



BOB GOFF

*New York Times* Bestselling Author of *Love Does*

EVERYBODY  
ALWAYS

BECOMING LOVE *in a*  
WORLD FULL *of* SETBACKS  
*and* DIFFICULT PEOPLE



# EVERYBODY ALWAYS



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# EVERYBODY, ALWAYS

BECOMING LOVE *in a*  
WORLD FULL *of* SETBACKS  
*and* DIFFICULT PEOPLE



An Imprint of Thomas Nelson







I've spent my whole life trying to make my faith easy. The truth is, it's not. From what I've been reading, if we do it right, it will actually kill all the earlier versions of us. What I've been trying to do is make my faith simple.

This book is dedicated to everyone who has helped my friends and me make faith increasingly simple. These people haven't tried to save up love like they're going to need it later; they know we're rivers, not reservoirs. It's also a really long thank-you note to everyone who has ever done something nice for Sweet Maria, for one of my kids, or for someone they love. When you've done it for them, you've done it for me. I know God feels the same way.







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## PROLOGUE

I wrote a book called *Love Does* a few years ago. We took all the money from the book and opened schools and safe houses and orphanages in a number of countries where regional conflicts had endangered the children living there. It was my first shot at writing a book, and I tried to tell stories of some things I've learned about the immense power that love has in the world. There was supposed to be a second book, but it was never published. This is my third book. Let me tell you why.

A number of years ago, a friend of mine quit the megachurch he pastored in Southern California and moved to the inner city of San Francisco. He wanted to build a community among people who had experienced tremendous failures and setbacks. He's a humble guy, is generous with his time, loves his family, and really loves God. Rather than spend only a few minutes each week with the thousands of people at the big church he pastored for years, he decided to go deep with a small number of people who had faced some tough breaks. He and a few friends started a restaurant staffed by guys who needed a fresh start and also a home for women who have confronted some of life's biggest challenges with courage and hope.



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These amazing people spend their free time loving people in the housing projects near the restaurant. They give away love like they're made of it. Like my friend, they do this because they have developed completely unrealistic ideas about what their faith can do in the world when it's expressed in love. They decided to spend more time loving people than trying to game the system by just agreeing with Jesus. You see, they wanted to follow Jesus' example; instead of telling people what Jesus meant, they just loved people the way He did.

The housing projects are difficult places. They're dark and scary and filled with beautiful, scary people. They are full of guns and violence and fights and theft. They are also full of love and compassion and generosity and hope.

These brave men and women seek out people who have felt forgotten and overlooked. They pursue the wrongdoers and disadvantaged and discouraged, and they love them Jesus-style—with extravagant grace.

On one of the trips to see my friend in San Francisco, I brought a couple of people who work with me. We flew in to San Francisco, rented a van, and headed over to the restaurant to see how we could help. We had been inside washing dishes for about thirty minutes when I went outside to get something out of the van. I was drop-jawed at what I found. All the windows were shattered, pieces of glass scattered on the seats and floorboards. Thieves in the neighborhood had broken in. All our luggage was gone. Oh, and our wallets, cell phones, and laptop computers too.

I had just finished writing the first draft of this book, and it was on my stolen computer. Get this: the manuscript wasn't backed up. (Who needs iCloud? It costs ninety-nine cents a year.) Minor oversight on my part. I had to write the book all over again.



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The good news was that I had been thinking about this book's idea for a while. A few years earlier, I had been with some dear friends at a large church in Chicago and gave a sermon where I said we need to love everybody always. It made sense to me, so I decided to write a book about it.

It's hard to believe Jesus loves the van thieves and all the difficult people we've met just the same as you and me. Yet, the incredible message Love came to earth to give was that we're all tied for first in God's mind. While we're still trying to get our arms around this idea, God doesn't want us to just study Him like He's an academic project. He wants us to live in grace and walk in love among one another.

I've heard it's hard to write a good second book and that they usually stink. The thieves probably did us all a favor, so let's just call this my third book. It's given me a lot of comfort knowing we're all rough drafts of the people we're still becoming. I hope this next version of the book moves the needle in a way that reaffirms the power of extravagant love and excessive grace in your life and in the world.







## ONE

# Creepy People

*We don't need to be who we  
were; we can become love.*

My friends and I finished what we were doing at the restaurant and took the windowless van back to the airport. We pulled into the rental lot looking a little windblown, and the attendant stared at us with a puzzled expression. “It looked like this when we got it,” I told him nonchalantly. Walking away, I tossed him the keys over my shoulder. I felt like the guy in the movies when the car explodes behind him. Pro tip: If you do throw the match, make sure you don’t turn around and look when it blows up. It wrecks the vibe.

