

Pre-Release Sampler



love  
revealed

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# CHAPTER I

## LOVE REVEALED

*Kerry Clarensau*

“What great love the Father has  
lavished on us!” (1 John 3:1, NIV)

Don't you just love newborn babies? Every time I look at one, I see God's creative abilities. Everything about them is simply amazing—their little toes, ears, and lips! For days after Tyler, our first son, was born I couldn't take my eyes off him. I would stare at him for hours. I wanted to memorize everything about him. He was simply adorable!

When he was four weeks old, I took him for his first well-baby checkup. I thought I had the most perfect baby in the world, so the idea something could be wrong never entered my mind. My only thought was, I can't wait to see how much he's grown!

The first part of the appointment was very routine. The doctor weighed and measured his little body, listened to his heart, looked in his ears and eyes. Everything looked good.

If you have ever watched a pediatrician with a newborn, you have seen him grab the baby's legs below the knees and bend them up in circular motions. I had no idea why the doctor did this, but I watched as he did it several times. And each time he looked a little more concerned.

Finally, he told me that he would like to take some x-rays of Tyler's hips and have an orthopedic specialist look at them. My heart began to beat out of my chest. What could possibly be wrong? Why do they need to take x-rays of a four-week-old baby? I suddenly wished my husband, Mike, had taken off work for this appointment.

After reading the x-rays, the pediatrician and the orthopedic specialist came into the exam room with a tiny hip brace and began using words I'd never heard. These words changed our world and soon became a part of our everyday vocabulary. “Your son has congenital hip dysplasia. It is rather severe. If this condition isn't corrected, he will never be able to walk normally. Even with correction, he will probably never be able to run or play sports. He needs to wear this brace 24 hours a day. If his hips don't respond to the brace, we will have to put him in a full-body

cast. He might need surgeries in the future, but we will cross that bridge when we come to it.”

It’s hard to describe how I felt in that moment. The emotions were so overwhelming—I could hardly hear the doctor’s words over the sound of my heart beating.

It was surreal to watch the doctor slide the brace under my baby’s bottom. He gently lifted each leg into the little harness. He secured Tyler’s legs with Velcro straps, positioning his legs at right angles to his body. It looked so uncomfortable!

Tears poured down my cheeks. I struggled to pay attention as the doctor showed me how to take the brace off and walked me through putting it back on. I numbly signed papers and set up the next appointments.

As we walked to our car, I was so heartbroken that I distractedly unlocked the door, threw my bags and keys in, fastened Tyler’s car seat, and shut the door. I didn’t realize I had locked myself out, until I saw my keys lying on the seat! There I stood on the outside of the car—crying! Almost immediately, Tyler started crying. What had I done? My poor baby is crying and I can’t get to him! I’m sure we were quite a sight!

It makes me smile now, but in that moment I was so thankful for a kind woman who volunteered to walk back in the building and call the police to come unlock my car. (This was long before cell phones or OnStar.) We were having a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day!

On the way home, I drove to Mike’s workplace and told him the news. I don’t think I will ever forget the look on his face. I knew his dreams of playing baseball with our son felt shattered. We were both so devastated.

That afternoon, all I wanted to do was hold Tyler. It was such an adjustment cuddling a baby in a brace! But we finally settled into the rocking chair. He quickly fell asleep, but I didn’t want to put him down. I just held him and cried and prayed like never before. With all of my heart I wanted to take this pain from Tyler. I remember asking God to give my healthy hips and legs to Tyler—I would gladly take his crippled ones. I loved this precious baby so much!

In a quiet moment, God spoke something so clearly to my heart. He said, “Kerry, I love Tyler even more than you love him.” How can that be? I knew how much I loved Tyler; how could He love him more? I would have given anything to take this suffering from him. But this loving God—who knows everything and is all-powerful—asked me to trust Him.

An indescribable peace began to wash over me. And then God spoke something else to my heart, something that changed my relationship with Him forever. He said, “Kerry, I love you—more than you love Tyler.” Wow!

