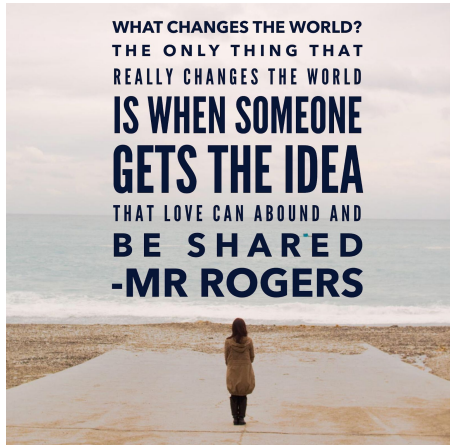


# Won't You Be My Neighbor?

*Love is at the root of everything*



**WARNING:** This article is going to talk a *lot* about Mr. Rogers.

*Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, the should've-been-Oscar-nominated documentary about the renowned TV personality, was released this past year at just the right time. At a time when our world has felt dark and cruel, we need someone like Mr. Rogers to be the shining light of love. Though Mr. Rogers was extraordinary, you don't need to have your own TV show for over 40 years to be this light.

I may speak in different languages, whether human or even of angels. But if I don't have love, I am only a noisy bell or a ringing cymbal. [2] I may have the gift of prophecy, I may understand all secrets and know everything there is to know, and I may have faith so great that I can move mountains. But even with all this, if I don't have love, I am nothing. [3] I may give away everything I have to help others, and I may even give my body as an offering to be burned. But I gain nothing by doing all this if I don't have love.

*1 Corinthians 13:1-3 ERV*

To God, love is the only thing that matters. We can accomplish amazing things, we can be smart or insightful, we can even have faith, but if we don't love, none of that matters. God wants us to become people who love through anything and everything.

## Bible Study

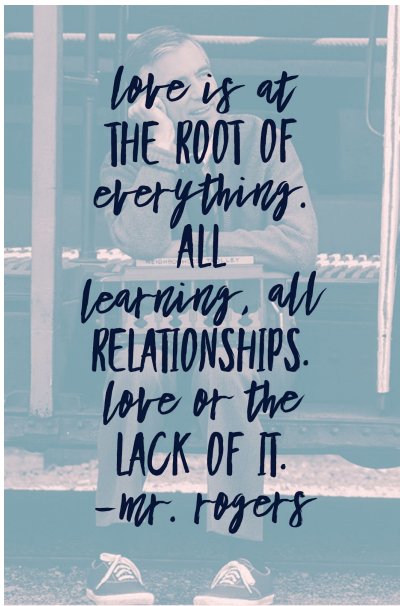
### Love or the Lack of It

There will be such an increase of sin and lawlessness that those whose hearts once burned with passion for God and others will grow cold.

*Matthew 24:12 TPT*

When was the last time your heart burned with passion for something or someone? The reason we deal with sin and what we are guilty about is not to put a rule on us or make us feel bad about ourselves, but because undealt with sin makes our hearts grow cold, and we stop caring.

- Has your heart grown cold? What does that look like for you? (self-consumed, don't care what other people are going through, don't initiate conversation with friends, etc.)
  - What guilt has made your heart grow cold?



Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity.

*1 John 2:15 MSG*

When we go to the world and people to meet our needs and desires to be self-reliant, self-indulgent, and self-important, our love for both God and people gets squeezed out. When we are so consumed with ourselves, we have no room left for anyone else. If we are going to become people who have, as Mr. Rogers said, “love that abounds,” then we have to be willing to

clear out what's taking so much room in our hearts.

- What consumes you? Are your thoughts and desires only centered around you?

## **I Like You as You Are**

I myself taught Israel how to walk, leading him along by the hand. But he doesn't know or even care that it was I who took care of him. [4] I led Israel along with my ropes of kindness and love. I lifted the yoke from his neck, and I myself stooped to feed him. [8] “Oh, how can I give you up, Israel? How can I let you go? How can I destroy you like Admah or demolish you like Zeboiim? My heart is torn within me, and my compassion overflows.

*Hosea 11:3-4,8 NLT*

We don't have to rely on ourselves to feel good because God is the one who meets our needs. Even when we push him out and let our love for him grow cold, he sticks with us because he loves us. He has been taking care of us and loving us longer than we even know, and we can learn to have our hearts burn with passion from him because that is how he feels toward us.

- How has God been sticking with you?

Below is the first showing of one of Mr. Rogers' more popular songs, “I Like You as You Are.”

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEeEEc\\_djco](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEeEEc_djco)

*I like you as you are  
Exactly and precisely*

*I think you turned out nicely  
And I like you as you are*

This is how God views us! He likes us just as we are, every part of us. He loves the dreams we have, the things we think no one else cares about, even the parts of ourselves we think make us unlovable. He loves every part of who we are.

You are so intimately aware of me, Lord. You read my heart like an open book and you know all the words I'm about to speak before I even start a sentence! You know every step I will take before my journey even begins. [17] Every single moment you are thinking of me! How precious and wonderful to consider that you cherish me constantly in your every thought! O God, your desires toward me are more than the grains of sand on every shore! When I awake each morning, you're still with me.

*Psalm 139:3,17 TPT*

Do you think about how often God thinks about you? When we believe God not only loves us, but *likes* us and what makes us who we are, we have the security to let go of the self-serving things that take up so much room in our hearts. We're freed up to love!

- Do you believe God loves you and likes you?
- Pray through this scripture and fight through any doubt or unbelief you have about how much God loves and thinks about you

## **Love is an Active Noun**

[14] For it is Christ's love that fuels our passion and motivates us, because we are absolutely convinced that he has given his life for all of us. This means all died with him, [15] so that those who live should no longer live self-absorbed lives but lives that are poured out for him-the one who died for us and now lives again.

*2 Corinthians 5:14-15 TPT*

Since we are able to free ourselves from the self-absorbed desires that deaden our hearts, it is God's love that gives us our passion back and fuels our love for other people.

Whenever crowds came to Him, He had compassion for them because they were so deeply distraught, malaised, and heart-broken. They seemed to Him like lost sheep without a shepherd. [37] Jesus understood what an awesome task was before Him, so He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. [38] Ask the Lord of the harvest to send more workers into His harvest field."

*Matthew 9:36-38 Voice*

Jesus noticed the needs of the people around him. He was willing to feel what they felt, which moved him to do something about it.

- What are the needs of the people around you? Are you willing to feel what they feel or do you not want to deal with the emotion and pain of it?
- What can you do today to love them?

10 Seconds of Silence (Watch 3:44-5:10)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcNxY4TudXo>

As Mr. Rogers said, love is meant to inform everything that we produce. Who did you think of in those ten seconds of silence? When thinking of who has made a difference in their life, who will think of you?

Love is patient; love is kind. Love isn't envious, doesn't boast, brag, or strut about. There's no arrogance in love; [5] it's never rude, crude, or indecent— it's not self-absorbed. Love isn't easily upset. Love doesn't tally wrongs [6] or celebrate injustice; but truth—yes, truth—is love's delight! [7] Love puts up with anything and everything that comes along; it trusts, hopes, and endures no matter what. [13] But now faith, hope, and love remain; these three virtues must characterize our lives. The greatest of these is love.

*1 Corinthians 13:4-7,13 Voice*

Do you love anyone like this? Pick a certain aspect of love that is hard for you. Maybe it's loving truth, not being self-absorbed, or not being arrogant and proud. Maybe it's enduring no matter what. Whatever is most difficult for you, choose today to love someone in a way you never have.