I was disappointed everything was stolen, but I figured it would all work out. What I didn’t realize was how hard it would be to get back on an airplane to fly home with no identification. I got to the front of the security line, and the guy with a badge asked for my ticket and ID. I reached in my pockets and turned them inside out. I had nothing. I shrugged my shoulders pathetically and said,



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“Man, it all got stolen. My luggage, my wallet, everything.” I felt like Jason Bourne.

The TSA guy wasn’t very sympathetic. I could understand. He was just doing his job. He asked if there was any way I could prove who I was. I shook my head, then suddenly remembered—I had written a book a while ago. We Googled it, but I forgot the cover only had balloons on it. (I made a mental note to put a huge photo of myself on the cover of this book just in case it happens again, but I bailed on the idea when I saw what my face looked like on a book cover.)

All of this raised a question I’ve been thinking a lot about lately. *How do we prove who we are?* I don’t mean who our driver’s licenses say we are or what our careers suggest about who we are or who we tell other people we are or who they tell us we are. Jesus talked to His friends a lot about how we should identify ourselves. He said it wouldn’t be what we said we believed or all the good we hoped to do someday. Nope, He said we would identify ourselves simply by how we loved people. It’s tempting to think there is more to it, but there’s not. Love isn’t something we fall into; love is someone we become.

It’s easy to love kind, lovely, humble people. I mean, who wouldn’t? These are the ones I’ve spent much of my life loving. Loving the people who are easy to love made me feel like I was really good at it. Because the people I loved were kind and wonderful, they made sure they told me what a great job I was doing loving them. What I’ve come to realize, though, is that I was avoiding the people I didn’t understand and the ones who lived differently than me. Here’s why: some of them creep me out. Sure, I was polite to them, but sadly, I’ve spent my whole life avoiding the people Jesus spent His whole life engaging. God’s idea isn’t that we



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would just give and receive love but that we could actually *become love*. The way we do this can be summarized like this: His plan is that we would love everybody, always. People who are becoming love see the beauty in others even when their off-putting behavior makes for a pretty weird mask. What Jesus told His friends can be summed up in this way: He wants us to love everybody, always—and start with the people who creep us out. The truth is, we probably creep them out as much as they do us.

Are there people you should give a wide berth to? You bet. There are people in my life and yours who are unsafe, toxic, and delight in sowing discord wherever they go. God gave us discernment, and we should use it as we live our lives. He's also given us love and understanding and kindness and the ability to forgive, which have power we often leave untapped. There's a difference between good judgment and living in judgment. The trick is to use lots of the first and to go a little lighter on the second if we want to live the big life Jesus talked about.

What I'm learning about love is that we have to tackle a good amount of fear to love people who are difficult. Oftentimes, when I encounter someone who makes me feel afraid, I instantly put up barriers. I put them up with my big words and opinions. I construct them to protect myself. Barriers make me feel right, and that makes me feel safe. I think this is something we all do to some degree, and there's no shame in that. Except it's not what Jesus did. He showed us what it means to become love when He spent His last meal with a man who He knew would betray Him.

We make loving people a lot more complicated than Jesus did. Every time I try to protect myself by telling somebody about one of my opinions, God whispers to me and asks about my heart. *Why are you so afraid? Who are you trying to impress with your big*



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*opinions?* Am I really so insecure that I surround myself only with people who agree with me? When people are flat wrong, why do I appoint myself the sheriff to straighten them out? Burning down others' opinions doesn't make us right. It makes us arsonists.

God's end game has always been the same. He wants our hearts to be His. He wants us to love the people near us and love the people we've kept far away who creep us out. To do this, He wants us to live without fear. We don't need to use our opinions to mask our insecurities anymore. Instead, God wants us to grow love in our hearts and then cultivate it by the acre in the world. We'll become in our lives what we do with our love. Those who are becoming love don't throw people off roofs; they lower people through them instead.



In high school, someone asked me if I had “met Jesus.” I thought he was kidding. “Of course not,” I answered literally. I still haven't. I don't have any friends who have either. From what I've read, very few people on this side of heaven have actually ever met God. Adam and Eve did. Joseph and Mary did too. Moses did on the top of a mountain. Some shepherds and a few wise men make the list. A thief on a cross and a boatful of fishermen. There were plenty of others, but not as many as you might think.

By contrast, there were a lot of people who watched Jesus from a distance. He walked their streets and went to their parties. He stood before leaders, and a few even saw Him raised up on a cross. I suppose they could say they met Him, but at best, they probably just got a glimpse of Him. For a long time, I saw Jesus from a distance and thought we'd met. It still happens to me every time



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I avoid people God made in His own image just because I don't understand them. My fear of them leaves me only with glimpses of Jesus. What I've come to realize is if I really want to "meet Jesus," then I have to get a lot closer to the people He created.