I thought about what Jesus had done for me. Just as I wanted to take Tyler’s place, He truly took my place. He suffered and died for my sins, so I wouldn’t have to. God understood exactly how I was feeling. He loved me so much that He was willing to allow His only Son to suffer for me. I can’t explain the peace that washed over me. Suddenly, in the middle of my pain, I gained a new understanding of the depth of His love for me!

God is so good to speak to us! I believe He was preparing my heart earlier that week in my quiet time, when I read King David’s words in Psalm 27, verse 10: “Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.” David enjoyed a close relationship with God and understood the depths of His love for him. God also spoke through the Old Testament prophet Isaiah saying, “Can a mother forget the infant at her breast, walk away from the baby she bore? But even if mothers forget, I’d never forget you—never” (Isaiah 49:15, THE MESSAGE). God wants us to know that His love for us is even purer and more encompassing than the love of a mother for her newborn child!

Tyler was in either braces or a full-body cast until he was about 24 months old. He was also diagnosed with another type of dysplasia at age five and had several surgeries as a teenager.

Our second son, Blake, was diagnosed with the same condition when he was only six hours old. It was heartbreaking to take him home from the hospital in a brace! He spent eight months in a full-body cast. But thankfully, Blake didn’t require any further treatment after he was 14 months old.

While I still wish my boys didn’t have dysplasia, I will always be grateful for the lessons our family learned through the journey. God continued to reveal His amazing love every step of the way. Sometimes He demonstrated His love with just enough strength for the moment. Other times He brought caring people to lend a hand. Once, He brought a miraculous healing to Tyler after months of swelling and pain from a surgery.

Just today as I write this chapter, Tyler, a husband and new dad, completed a 5K run—an accomplishment at one time we wouldn’t have thought possible. Over the years, Mike and I have quietly celebrated at every baseball, soccer, and basketball game Tyler played.

## LOVE REVEALED

We can be confident that God wants to reveal His love for each of us in personal ways! We are all unique individuals. As a mom, I grew to understand that my boys received love differently. I knew Blake needed hugs and attention. And Tyler needed words of affirmation and space. God knows us even more intimately. We can trust Him to reveal His love for us in a unique, meaningful way.

He may speak to you through His Word, in quiet moments of prayer, walking in nature, or through the kindness of a stranger. While your experience will not be like mine, His love for you is just as great!

Understanding His love builds our trust! I learned this firsthand. From that moment in my rocking chair, I've known God loves me. He loves Tyler and Blake. He loves our family. And I can trust His love, even when I don't like or understand my circumstances. As I've depended on Him, I've experienced the joy of His presence in my most difficult moments.

I believe with all of my heart that God wants you to know the full extent of His love! May you grow more and more aware of the revelations of His love!

He wants you to experience authentic love through connections with others. He wants you to grow and mature by encountering His transforming love. He wants to reveal His love in motion as you serve others. He wants the world to see His extravagant love as you care for those in need. And when you are consumed with His love, you can live every moment in the fullness of His presence and experience the joy only He can give.

## Scripture Points

Consider how the following verses describe God's love for you:

- Psalm 32:10, NIV

Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

- Psalm 36:5-10, NIV

Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep.

O LORD, you preserve both man and beast. How priceless is your unfailing love!

Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. Continue your love to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart.

- Psalm 86:5, 15, NIV

You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. . . . But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

- Psalm 103:8, 11, 13

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. . . . For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; . . . As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.”

- Psalm 118:1, NIV

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

- Zephaniah 3:17, NIV

The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.

- John 3:16, 17, NIV

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

- Romans 8:37-39, NIV

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth,

LOVE REVEALED

nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Ephesians 3:16-21, NIV

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.

- I John 4:9-10, NIV

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Which verse most reveals God’s love to you?

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**Talk Points**

- Read the entire chapter of Psalm 103. Discuss the ways the psalmist, David, describes God. How do each of these characteristics and behaviors reveal His love?

