

The indications are fascinating; when God's love, agape love, moves in the heart of an individual, then the person will express Jesus' love in and through his or her life. This book describes an emerging expression of God's love in daily praying, caring, and sharing, moving the reader through the proven steps of love's cleansing, transforming, and empowering stages, initiated by a consistent outpouring of Jesus' Spirit. This tool will encourage the reader to first receive and then share God's love. Extraordinary encouragement comes from reading and responding to *40 Days of Love*.

—TOM PHILLIPS, vice president, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association; executive director, Billy Graham Library

Years ago, I recall hearing lyrics that expressed the conviction that love isn't love until it's given away! *40 Days of Love: A Prayer, Care, Share Devotional* wonderfully captures the sentiment of that timeless idea. Here's a forty-day guide to help you experience Christ's love in remarkable new ways—and with plenty left over, give plenty away!

—DICK EASTMAN, international president,
Every Home for Christ

Have you ever wondered how to express the love of Christ to others in a way that could change their lives forever and impact the kingdom in significant ways? *40 Days of Love: A Prayer, Care, Share Devotional* is a compelling tool to teach you this lifestyle habit of praying for, caring about, and sharing the love of Jesus with neighbors, friends, and others. Allow yourself to be transformed and set on fire for the gospel as you live out His Great Commission of love through a Prayer-Care-Share lifestyle!

—DAVE & KIM BUTTS, National Prayer Committee/
Harvest Prayer Ministries

The church is relearning that the Great Commission will be fulfilled when Jesus' followers are daily obeying the Great Commandment: "As you go ... make disciples ... by loving God and loving your neighbor." This book partners with you to mobilize the men, women, students, and/or children you serve—to lead them into a daily practice that produces a lifestyle of love-motivated prayer, love-in-action care, and love-compelled sharing of the Good News of Jesus.

—PHIL MIGLIORATTI, Cityreaching.com
and Pray.Network

This book will help lead believers into a lifestyle of prayer, care for others, and sharing of Jesus with people by showing how important it is that we love others. If we don't feel loved by God, it is hard to share that love with other people. The next forty days will prepare you to receive His love so you can pass that on to others as a daily lifestyle.

—FORD TAYLOR, FSH Group/
Transformational Leadership

Inspiring, accessible, practical, and helpful—these takeaways will help you shape a Prayer-Care-Share lifestyle through which Jesus' Spirit will let you more beautifully help your family, neighbors, and friends touch the Lord's goodness of help, healing, and salvation. Branzell and Vennetti's book, *40 Days of Love: A Prayer, Care, Share Devotional*, will give you the daily equipping you need to live a Prayer-Care-Share lifestyle. You will not be sorry moving through this book as part of your daily worship walk with the Lord.

—REVEREND DR. BYRON SPRADLIN, president,
Artists in Christian Testimony International;
coordinator, Arts & Entertainment Affinity Group,
Mission America Coalition (Lausanne, USA)

In recent years, multitudes of Christians across the land have been praying for a nationwide awakening to Christ for all He is. Within this yeasty spiritual milieu, *40 Days of Love* calls us to action. Equal parts inspiration and implementation, here's a resource that will open your heart to Jesus and open your mouth for Jesus. An unbeatable combination!

—DAVID BRYANT, president, Proclaim Hope!;
author, *Christ Is ALL!*

Nothing will change our world more than accepting and then giving out the love of Jesus. Prepare yourself through this great read, and as you pray, let the Lord lead you forward every day with His love to change the world around you.

—LISA CRUMP, chief operating officer,
National Day of Prayer Task Force

Kathy and Chris are two of my favorite people on the planet—because of their passion to help others live an authentic lifestyle of “Prayer, Care, and Share.” Their new devotional will help us all to be on the journey—together.

—TOM VICTOR, president, The Great Commission Coalition;
facilitator, 4 to 14 Window North American Leadership Team;
executive team, International Prayer Council

What matters most to God about any Christian's life? Our Christlike character—that is, loving Him wholly and loving others selflessly. This dual outcome must be our daily prayer. It's how we show others that we care. It's the message that we share. Thank you, Chris V. and Kathy B., for devoting these meditations to those realities.

