

EXTREME GRACE

Love that Transforms

BY DICK DUERKSEN

Your assignment for today has three parts:

1. Please read 1 Corinthians 13 and Romans 12:10–21.
2. Then read the following “love stories” and grade them (1–5) according to God’s love scale. (1= Loving as God loves. 5= Not at all as God loves.)

Love Story #1: Mark’s Request

Everything was awful for teenagers Mark and Karen. And for their daughter Melody, although she didn’t know it!

Melody had been born on Wednesday, and had gone home with her unmarried parents Friday morning. All seemed well, for a little while. Then Karen’s C-section

incision began to bleed profusely. They dashed back to the hospital where Karen was immediately taken into surgery.

That left Mark alone with baby Melody. Not

knowing what to do, and terribly worried, he wandered off to the hospital receptionist and asked for advice.

“Mrs. Smith,” Mark began, “I need some help. I don’t know anything about caring for babies, and Karen and I have decided we’d like to get married. We’d like to have a pastor marry us, but our folks say churches don’t like unmarried parents. Can you help me?”

Mrs. Smith assured Mark that God loved and accepted them—even though they were not married—and called Pastor Martin (who happened to be in the hospital).

A few moments later Pastor Martin arrived, listened, and added his assurances to those of Mrs. Smith.

“God loves you just as you are, Mark. No reservations.”

Before the evening was over, Mark and his new Adventist pastor friend had begun arrangements for a wedding for Mark and Karen, and a dedication service for Melody.

And, by the way, Melody and Mark had gone home with Mrs. Smith.

Love Story #2: Kelly’s Terror

Gramma was a stickler for rules, especially when it came to her cherished china plates and vases. Whenever the grandkids came to visit, she would take them to the kitchen, show them the big china cabinet,

and remind them, “You can play anywhere in the house, but please stay away from the china cabinet. Gramma doesn’t want any of these things to be broken.”

So Kelly disobeyed.

It took two chairs and a lot of stretching, but she finally reached the shelf with the white porcelain vase. She grabbed the vase, held on, and then watched in terror as it slipped through her fingers to the distant tile floor.

Gramma came running to meet the crash. Without even a second’s hesitation, she dashed across the porcelain pieces and embraced sobbing Kelly.

“I forgive you, Kelly. Now, let’s get a broom.”

Love Story #3: Jim’s Mistakes

Jim made more mistakes than anyone else. No matter what he did, he did it wrong—and got caught!

And that made Grandmother very sad.

But Grandmother didn’t scold Jim, or hit him, or even shout at him, “Just wait till your Grandpa gets home.” Instead, she walked quietly to the shelf where she kept photographs of all her children and grandchildren and turned Jim’s picture around to face the wall.

Sometimes it took a couple hours. Sometimes it took days. But, finally, Jim would come to Grandmother, apologize, and ask to be let back into the family.

The older Jim got, the longer the picture stayed facing the wall.

Assignment part 3:

3. Read Romans 12:2, “Fix your attention on Christ, and you’ll be changed from the inside out,” (The Message) and discuss how God’s “transforming love” is working in your family.

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