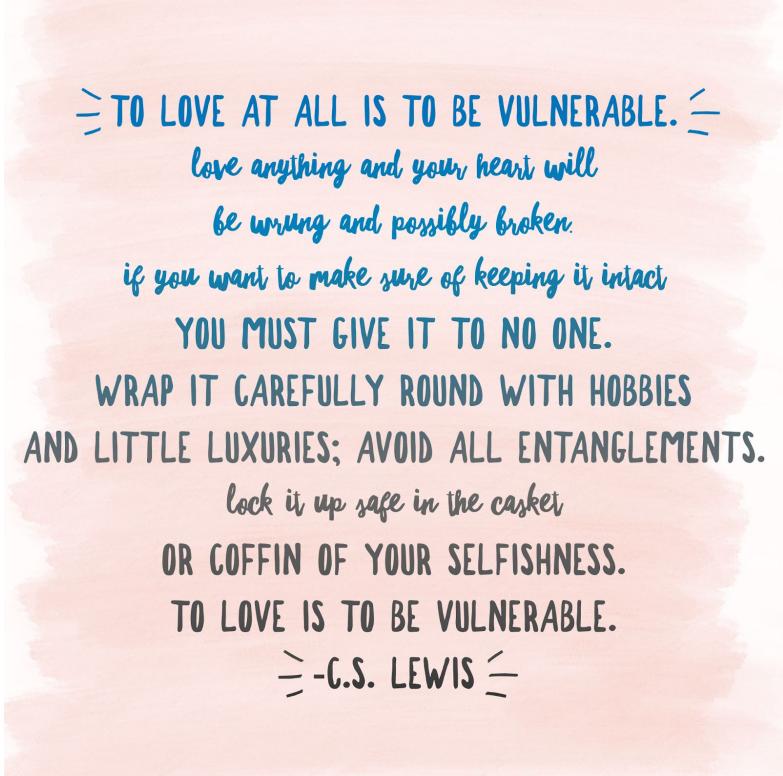


Only the Broken Can Become Whole

Strength comes from admitting weakness



TO LOVE AT ALL IS TO BE VULNERABLE.
love anything and your heart will
be wrung and possibly broken.
if you want to make sure of keeping it intact
YOU MUST GIVE IT TO NO ONE.
WRAP IT CAREFULLY ROUND WITH Hobbies
AND LITTLE LUXURIES; AVOID ALL ENTANGLEMENTS.
lock it up safe in the casket
OR COFFIN OF YOUR SELFISHNESS.
TO LOVE IS TO BE VULNERABLE.
—C.S. LEWIS

Even though our inner thoughts may condemn us with storms of guilt and constant reminders of our failures, we can know in our hearts that in His presence God Himself is greater than any accusation. He knows all things.

1 John 3:19 Voice

It can be easy to let our “inner thoughts condemn us,” telling ourselves that no one will really love or accept us if we showed who we really are. That our failures are just too many, our guilt is just too big, our scars are just too ugly. But God says he is bigger than all that. There is no mistake, flaw, or failure that is too much for him to handle or that could scare him away, so we are free to be ourselves without any filter.

Wonder, a movie about a boy who struggles with being accepted and feeling confident in who he is because of a physical deformity, touches on the importance of embracing our scars, flaws,

Opening Questions

- What is your attitude toward vulnerability? Do you see it as an opportunity for growth and closeness, or as a risk of being hurt?
- Do you value closeness and intimacy? How much of a role do you believe vulnerability plays in achieving these things?
- God teaches us intimacy through vulnerability.

Bible Study

Made Whole by God

There is a sure way for us to know that we belong to the truth.

and discrepancies. The conversation his mom has with him about how she feels about him despite his scars is exactly how God feels about us!

