love becomes what we feel most comfortable and beautiful in! Love fits every occasion. Like a new pair of shoes, at first living out God's love can feel uncomfortable, even unnatural in our me-first culture. As we are maturing, though, we'll grow more and more comfortable loving others, putting their needs and wants before our own.

Agape will rush out of us and spill over onto siblings, parents, friends, and even the barista and others we encounter throughout the day. And while such love will be appealing to a guy who shares your love for God, this isn't just about becoming attractive. For those of us who call ourselves Christ's, He commands us to love like He loves: unconditionally, no

strings attached. “And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1 John 4:21).

My daughter Madi listened to God’s command when she faced a choice in her social calendar: go to the lake or serve the poor? Though she wanted more than anything to go to the lake with her friends, she made the difficult decision to serve the poor. She knew that’s what love would do. Serving with friends from church for twenty-four continuous hours, they played kickball with homeless children, served lunch, cleaned a shelter, and created a BBQ party in a poor section of our city. Dirty feet never looked so good as when she sauntered up our steps afterward. Though she was worn out, I had never before seen her glow as she did that morning, with love pouring out of her. “That was so amazing,” she said, as her backpack slid to the floor. “I’ve got to get to sleep, but first let me tell you about the past twenty-four hours.”

As Madi told me all about her adventure with the poor and broken of our city, her bright eyes twinkled and her laugh was so pure. Loving others had created a beauty that could never come from designer clothes or makeup.



When did you recently choose loving others over loving yourself?

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Selflessly loving others can be your beauty secret too! God’s Word gives us clarity with everyday examples of what love looks like.

It looks like Jesus.

THE LOOK OF LOVE

First John 3:16 gives us a clear example of Christ’s love: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” Jesus modeled laying down His life for us. He showed love by giving His life for our need. “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?” (verse 17).

Generosity is an outward expression of love. When Mariah got a job as a nanny, she also got her first taste of being generous: “I really love the opportunity I have now to be able to bless someone. They are so surprised when I pay for their food or movie tickets.” Of course you can be generous with more than just money—sharing your time, effort, knowledge, or talents.



Where will you show generosity in the next couple of days?

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Mariah understands that love is an action and a command to us from God. “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (verse 18). It is so easy to tell our friends “Love ya!” or “I’m here for you!” but actually putting their best interests before our own is anything but!

God’s Word makes clear what love is and what it is not. For now, let’s highlight a few points on what love is not. If you want to dig further, check out 1 Corinthians 13. It’s known as the love chapter.

Love Is Not Hateful

I know you have met the girl who seems all nice when you first meet her, but the moment things don't go her way, all kinds of ugly comes out. Let's admit it: we've all been that girl. Birthday plans tank. Someone subtweets about us. He breaks up. Ugly comes out.

But love never hates, not under any circumstances. It just isn't possible. "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20).

Love Is Not Envious

What girl hasn't struggled with envy? It snakes its way into our minds and then slithers down into our hearts. It may be envy about guys when we're younger, but when not brought under control, envy just moves on to something else as we get older. Her house, her shoes, her job. There's no such thing as a little bit of envy; it comes in and takes over. Impossible to hide, it's definitely ugly! For the magnetic girl, envy is never an option because 1 Corinthians 13:4 tells us that love "does not envy." When we sense envy creeping in, we have to be brutal, leaving no room for just a little bit. Otherwise, we're just setting ourselves up for misery. "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones" (Proverbs 14:30).



What most often invites envy into your heart?

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Love Is Not Rude

Rudeness has become so common in our culture, a symptom of our me-first syndrome.

Who are you most often tempted to be rude to? It seems in our house, it's easiest to be rude to those you know will always love you—family. But it doesn't stop there. Teachers. Friends. Sometimes we're even rude to those serving us.

