



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



A Relationship Worth Reaching For

Three years had passed since snow had last fallen in Georgia. But this year, it was back. It didn't matter that it was an inconvenience for adults — the children loved it. Little

Mary was no exception. She was thrilled! Grandma decided to add to the special treat, treating Mary and her siblings to some hot chocolate topped off with marshmallows. Everyone enjoyed it . . . until the unthinkable happened.

After the fun day, the children marched into the family room for inside games. Still excited about the marshmallows, Mary wandered back into the kitchen to search for the marshmallow jar. She found it sitting on the counter. Climbing up on a chair, she opened the plastic lid cap and stuck her fingers inside as far as they could reach. With a few marshmallows in her grasp, she attempted to pull her clenched fingers out of the jar. But they were stuck. She twisted and turned to free herself; but like quicksand, the harder she tried, the worse the problem became.

But everything would be okay, Mary thought. After all, Grandma was nearby in the family room with the other children. Mary showed Grandma the jar, and she pulled out the liquid soap, Vaseline, and everything else she could think of. Still, the little fingers did not budge. In fact, they began to swell.

Grandma was in panic mode, but tried to avoid frightening Mary. She decided at this point it would be best to call the paramedics. When they arrived, they, too, were helpless to free her fingers from the plastic lid cap. The only option was to cut the plastic cap, but the paramedics were afraid Mary would be cut by the jagged edges of the lid if they used scissors. Reluctant to take this chance, they unscrewed the cap from the jar and finally suggested taking her to the Emergency Room.

In the middle of the confusion, Mary kept herself occupied by reaching into the now-open jar with her left hand to nibble on the marshmallows that were still inside. When the ER doctor was finally able to see Mary, he managed to cut the lid cap

open within a few minutes. Now Mary's little fingers were free. She is fine, and this story has a wonderful ending!

Mary's story is much like many Valentine's Day stories that play out today. It is so easy to reach for a relationship thinking it will be okay, only to find ourselves stuck in a situation that is hard to escape.

Perhaps I'm speaking to you right now, and you are feeling stuck and trapped! Many would say, "Had I known then what I know now, it never would have happened." Most of us feel that knowledge would have changed the dynamics of our actions.

Can you imagine someone pursuing such a relationship despite knowing the disappointments to come? If you are like me, you probably wouldn't think of knowingly entering such a relationship. And yet, despite knowing all of the challenges that would be encountered, Christ the Son of God freely engaged in a relationship with humanity — a relationship that cost Him His life on a cross in a forsaken place called Calvary!

Without hesitation, He would do it again. We are told in the Word of God, "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:7-8 (NIV)

We may face disappointments during one time or another in our relationships. You may even experience such a time this Valentine's Day. Take heart in knowing there is one Valentine who will always love us, that's our Lord! There is never a moment that he does not think about those dear to Him! That's you and me!

- Dr. L.W. Edwards

True Love for Your Deepest Need

The castle's stone hallways echoed with the intermittent clanging of steel swords wielded by two antagonists clad in medieval garb. After a seemingly endless battle, the Black Knight emerged victorious over his bitter archenemy, the Duke. With his foe eliminated, the victor climbed the staircase where the fair princess awaited, cradled her in his strong arms, carried her off into the sunset . . . and they lived happily ever after.



One princess who might dispute the notion of such fairytale endings is Jennifer Lopez. The celebrity actress, singer and entrepreneur has sought true love for years. In her quest, she has won millions of fans. She has appeared on the cover of 46 magazines in one year. One of her eight studio albums has sold more than 8 million copies worldwide. She has produced more than 30 movies. In her 53 years, she has achieved more than many artists would hope to accomplish in their lifetime. But she still admits a sense of 'happily ever after' has eluded her, both in her public and private relationships.

For her entire career, Jennifer has impressed the world with her artistic capabilities and attractive physical appearance. While very successful by most celebrities' standards, in her eyes, her talent has been overlooked and underappreciated. With pain in her voice, she sighed to *Rolling Stone Magazine*, "It's just 20, 25 years of people going, 'Well, she's not that great. She's pretty and she makes cute music, but it's not really this and that.' You know, I think I've done some nice work over the years, some really nice work. But there is a club that I just wasn't a part of. . . . It hurts to not be included. I don't know if I will ever be."

Many of Jennifer's personal relationships have also come short in delivering lasting happiness. Her marriages and engagements have been heralded by the media, but none of them have provided the security or fulfillment she desired. She shared with *Vogue Magazine*, "You go through all these relationships, and you're searching and you're connecting and you're disconnecting with people, and you're like, God, is this just what life is? Like a carousel, roller coaster, carnival ride?"

Jennifer is not alone in expressing these feelings. Millions of men and women around the globe have asked the same questions after experiencing the same frustrations from unfulfilling relationships and unmet expectations. Each year they approach Valentine's Day with a hole in their hearts that can-

not be filled with chocolate or diamonds. In search of happily ever after, they are left with more questions than answers.

I want to tell you about one woman who found answers. I'll call her Phyllis.

As a serial divorcée, Phyllis knew Rejection on a first-name basis. Rejection had taught her when to wake up, what to wear, who she was and how she should see herself. Like a cruel taskmaster, Rejection controlled every aspect of Phyllis' life.

One day while taking Rejection's walk of shame to the village well, Phyllis met a stranger. The conversation that followed changed her life. For the first time, Phyllis felt as if someone who knew the regret and pain of her past still loved her unconditionally. It was the first time Rejection's chains felt light enough for Phyllis to hold her head upright — and the next thing she knew, the chains were gone. She had spoken with many men over the years, but there was something different about this one.

The man's name was Jesus. His love broke Rejection's grip on Phyllis' life. It offered forgiveness for all of her sins and acceptance that was not based on her past performance or relationship status. Best of all, it changed the way she saw herself. Phyllis was a new woman with a new identity. Her self-centered shame, regret and sorrow were replaced with a joy which radiated outward to everyone she met. She no longer measured her worth by the expectations of others. In fact, others lost their power to control her happiness. Jesus had given her true love, a love she never knew was possible. The key to her abundant, eternal life was Jesus Himself.

That day marked the beginning of Phyllis' experience with true love. Jesus' love had changed everything.

Do you ever wish you could experience true love? You won't find it in its fullness until you have experienced the love of Jesus Christ. This doesn't mean we cannot experience love from a spouse, our family or friends. Jesus' love is unique because it is not dependent on others' approval or their recognition of our value. Put your trust in Him today. Only His love will meet your deepest needs.

- Cam Edwards