—SKIP GARMO, PhD, Convener of Disciple Making in Mission America Coalition's “Love2020” Initiative; author, *The Leader's SEECret: Asking the Right Questions & Embracing God's Answers*

Kathy Branzell and Chris Vennetti's *40 Days of Love: A Prayer, Care, Share Devotional* is a devotional tool that will help you in your personal prayer and devotional life. We all need tools to help us connect with the heart of God through prayer, and this tool is one of the best ever to do that. Start using this devotional each morning and you will immediately see a change in your spiritual life. I highly recommend this devotional if you want to improve your prayer life with God.

—OS HILLMAN, author, *TGIF: Today God Is First*
and *The Joseph Calling*

True love is always revolutionary! Those who came in contact with the early Christians were bowled over by the love of God radiating through their words and actions. They turned the world upside down! This practical 40 Days of Love guide will have the same revolutionary impact on you, your church members, and your community. Get it, read it, and implement it for transformational breakthrough where you live!

—JOHN ROBB, International Prayer Council, World Prayer
Assembly, National Prayer Assembly (USA)

In our world filled with so much hate and confusion, Christ followers need to be experiencing the love of Christ themselves and expressing it to our broken world. Reading this book and learning from these two kingdom-minded leaders will launch you into living a Prayer-Care-Share lifestyle that impacts your friends and even your whole community!

—MARK SLAUGHTER, evangelist,
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship; National Facilitator
of Emerging Generations, Mission America Coalition

I pray that everyone reads *40 Days of Love*! It will bless you and equip you to enjoy a Prayer-Care-Share lifestyle.

—PAUL CEDAR, chairman, Mission America Coalition

In Acts 1:8, Christ told the disciples to *be* witnesses, not *do* witnessing. This forty-day journey with Jesus comes from the hearts of two Christ followers who have learned the art of “being.” I encourage you to join them in this forty-day commitment to knowing Christ and making Him known.

—REV. GARY FROST, National Facilitator for Prayer,
Mission America Coalition

Love changes everything and everyone. Kindness is God’s gift and instrument of mercy to mankind. *40 Days of Love* is a daily devotional that will deeply challenge you live out God’s lovingkindness toward others around you. Join the adventure of the Prayer-Care-Share lifestyle. It will change your life!

—MILTON MONELL, Director of Global Prayer
for Campus Crusade for Christ, Int’l

Chris Vennetti and Kathy Branzell have penned a practical guide to demonstrating God’s love to a hurting world in *40 Days of Love: A Prayer, Care, Share Devotional*. Step one: They guide you to experience the love of Christ personally through well-chosen Scripture passages coupled with key insights. Step two: They offer probing questions to prepare yourself to act purely. Step three: They suggest doable prompts to love others. If embracing the Prayer-Care-Share lifestyle is a step out of your comfort zone, don’t worry. This devotional is a gentle arm around you to lead the way.


—JULIE LOOS, Ratio Christi, Director of Prayer and Outreach;
Moms in Prayer International, College Groups Facilitator

As a member of the Mission America Coalition for over twenty years, I still need constant encouragement to practice a Prayer-Care-Share lifestyle in my own life and neighborhood. Chris and Kathy have definitely encouraged me through their own personal commitment to this vision, and anything they write will get my attention and help me grow my own witness. I recommend this book to you for the same reasons, and trust that together we will see many respond in faith.

—JOHN QUAM

In a world where love has “grown cold,” the Holy Spirit can use this forty-day journey to rekindle the much-needed testimony of His love. As His church has too often been led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ, these forty days can restore us to Great Commission living, empowered by Great Commandment love.

—DR. DAVID FERGUSON, co-chair,
Awakening America Alliance



40 DAYS
of **LOVE**

A PRAYER,
CARE, SHARE
Devotional

CHRIS VENNETTI
KATHY BRANZELL

BroadStreet
P U B L I S H I N G

BroadStreet Publishing® Group, LLC
Racine, Wisconsin, USA
BroadStreetPublishing.com

40 DAYS of LOVE: A PRAYER, CARE, SHARE Devotional

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ISBN-13: 978-1-4245-5522-2 (softcover)

ISBN-13: 978-1-4245-5534-5 (e-book)

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Cover by Garborg Design

Interior design and typesetting by Katherine Lloyd at theDESKonline.com

Printed in the United States of America

17 18 19 20 21 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

Introduction	xiii
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Section One: Preparing Our Hearts to Love

Day 1: What Is Love?	3
Day 2: The Source of All Real Love	7
Day 3: Staying Connected to the Source	11
Day 4: The Great Exchange.	15
Day 5: To Love God Is to Obey God	19
Day 6: Love Awakens Faith.	23
Day 7: We Can Trust God's Love Wholeheartedly	27
Day 8: Called to Forgive	31
Day 9: Love Prefers Others above Ourselves.	35
Day 10: Let's Get Real	39