Wonder - “Never Ugly”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fa1auhluqM4&feature=youtu.be>

Loved No Matter What

[15] Eternal One: Is it possible for a mother, however disappointed, however hurt, to forget her nursing child? Can she feel nothing for the baby she carried and birthed? Even if she could, I, God, will never forget you. [16] Look here. I have made you a part of Me, written you on the palms of My hands. Your city walls are always on My mind, always My concern. [18] Raise your head, lift up your eyes, and watch your heart's desire come...

Isaiah 49:15-16,18 Voice

Even when we make mistakes and hurt God, he still sticks with us because he loves us. He says we are always on his mind, and we are a part of him. He craves intimacy with us just as much as we do, and so there is nothing we can do that would drive him away. There is no guilt, no mistake, no flaw that could make him not want to love us anymore.

- Do you believe this about God?
- Pray about the things you feel would drive God away, and pray about Scriptures like this one to show you how he really feels about you

Paradoxically, my bitter experience was pushing me toward wholeness. For You, God, have put behind all my shortcomings and wrongdoings. You have rescued me from death. You pulled me from a black hole of nothingness and held me close to You.

Isaiah 38:17 Voice

The insecurities and self-doubt that plague us can often drag us into what feels like a black hole. We make mistakes or cause hurt in relationships, and it can get easy to get sucked into how bad of a person we feel we are or become insecure that we are unlovable. But when we admit our “bitter experiences” and what has brought us into this black hole in the first place, God can make us whole again. God wants to pull us out of the black hole and hold us close, but we have to let him!

- What “black hole” are you in right now?
- What weaknesses and insecurities are you afraid to show? Share about them with God and people!

Made Whole Together

Then Jesus led his disciples to an orchard called “The Oil Press.” He told them, “Sit here while I go and pray over there.” [37] He took Peter, Jacob, and John with him. However, an intense feeling of great sorrow plunged his soul into deep sorrow and agony. [38] And he said to them, “My heart is overwhelmed and crushed with grief. It feels as though I’m dying. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

Matthew 26:36-38 TPT

Even Jesus wasn't afraid to admit need. He had this conversation with his friends right before he was about to die on the cross. Rather than isolating and being alone, he reached out to his friends to be vulnerable with them in his deepest moments of grief and sadness. If you keep reading the chapter, it was this decision to admit need and reach out for help from his friends and God that made him strong enough to push through and endure going on the cross.

If Jesus needed to be vulnerable with friends to make him stronger, how much more do we need to?

- What need are you too afraid or proud to admit?
- What experience that feels impossible would you actually be able to endure if you admitted need?
- What friends can you admit need to today?

Don't Go at it Alone

[9] Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. [10] If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. [11] Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? [12] A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NLT

When we go at life alone, we can only be so strong. Avoiding vulnerability may protect us from feeling rejected and hurt, but it also prohibits us from being strong enough to withstand problems that come our way, and from becoming who we are meant to be. Admitting that we need each other leads to sticking together, and becoming together what we could not be alone (Romans 12:15 Voice).

- What in your life has felt difficult to accomplish? Are you going at it alone or with friends?
- What purpose are you holding yourself back from by choosing to be alone and invulnerable?

Make Others Whole

8 We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 NLT

As the quote says at the beginning of the study, to love is to be vulnerable. We may think we are being loving by doing things for people, but if we don't share who we are as well, what does that actually do for them?

- Do you love anyone so much that you're willing to share your life and who you are with them?

Vulnerability is not just about ourselves. It's about helping the people around us see that they are not alone.

The Importance of Vulnerability

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJsJ96yyVk8>

“Good vulnerability is fundamentally generous. It takes the first step at disclosure, so as to render it safe for others to unburden themselves, and disclose something of their hidden selves in turn. It’s a gift in the form of a risk taken for somebody else.”

“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14-16 MSG

We show others who God is, not when we know everything, have all the answers, or act perfect all the time, but rather when we open our lives up to them.

When we don’t open up to others, we inhibit them from seeing that God can heal them too. But when we are vulnerable, we show people they are not alone, and can give them hope.

- Who needs you to open up to them?
- How can you choose to be generous in vulnerability today?

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