

# the best *you can be*

Lesson

7



## A LOVING *woman*

"And people don't hide a light.... You should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do and will praise your heavenly Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:15,16 (NCV)

THERE ARE MANY STORIES told of people who came to know and love Jesus because of the kindness and love shown to them in a time of need. Strangers to a new country need love, sick neighbors need love, struggling families need love, widows need love, young people and children need loving and attentive mature people in their lives. There are many categories of lonely or sad people who need loving friendship, and you might be the person who can show them love. Loving, kind, and compassionate people draw others to Jesus Christ. Truly caring for others is the best and easiest way to win people for Christ and the heavenly kingdom.

A young woman who had arrived in a new country, lonely and afraid, found a job working for a Christian family. They loved her, provided for her, and demonstrated God's love. They gave her a Bible to read in her own language. As she read the Bible, she said, "The story of Jesus is so beautiful." Because of this family's love, she became a Christian.

The Bible says, "Men do not light a lamp and put it under a basket. They put it on a table so it gives light to all in the house. Let your light shine in front of men. Then they will see the good things you do and will honor your Father Who is in heaven" (Matthew, 5:15, 16, *NLV*).

It can be our goal—to be the woman who is so loving and compassionate that others will be drawn to Jesus Christ. How can I communicate that love? Let's discuss this.

### THREE WAYS LOVE LISTENS

James 1:19 says, "...Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak...." Listening is one way

to show love. Most of us are not very good listeners. But we can learn how to listen well.

- 1. Body Language** - Experts say that 90% of our communication is through body language. We often say one thing but mean another, and our body language shows it. A good listener faces the person who is speaking. She maintains an open posture, with arms and legs uncrossed. She leans forward slightly and maintains eye contact at the level of the other person.
- 2. Open Questions** – Asking open questions will accomplish more than closed questions. Open questions ask for reasons, opinions, thoughts, feelings, and explanations. They allow the person to share while you listen. By contrast, closed questions ask for facts and require merely a yes or no answer. They stop people talking.
- 3. Reflective Listening** – Often the one speaking has an idea and tries to express it, but it may not always come out right. The reflective listener will check back to make sure she got the right message. She will reflect what the speaker may mean. For example, "I hear you saying..." and waits to see what response comes. Love listens, hearing not only the words but the feeling behind the words. Love takes time to check if the message received is the one given.

Consider the Bible story of the woman taken in adultery (see John 8:1-11). Love was demonstrated in the way Jesus dealt with this woman. The Pharisees came scolding, condemning, punishing, blaming, and shaming. Jesus communicated love. He accepted and forgave. He treated her with dignity and respect. He gave her courage.

### THREE ROADBLOCKS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- 1. Judging.** Includes criticizing, blaming, shaming, labelling, name calling. Jesus said, “Judge not” (Matthew 7:1, *KJV*).
- 2. Sending solutions.** Includes ordering, commanding, demanding, preaching, moralizing, advising.
- 3. Avoiding the other’s concerns.** Includes diverting, distracting, arguing, reassuring, changing the subject.

### LOVE IS VULNERABLE

Jesus gave up His high position to come and be as we are. He became approachable, and thus opened Himself to attack. He made Himself vulnerable, able to be hurt and rejected. Love strips away our pride and makes us approachable, willing to show our humanity.

### LOVE ENCOURAGES

Let us encourage one another (see Hebrews 10:25). Voicing our appreciation is the most effective way to encourage someone. It is simply doing what God did for His Son at the Jordan River (see Mark 1:11).

Think of a time when you were encouraged by someone in your family, church or community and how this helped you. Think of a time when someone showed you true love—acceptance, compassion, care, and a listening ear. How did this affect you?

Let us be loving women wherever we are. Let us be like Jesus.

### RATE YOURSELF

On a scale of 1 to 5, rate yourself on the following ways of communicating love. Five is the highest.

- Love listens not only to a person’s words, but to the meaning and feeling behind the words.  
1      2      3      4      5
- A good listener faces the speaker, keeps body in an open position, and maintains eye contact.  
1      2      3      4      5
- A good listener asks more open questions than closed questions.  
1      2      3      4      5
- Love overcomes the judging roadblocks.  
1      2      3      4      5
- Love overcomes the sending solutions roadblocks.  
1      2      3      4      5
- Love overcomes the avoiding the other’s concerns roadblocks.  
1      2      3      4      5
- Love becomes vulnerable. It makes us open, honest, and human.  
1      2      3      4      5
- Love encourages by voicing appreciation.  
1      2      3      4      5

## PERSONAL GROWTH EXERCISES

1. On the blank beside each statement below, identify the type of roadblock it represents. Is it 1-judging, 2-sending solutions, or 3-avoiding the other's concerns?
  - That was a stupid thing to say.
  - You just want to look good.
  - You'd better do it, or else.
  - You really ought to try it.
  - You usually have good judgment.
  - Stop it right now!
  - That's just like a man!
  - You'll feel better tomorrow.
  - There is one logical conclusion.
2. Find an opportunity to engage someone who is merely an acquaintance in conversation. The object is to keep the conversation going for a minimum of four minutes, the time it takes to make a friend. It is a real challenge for some people to cross the four-minute barrier. Use open rather than closed questions.
3. Let today be Affirmation Day. Find at least ten people to whom you can voice honest appreciation. You may do this in person, on the phone, via email, Facebook, or a handwritten note. At the end of the day, make a list of the people you encouraged.
4. Create an Alphabet of Love. Write beside each letter a description of what love is.

A - affirming, B - beautiful, C - caring, and so on through the alphabet.

As you complete this lesson, think about your activities as a Christian woman. Do you radiate the love and happiness that Jesus gives you? Are you able to share this with others? Can you find ways to do this? Ask the Lord to help you become a more loving and compassionate Christian.

## SUCCESS PRINCIPLE

- L — Listening
- O — Overcoming roadblocks
- V — Vulnerability
- E — Encouragement

## MY PRAYER FOR TODAY

Gracious and loving God, I come to You today asking for more love, for more compassion—to share with others. Help me to live so close to You that I will radiate the love and joy You bestow on me. I want people to know You as their Savior and Friend because I have shared Your love with them. Thank You.



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD  
20904 USA | Ph: 1-301-680-6636  
[www.adventistwomensministries.org](http://www.adventistwomensministries.org)