Section Two: Meditating on God's Great Love

Day 11 : God Loves You Unconditionally	45
Day 12: We Are God's Children	49
Day 13: True Love Disciplines.	53
Day 14: God's Holiness Compels Us to Love	57
Day 15: God Desires All People to Be Saved	61
Day 16: Without Love We Can Accomplish Nothing	65
Day 17: Love Is Always a Choice	69
Day 18: A Finished Work	73
Day 19: Love Is the Greatest Thing	77

Section Three: Enemies to a Life of Love

Day 20: Our Flesh Cannot Love	83
Day 21: God's Grace Rescues Us from Our Flesh	87

Day 22: The World Does Not Know Love	91
Day 23: Our Faith Overcomes the World	95
Day 24: Battle in the Heavenly Places	99
Day 25: Loving God Overcomes the Enemy	103

Section Four: Spiritual Keys to Remain in God’s Love

Day 26: A Lifestyle of Praise and Worship: God Is Seeking Worshipers.	109
Day 27: A Lifestyle of Praise and Worship: Give Thanks at All Times	113
Day 28: A Lifestyle of Waiting and Listening to God’s Spirit: God’s Children Hear His Voice	117
Day 29: A Lifestyle of Waiting and Listening to God’s Spirit: Be Still	121
Day 30: A Lifestyle of Being Filled with the Word of God: The Word of God Sets Us Free.	125
Day 31: A Lifestyle of Being Filled with the Word of God: The Word of God Is Living and Active	129
Day 32: A Lifestyle of Prayer and Intercession: Power in the Prayer of the Righteous.	133
Day 33: A Lifestyle of Prayer and Intercession: Praying the Will of God.	137
Day 34: A Lifestyle of Accountability and Mutual Submission: Encourage One Another Daily	141
Day 35: A Lifestyle of Accountability and Mutual Submission: Iron Sharpens Iron	145

Section Five: The Fruit of God’s Love

Day 36: A Lifestyle of Effective Evangelism: Ambassadors for Christ	151
Day 37: Developing a Lifestyle of Effective Discipleship	155
Day 38: Unconditional Love: It Begins with Receiving.	159
Day 39: Unconditional Love: Loving Our Families	163
Day 40: Unconditional Love: Love for Our Enemies	167
Conclusion	171
About the Authors	173

Introduction

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

It is safe to say that every heart on planet Earth longs to know God's love. As Paul writes here, when all is said and done, faith, hope, and love will remain, but the greatest is love. Jesus Himself stated that love for God and love for others are the most important things. Therefore, we believe taking forty days to experience God's love for us, and then learning how He intends for us to express this love to others, is one of the greatest time investments we could ever make.

We are so excited to go on this journey with you into the heart of God's great love. It is hard to think of a more exciting and more important topic than love. It is our hope and prayer that, as you move through each day's devotional, you will be inspired to receive and experience God's love at a depth you have never known. Each day we will also provide a practical opportunity to express the love of God to others through Prayer, Care, and Share action points.

Take some time now to write down the names of ten people you will pray for over the next forty days, and pray for them every day. Write down ten names of people you want to show Christlike care, and finally write down ten names of people you

would like to share the gospel message of Jesus with over the next forty days.¹ The Holy Spirit will prompt you with other names as you go through these devotionals and will provide you with many opportunities to show and share the love of Jesus with friends, family, and complete strangers. Remain watchful and available.

There are two main sections to each day's reading: Experience God's Love (written by Chris) and Express God's Love (from Kathy). As you move through the devotional, be sensitive to items that God's Spirit is highlighting to you. Take time to wait on Him rather than rush through the Prayer, Care, Share action points. If something stands out, mark the book, or keep a separate journal where you can document what God is speaking. As you follow His lead, we trust He will take various facets of this book and use them to mold you into His image. As you join Him in praying through what He shows you, and as you make the necessary lifestyle adjustments, we trust that you will experience a true transformation taking place.

It is our joy and pleasure to be with you on this forty-day journey. Be prepared to experience and express the love of God as you never have before!

Learning to love with you,
Chris Vennetti & Kathy Branzell

For more information on participating with the 40 Days of Love, go to: 40DaysofLove.net or visit Love2020.com.