What is going on in your heart and mind when you choose to be rude? Afraid to look dumb? Pouting because you didn't get your way? I've never seen a girl be rude after landing the lead part in the musical, but watch out if she didn't! She comments to others, "She can't act, can't sing, and can't dance!" Not getting her way, she resorts to being rude—and nobody wants to be around that.

Contrast the quick-to-complain girl with the one who handles disappointment, even rudeness, with style. She says, "I'm happy for her; she deserved it." That's the girl who stands out.

Let's set up a challenge: let's bring manners back into style...starting now! In the next twenty-four hours someone will be rude to you. Determine now that you won't pay back rudeness but pay out love.

Love Is Not Self-Seeking

I love what Adam said about Lindsay: "What attracted me the most was how Lindsay wanted to listen when I talked. She isn't wrapped up in talking about herself all the time." How refreshing!

Lindsay knows life is not all about her. Her selflessness shines as she notices and pays attention to those around her. Love is not self-seeking.

Love Does Not Keep Score

"You did that last time..."

"Here we go again..."

“You always...”

Ever start a sentence this way? If you hear yourself saying one of these lines, you can be sure you’re keeping score. Keeping score has been a personal struggle for me—not so much what others have done wrong against me, but the nice things I’ve done for others not repaid. Either way, it’s not love.

Wonder if you’re keeping score? Listen to yourself. Do you feel the need to tell the story of how she let you down or how much it hurt when he broke up? If you can’t get beyond retelling it again and again, then God’s got some work to do and it starts with you forgiving.

Keeping score is your Check Heart signal. Like the Check Oil light on your car’s dashboard, it says you need repair. First Corinthians 13:5 tells us love “keeps no record of wrongs.” You’ll know you’ve beaten bitterness when you no longer need to repeat the story of how you were mistreated.



What story have you found yourself telling over and over?

Say a prayer, forgiving that person and asking God to please give you the feelings to match your obedience.

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Love Takes No Joy in the Distress of Others

Few things are as hard to resist as sharing juicy gossip! “Have you heard what happened with her?” Especially when it is something bad, that ugly girl in us wants to tell the world!

Let's be honest. Those of us who are Christ followers tend to be the worst. "She deserved it." "What does she expect when she acts like that?" Somehow we feel justified in celebrating when those who don't live God's way get what we think they deserve.

When you hear news about another girl's problems, what's your first response? Does your heart break when you learn of her unwise decision, or are you secretly glad?

It's hard to admit we can be so ugly, but confessing our sin is a necessary step toward becoming the girl He wants. When we take an honest look inside and see the sin blocking His love, we can humble ourselves and ask Jesus to change us. As long as we pretend we have it together, we won't!



Finding happiness in someone else's trouble reveals a hard heart. Another's failure never makes us look better. Beauty comes when we allow Jesus to break our hearts for others the way His heart breaks for them.

The Bible calls the change we need *repentance*, meaning "deep sorrow or regret for a past wrong." It's not enough to admit we were wrong; we only grow by asking Christ to forgive us and make a permanent change in us. With Jesus's power, we can lean on Him for the power to go in His direction.

Ask the Holy Spirit to make you aware of how you respond to another person's bad news. Pray for a heart tender to the hurts of others. He promises us in Ezekiel 36:26, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

Love hopes a situation turns out for good, rather than hoping for the worst. Love sincerely wants the best for others, guys and girls alike.



Though at times everything within you wants to envy, be rude, or keep score, I challenge you to give and receive love! Whatever situation you face, love is the answer.

Jesus, You are the ultimate magnet because You are love! You promised in the Bible, "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Make Your love toward others great in me! Break my heart of envy, rudeness, and scorekeeping so I can love others as You do. Transform me so that love naturally, beautifully pours out. I long to be magnetic, just as You are. Amen.





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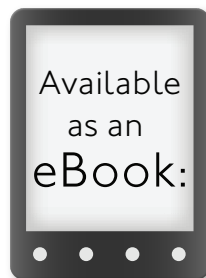
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