

Radical Love Moved to Action

A 30-DAY JOURNEY INTO A RADICAL
WAY OF LIVING

Jen DeBrot

RADICAL LOVE: MOVED TO ACTION

Radical Love: Moved To Action
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*TO MY FAVORITE GUY, TRAVIS -
AND THE SEVEN THAT FOLLOW:*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book will open your eyes to needs in your community. *Radical Love* makes loving your neighbor easy to understand with transparent stories, sorrow and humor, and heartfelt words of wisdom.

Alli Worthington
Author of *Breaking Busy*

Radical Love is a call to not settle for information on the life of Jesus but to practically live out God's proclamation and truth. He has a radical life for you, and this 30-day call is an amazing way to figure out how that life plays out.

Justin Thornton
City Life Church – NYC

If you're looking for a book that will help you follow God in specific, concrete ways every day, this is the book for you. *Radical Love* is readable, practical, and enjoyable. Reading it and following its 30-day suggestions will help you, your neighbor, and your community.

Dr. Kristen Deede Johnson
Professor of Theology and Christian Formation
Western Theological Seminary

FOREWARD

I met Jennifer DeBrot about two years ago. She was dating one of my church members to whom she is now married. When I met Jen, I could sense she had an urgency about something that was going on in her life. Little did I know that she had made a promise to God that she was going to try and reach one million people with the Gospel in just ten short years.

Wow, what a promise! What an undertaking! Between being a mom to her own five boys and now to Travis' two girls as well as going to seminary, being a new wife, and being on staff at Living Life Church, where would she find time to fulfill her promise? Well the more I got to know her, I knew how she would fulfill that promise: through her *radical love* for people.

In this book, you will not only read about Jen's heart for people, but you will actually be drawn into her life to see how she came to the place where she has a *radical love* for the world to come to know Christ. As you read through each chapter, you will actually feel her pain, her joy, her experiences, her excitement, her heartbeat, and what makes her the person she is today. You, too, will find yourself catching the same vision she has and wanting to be a person who also has a *radical love* for those around you.

My advice is not only to read this book but also to study each and every chapter. Then, after you are done, pass it along to someone else. This world needs more people with a *radical love* for people and for Jesus.

Are you ready? Are you ready for God to give you a *radical love* for people? Dive in and enjoy! But get ready, God's going to do something amazing in your life. He's getting ready to give you a *radical love*!

Jeff Yandall
Lead Pastor
Living Life Church

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Friend,

There's a longing for purpose in every human soul. I believe it was put there by our Creator and was intended to leave us searching for the answers that our hearts are dying to know.

Why is this world so broken?

Why is there abuse?

Why is there cancer?

Why is there mental illness?

Why is there divorce?

Why is there violence?

Why is there so much poverty?

These are some of the same questions that I've asked myself over and over. Although there is not a one-word answer to those questions, there is a one-word answer that can bring the hope that we need to fix this god-awful mess.

His name is Jesus.

We may never see an end to all of these terrible epidemics, but we can make a BIG impact against them. When we choose to make each day count and make the most of our time spent here on earth, we combat these things one day at a time.

As I prepared to write this book, I continued to ask myself this question: What problem am I addressing and how will my words offer any help to this issue. The resounding word that I continued to hear when I tried to make sense of what I was feeling called to was the word "apathy." The Webster dictionary defines apathy as this: "a lack of feeling or emotion." The problem in our world is not that we don't have enough people out there sharing the good news of the Gospel. We've actually done a great job with that assignment. The problem we now face is what to do with this wonderful news of the Gospel and His invitation to a relationship with Him.

All over America, our churches are filled with people who have received this news and continue to receive more information on what it means to be a Christian. We are not lacking knowledge or resources to grow in our understanding. Might I suggest that we may just be empty of passion and purpose and so we continue to feel as though we need to fill ourselves up with more information so we can be more inspired to make a difference? Maybe the new information we need to learn is just how bad things really are.

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I wonder if just a few simple steps of action done by a small group of people could actually make enough of an impact that we would see poverty finally decrease in one city after another?

I want to invite you to radically love your community this month by surrendering your apathy and taking the simple steps of action outlined in the following pages. You might be surprised by the results.

Let's go, time's a wastin'!