1 We have a sample "Prayer, Care, Share" brochure in association with the *40 Days of Love* that you could use for this opportunity. You can find it at http://www.40daysoflove.net/wp-content/PDF/40daysoflove_inside.pdf.



Section One

PREPARING OUR HEARTS TO LOVE

It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

Philippians 1:9-10

We are called to a life of abounding love. Is that how you would classify your current level of love in the relationships that God has entrusted to you? Are you living a pure and blameless life that prefers others above yourself? If you are like many sincere followers of Christ, we can know these things are supposed to be true of us, yet fail to walk in them as our daily reality.

As we begin this journey into God's love, it will be helpful to define exactly what God means by *love* and to see where we are in experiencing and expressing His love. In 2 Corinthians, Paul encourages us to "examine" ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5). Where do you stand in relationship to a life that is fully surrendered to God? Have you been walking out a lifestyle of complete trust in Him, or does your heart still doubt His unwavering love?

This first section of devotionals is a personal preparation of

the heart as you begin to think and prepare to care and share God's love through personal and corporate acts of love. Take these days to be filled with His love and then let it begin to spill out all over your community—over your home, neighborhood, church, work, school, and wherever else God leads you. You cannot express what you have not experienced first; be faithful to spend these first days soaking in the love of your Savior. We hope that by the time you complete these first ten days, you will have fully surrendered your life to Jesus Christ. We hope that you will have entered more fully into trusting God with every aspect of your life. As we enter this time of heart preparation, let's pray:

Father, I thank you that you desire me to live in a place of total abandonment to your great love. You desire for me to trust your love completely so that I will never doubt you. Today, I believe you will encounter me with your love, and I thank you in advance for how you are going to prepare my heart to be an instrument of love to all those you allow into my life.

Let's be prepared to love well!



What Is Love?

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE

The Word of God unfolds an unselfish love that cares more for others than we care for ourselves. However, popular culture uses the word *love* to mean many different things. Take for instance the following examples:

A young girl with candy dripping down her chin declares, “I *love* chocolate.”

A grown man jumps up from his courtside seat and shouts, “I *love* this team!”

A high school student encourages his girlfriend to get an abortion as he whispers, “I really *love* you, and I don’t want anything to come between us.”

Expressions like these should make us wonder what exactly we are talking about when we use the word *love*. Is all love the same, or are there variations that we should be aware of?

The ancient Greeks came up with multiple words to express different types of love. This is not an exhaustive list, but three words that they used to define love were *eros*, *philia*, and *agape*.

Eros is where we get the word *erotic*. It refers to a passionate physical attraction in which our motives are often about what we can get out of the relationship. *Philia* is the type of emotional love you have for a brother or sister. The Greek word *agape* refers to an unconditional love. It is love that gives without expecting anything in return, a love that moves us to action no matter what the cost may be to ourselves. It is this love that motivated Jesus to go to the cross so that sinful humanity could be saved. This type of love is a choice.

Aren't you glad that God's love for you is of the *agape* variety? His love for you is patient and kind. He is not frustrated or irritated. He bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. His love for you is beyond what your human mind can even comprehend. Yet it is as real and consistent as the rising and setting of the sun.

Only as we come to know the depth of love that God has for us will we be able to give that same type of love to others.

Father, I ask that you show me your love. I admit that my understanding of love falls far short of what you intended. As I take the next forty days to experience your love, I ask that your Holy Spirit would fill me with the reality of unconditional love. I thank you for this in advance right now. (Continue to pray as God's Spirit leads you.)


EXPRESS GOD'S LOVE

Let Christ's love wash over you and fill you as you ponder the depths and dimensions of His love for you. It is only in that love that the Spirit equips you to express love. You learn to love others through the love we experience from Christ. For example, when you realize how patient God is with you, it humbles you to be patient with others. The Holy Spirit prompts you toward affections, attitudes, and actions of love that lifts up, forgive freely, and bring courage and hope into the life of another.

🕯️ Prayer: *Lord, thank you for loving me so deeply, so perfectly, and so patiently. Fill me with your love so that it overflows my heart and pours out through my speech and my steps. Let all that I say and do be a reflection of your love for me. Please put people on my mind and in my path that need to be loved today. Holy Spirit, equip me with love as I express what I experience in you. Now I pray that _____ (insert the name of someone you are praying for) would experience your love, as they need you to bear _____ (insert a circumstance or trial they are going through). I pray they would fully believe in you and your Word, and know that you are our hope in all things. (Pray for those on your prayer list.)*

♥️ Care: Prepare and commit to express the attributes of love today and always. What will patience look like when you are inconvenienced or someone does not act or react as you would like them to? How will your kindness help shield or sustain someone through the cruelty of a selfish culture? Find ways to shine

the spotlight of credit and appreciation on others even if you could boast in an accomplishment. Check your mood; determine to make your presence add life and joy to a room.