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love   
revealed

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**The Love Revealed Challenge:**  
45 Days to Discovering God's Authentic Love

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KERRY CLARENSAU



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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 45-Day Challenge, companion to the Love Revealed Bible study.

The thoughts offered in this challenge are designed to help you apply the principles of Love Revealed in a practical way. Each day offers a Scripture Point, a Thought Point, and a Challenge Point.

You may choose to use this challenge:

- As an individual 45-day devotional,
- With a friend, using the Thought Points as discussion guides, or
- In a small group setting, meeting weekly to discuss the material.

We pray the Holy Spirit will reveal God's love for you in transforming ways throughout this 45-Day Challenge. And that His love will brim over from your heart to everyone around you!



## DAY I

# UNFAILING LOVE

### Scripture Point

“Your unfailing love, O LORD, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the ocean depths. You care for people and animals alike, O LORD. How precious is your unfailing love, O God! All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings” (Psalm 36:5-7, NLT).

### Thought Point

David, the writer of this psalm, enjoyed a close relationship with God and was called a man after God’s own heart. He wrote many psalms describing the greatest of God’s love for us. Take time to reread this psalm and thoughtfully consider how God’s love is described in every line.

#### THE LOVE REVEALED CHALLENGE

- What does it mean to you that God's love is unfailing?

#### **Challenge Point**

Spend a few minutes in one of your favorite places in nature today. Consider how God's love is displayed all around you. Then take some time to express your love for Him in your own unique way:

- Write your own psalm describing God's unfailing love;
- Paint or draw something in nature that speaks of God's faithfulness;
- Sing a song that shares your gratefulness for His goodness;
- Simply speak aloud your praise.

Allow His unfailing love to wash over your every thought and care.

## DAY 2

# SACRIFICIAL LOVE

### Scripture Point

“This is how we’ve come to understand and experience love: Christ sacrificed his life for us. This is why we ought to live sacrificially for our fellow believers, and not just be out for ourselves” (1 John 3:16, THE MESSAGE).

### Thought Point

Many times we love others conditionally—only loving those who love us back. But Christ’s love for us didn’t depend upon our responses or on our worthiness. He knew some would accept Him and others would reject Him, still He loved us and gave His life for us. It is difficult to accurately explain that kind of love. In chapter one, Kerry describes God’s love as being greater than the love of a mother for her child. Most mothers willingly sacrifice whatever is necessary for their children.

#### THE LOVE REVEALED CHALLENGE

We are called to love one another in the same sacrificial way.

- Think about the sacrificial nature of a new mother's love for her infant and compare it to God's love for us.
- What hinders us from loving others this way?

#### **Challenge Point**

Look for a way to encourage someone by sacrificing some of your time and energy today—loving them in a Christ-like way. Here are some ideas to get your creative energies flowing:

- Babysit for a single mom or give a couple a night out;
- Clean someone's home who is in a busy season of life;
- Help a neighbor with some yard work;
- Make a meal for a friend or offer to do her grocery shopping;
- Spend some time with someone who is homebound.



Discover an ever-abiding intimacy with the Lord from these companion books.

## ***Love Revealed* and *The Love Revealed Challenge***

If you know how to spot it, God reveals His love in intimately personal ways. *Love Revealed: Experiencing God's Authentic Love* will open your eyes to the full extent of His love for you and through you. In six warm and inviting studies, you'll discover your heavenly Father's:

- Authentic love
- Transforming love
- Extravagant love
- Love in motion
- Consuming love

As intimate as the study itself, *The Love Revealed Challenge: 45 Days to Discovering God's Authentic Love* helps you apply the principles of *Love Revealed*. Each reading offers a "Scripture Point", "Thought Point" and "Challenge Point" for reflection. Take the challenge – individually, with a friend or in a small group – and be transformed by your knowledge, understanding and experience of God's love for you and through you.

**Kerry Clarensau is Director of the National Women's Department for the Assemblies of God.**

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