*Love,
Jen*

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Chapter One

HEART, MIND, AND SOUL

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

ROMANS 13:9

It was a cold January night. The house was empty, and I knew I needed to take advantage of it. At the time, I was a busy single mom with four boys still living at home with me, well kind of. I say kind of because the truth is that we weren't living in "my home." We were living in my parent's home. Just a few months earlier, I had packed up all of my belongings and humbly had to move back in with my parents while I was fumbling my way through a painful divorce. This was not at all where I thought my life would be at forty years old. I was living with so much shame and had oh so much *regret*.

△

Where in the world was the God that I needed Him to be for me in a situation like this?

The boys were all gone for the night, and my parents were away on vacation. I decided to put some worship music on while I sat and attempted to put my thoughts to pen. I didn't have many words to speak, because I had never felt so flattened out by God before, and I wasn't sure what to do with this anger I was feeling. I just couldn't understand how a loving God could have allowed my life to have taken such a wretched turn. Where in the world was the God that I needed Him to be for me in a situation like this? Didn't He see the mess my life was in? Didn't He see how this was hurting our children? Didn't He care?

Before long I found myself laid out on the floor just listening to the songs play on the playlist. I was working through layers of pain, and I was continuing to coach myself along to a place of surrender. Have you been there? Oh this wasn't my first worship and cry session. I'd had many before this night, but for some reason the months passing by were bringing what everyone said they would bring: healing.

The next thing I knew was that I began to pray a simple prayer. I'm not sure where the words came from other than to say they were true to what my heart was feeling at the moment. I remember thinking that I no longer had a need for the "American Dream." I had lived it already. I was blessed with a beautiful life. For whatever reason, my life took a turn and that wasn't my life any longer. I was now finally coming to a place of desiring what God wanted for my future. I didn't care if that meant moving, never marrying again, living with my parents forever, never having much money.... I didn't care. I just wanted my prayer to be for what was most important for my future. I didn't want to begin to dream for something new for my life that wasn't His dream for me. Not too far in my rearview mirror, I was a worship pastor's wife, living in my husband's family farm home, where we had some chickens and a garden. I had been living my dream, and I thought it was His dream for me, too.

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How many of you know that you can lose it all in a day? It's true. You are not guaranteed tomorrow, and it is because of this truth that you must live each day as though it is your last. Don't get caught up chasing after empty and fleeting dreams, because you won't get your days back. They slip away as fast as they come.

So again, back to the prayer that God put in my heart that night:

“Oh God... I mean it this time. I really do. Please don't give me another dream that isn't one of Your dreams for me. I only want Your dreams for my life. I want a radical love that looks like You, one that will cost me greatly and moves me to action.”

As I prayed this simple prayer over and over that night, God began to speak very clearly to me, pointing out where He wanted me to start with this prayer that I was offering up to Him. It went something like this.

Me: God – who do You want me to love? I'll love anybody. What cause do you want to use me for? I'll do anything for You.

God: Love!

Me: Love? Okay. Yes, God. I'll love anybody. Who God? Who do You want me to love? I'll do it.

God: Yourself!

Me: Come again? Love myself? Is that You? If this is what You want from me, then show me that in the Bible because that just doesn't sound right to me.

And sure enough God continued to confirm it to me over and over again starting with His Words in Matthew 19:19, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Apparently I had been doing a terrible job at loving myself. Everything in my life proved this to be true, but I didn't know what to do about this new revelation. How do you begin to change your actions in order to love yourself without being viewed as selfish? How do you love yourself and still be a Christian? Is that even possible? These were all things that I began to wrestle with over the next several months. The truth was I didn't even realize just how bad I was at knowing how to love myself. I was so good at hiding my needs from myself and had gotten so good at neglecting me that I discovered I didn't even know who I was at all.

So I promised God that night that I would work on learning how to love myself. I would trust Him to teach me how to do that, and I wouldn't feel guilty for pursuing this path for my life. I would attempt to work on giving Him my whole heart, my mind, and my soul.

Turns out, this was the very beginning of a journey on which I began to learn so much more about. A journey of accepting that I was worthy of love and now I was finally ready to learn how to love my whole self.

Today, I want to challenge you to take an inward look at your heart and do a self-evaluation of how well you are at knowing and loving yourself. I never thought about the fact that in order for me to love others well, I would first have to love myself with all of my heart, soul, and mind. Otherwise the love I was offering to others would not even be real love at all.

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