 **Share:** It is a misnomer to think that trials and troubles cease when you become a Christian; the truth is that Jesus will cover you as the Holy Spirit guards and guides you *through* the tough times, not around them. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know the attributes of God's love for them and what it looks like to express this love to others. Be prepared to share and show love.



The Source of All Real Love

*Anyone who does not love does not know God, because
God is love.*

1 John 4:8

EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE

Love is a person. When we realize this, we see that our desire to be loved is really a desire to know God. This simplifies everything. Now, instead of feeling like we have to chase after dozens of people, places, or things to make us happy, we need only one pursuit. The pursuit of knowing and being known by God, the source of love.

The truth is, our souls are all longing for a garden experience. The kind of love and intimacy that Adam and Eve had with God before the fall. Amazingly enough, through the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, the way has now been paved for this to become our daily reality. There is no hindrance or lack of desire on God's end of this relationship. What remains to be seen is if we will choose to seek Him until we begin to tap more deeply into His life.

If you have the opportunity to go to the Nile River, it is well worth the trip. I can assure you that virtually no one looks out

at that body of flowing water and thinks to themselves, *I wonder if this water is going to run out today?* The Nile River, which has been flowing unbroken across the continent of Africa for thousands of years, is a visual picture of the unending flow of love that pours from God to each and every one of us.

Simply go to the source today and drink deeply of Him. His love for you will never run dry. “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Father, I ask for your forgiveness for the times that I have sought to find love and satisfaction apart from you. Today, I choose to turn to you as my only source of real contentment. I choose to believe that as I seek you first, every other need I have will be satisfied. Thank you for filling me to overflowing today.


EXPRESS GOD'S LOVE

God is love. This statement is the foundation of love; it describes who God is and that His thoughts, plans, and actions toward us are bathed in His love. It is difficult to understand when we see suffering around us. We often hear people say, “How could a loving God allow ... ?” Remember that Jesus said, “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). We will not fully understand many things on this side of heaven, but love is the foundation of knowing God and should frame every thought and emotion we have toward Him and others. If we claim to know and experience Him, then the proof will be in the love we express toward Him and others. His is a love we cannot selfishly claim and contain, but a love that flows freely through us like the Nile through Africa.

🕯️ Prayer: Lord, let your love surge through me today like a rushing river. I want people to recognize your love in me and to receive a touch of your love through me. Let my words and actions be evidence of our relationship—not just my knowing you but loving you.

♥️ Care: Many people are looking for evidence that God really exists. Apologetics offer evidence for those who need head knowledge and “proof” of Jesus and biblical people, places, and stories, but the message first comes through the heart. God draws men’s hearts to Himself; we have a longing, a hole in our heart that only He can fill. People need to hear and see the evidence of God in your words and deeds before they will consider the

“unseen.” What will they see in you today and over these forty days? Begin planning and taking action in big and small ways to share the God of true love.

 **Share:** When you value others with acts of compassion, you will stand out in a selfish world and people will be curious about the reason you have hope. It is necessary to share the reason for your hope, to let people know that Christ’s love for you and your love for Him is the source and strength for all that you do. Do not let people label you as just a “do-gooder,” but rather “God’s doer.”



Staying Connected to the Source

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

John 15:4-5

EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE

One time, when I (Chris) was meditating on the importance of staying connected to God, I saw a visual picture of a scuba diver. The diver was swimming so deep that there was no way he could possibly make it back to the surface in time to get air if he lost his mask. I then saw the diver bump against a coral reef, and his air tank got tangled and knocked off his back. His mask and air tank started falling toward the bottom of the ocean. The thought came to my mind, *If that were me, how desperate would I be to reach the tank and put the air mask back on?* Obviously, I would stop everything else and do whatever it took to regain the tank and secure the mask before I died. God's Spirit then whispered to my heart, "You should regard your connection to me with the same sense of urgency that this diver would his mask."

How many of us treat our connection to God as a casual thing? If it requires some level of self-sacrifice to take time in the Word of God, prayer, or worship, to remain connected to Him, how many of us hit the snooze button, thinking nothing of it? How many of us neglect a deep level of relationship, in which we are honest about where we are really at with the Lord, with other believers? As those who have been called out of the world to be children of God and His royal ambassadors to the world, we cannot afford a haphazard treatment of our connection to God.


May our heart cry become, “Whatever it takes. Whatever the sacrifice. I am willing.”


The Spirit of God is our spiritual air. We cannot survive, let alone thrive, without Him.

Father, I ask for your forgiveness for times when I have neglected our connection. I am sorry for counting other things as more important than our relationship. By your grace, I believe you to fill me with a sense of spiritual urgency to always maintain a deep connection to you no matter what it takes.


EXPRESS GOD'S LOVE

To “abide” is a continual action of being held by, attached to, or kept in place near your source and means of survival. Abiding as branches in the vine of Jesus means we allow Him to hold us, surround us, and pour lessons through us so that we can thrive during times of “pestilence” and the “pruning” that make us even more fruitful. It is in abiding that we experience Christ’s love and the fruit of the Spirit in and through our lives. Apart from Him we cannot express real love. Abiding in Him we are sourced to love even in the most difficult of circumstances.

 **Prayer:** Lord, thank you for pouring your love through me like life-giving sap runs through a vine. I am thankful to be a branch on your vine. Please prompt and protect me as the world pulls at me with distractions or discouragement. Hold me close as you examine me, and prune me with discipline and discipleship that I might bear more fruit for your glory. Please help me to wait on you and to grow in the direction that you steer and stake me to go. Use me to support others who are growing in their knowledge and love for you.

 **Care:** Have you ever noticed how a vine grows with its branches intertwined, adding additional support to each branch as it matures and produces fruit? God puts people in your life so that you can grow together and support one another through storms and tender places of new growth. Who do you know that could use some extra support right now? There are many ways to provide support: through prayer; spending time listening and

encouraging; providing a meal, a ride to an appointment, or childcare for a few hours; or completing an errand or chore, etc. Take time as part of the vine today.

 **Share:** In Scripture we are prompted to abide in Christ and His love, and to let His Word (Scripture) abide in us. It is important to be prepared to give a reason for the hope we have when someone asks (1 Peter 3:15). So what is your story of God's glory in you? Be prepared to share what Christ means to you as well as what He has done in you, and for you, as you walk and work in a world of hurting people who need hope today.

Conclusion

I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6

To enter into a lifestyle of unconditional love is no small thing. We will have times when we fail and will need to humble ourselves and ask God's forgiveness. It is our fervent hope and desire that as you have meditated on the Scriptures and insights here, that the Spirit of God has convicted you of sin as well as inspired you to believe God for a new life, a life of love that chooses to prefer others above yourself. A life that goes beyond mere lip service to tangible expressions of care for those around you. And a life that shares the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone who God brings into your life. In all this, we trust God's Spirit to complete the good work that He has begun in you.

We are grateful to be a small part of your journey with Jesus. We hope that these 40 Days of Love have been a special time in your relationship with God. We encourage you to continue to use this devotional well beyond the first forty days to reflect on God's love. In time, we trust His Spirit will mold your heart more and more into His image, with the result being great glory to Jesus!

40 DAYS of LOVE

Journeying with you to experience and express the love of
God,

Chris Vennetti and Kathy Branzell

• • •

**For more information on sharing the 40 Days of Love
with others, go to: www.40DaysofLove.net
or visit www.Love2020.com.**

About the Authors

Chris Vennetti is the co-founder of the “40 Days of Love,” an initiative that seeks to empower Christ-followers in a lifestyle of prayer, care, share evangelism. Chris also helps to steward Disciples Nations International, an international missions organization focused on personal, family, and community transformation. Chris and his wife live with their five children in Orlando, Florida.

Kathy Branzell is a speaker, author, National Coordinator of LOVE2020, and has been an active member of the Mission America Coalition since 2000. Kathy began her ministry journey as the founder and president of Fellowship and Christian Encouragement (FACE) for Educators. FACE has grown to over 130,000 public and private school educators who meet and pray in their schools each week. She is also a board member of the National Prayer Committee and a working member of the Board of Directors for The National Day of Prayer. Kathy lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband and is mom to two grown children.

40 DAYS of LOVE

40 Of Praying, Caring and
Sharing the Gospel to
DAYS Transform Nations



40DaysofLove.net