God could have made it otherwise, of course, and everyone could have actually met Jesus. He could have appeared in person throughout history in all maternity wards and huts and fields where children are born. He could have shown up at Super Bowl games and Taylor Swift concerts and at elementary school plays and the Rose Parade. By not doing this, I don't think He's avoiding us. I think His plan all along has been for us to meet the people He made and feel like we just met Him.

In this sense, I've met God almost every day. He made all of us—the wonderful, engaging ones who are easy to get along with and the ones we just don't "get." Certainly, God wants us to learn about Him by reading the letters and stories collected in the Bible, but He also wants us to meet Him by loving the people who are difficult to get along with. If I'm willing to love the people who are nice to me, the ones who see things the way I do, and avoid all the rest, it's like reading every other page of the Bible and thinking I know what it says.

Jesus told His friends if they wanted to be like Him, they needed to love their neighbors and they needed to love difficult people. This sounds so familiar that I'm tempted to just agree with Jesus and move on, but Jesus doesn't want us merely to agree with Him. In fact, I can't think of a single time He gathered His friends around Him and said, "Guys, I just want you to agree with Me." He wants us to do what He said, and He said He wants us to love everybody, always.

It's tough, though. Some people just seem to have a mean



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streak. They're wrong-minded, backward, disagreeable, hateful, misguided, or deluded by money or power or status. They're hard to be around. We've met them in the marketplace and at our schools. We've even elected a couple. Don't worry about who's in the oval office with the launch codes. If we draw a circle thirty feet around ourselves and love everyone inside of it, that's our office.

Jesus said to love our enemies. I thought I'd get off easy because I don't have any real "enemies." I mean, I'm not mad at North Korea or Russia or China. And I don't think they're mad at me. After all, I wrote a book and put balloons on the cover. Who could be mad at that guy? I think Jesus meant something different when He said "enemies." He meant we should love the people we don't understand. The ones we disagree with. The ones who are flat wrong about more than a couple of things. I have plenty of those people in my life, and my bet is you do too. In fact, I'm one of those people sometimes.

I think God allows all of us to go missing a time or two. He doesn't lose us like I did my computer when my van was broken into, but He lets us get lost for a while if it's what we want. When we do, He doesn't pout or withhold His love the way I probably would if someone completely ignored me or walked away from me. Instead, He pursues us in love. He's not trying to find us; He always knows where we are. Rather, He goes *with* us as we find ourselves again. In this way, we have both a little sheep and some shepherd in us. God isn't constantly telling us what to do as we search for ourselves either. He gently reminds us who we are. He continues to rewrite our lives the way I rewrote my book—in beautiful and unexpected ways, knowing the next version of us will usually be better than the previous one.



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As a lawyer, I win arguments for a living, but I'm not trying to be "right" anymore. I want to be Jesus. I've concluded we can be correct and not right. Know what I mean? I do this most often when I have right words and the wrong heart. Sadly, whenever I make my opinions more important than the difficult people God made, I turn the wine back into water. I'm trying to resist the bait that darkness offers me every day to trade kindness for rightness. These are not mutually exclusive ideas, of course, but there's a big difference between being kind and being right. Pick the most controversial social issue of the day, and you'll find passionate voices on all sides. The sad fact is, many of us have lost our way trying to help people find theirs. Arguments won't change people. Simply giving away kindness won't either. Only Jesus has the power to change people, and it will be harder for them to see Jesus if their view of Him is blocked by our big opinions. I don't want to get to heaven and have Jesus tell me my big opinions blocked someone's view of Him.

I used to think we'd be known for whom we hung around, the groups or social issues we identified with, or the faith tradition we were familiar with. Now I think while we might be known for our opinions, we'll be remembered for our love. What I've learned following Jesus is we only really find our identities by engaging the people we've been avoiding. Jesus wrapped up this concept in three easy and seemingly impossible ideas for us to follow: love Him, love your neighbor, and love your enemies.

I want to love God more fully. I really do. Who wouldn't? I want to love my neighbors too. Why not? I live next door to some of them. Overall, they are kind of like me. But love my enemies?



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Sure, I'll tolerate them for a while. I might even be nice to them for a couple of minutes. But *love* them? Yikes.

Whenever I feel fear and insecurity telling me to put up barriers or take someone down with the strong words I've memorized, I try to remember the example God Himself set. I realize I was God's enemy because of my selfishness. That's a little hard to own when you think you're a pretty nice person. There's some theology surrounding this idea that some people have made more complicated than it needs to be, but it originated with the first people God created, not me. The fallout was I couldn't be God's friend. He didn't want it to stay that way, and we don't either. So He made a move toward us.

In the simplest terms, Jesus came to earth and declared He would turn God's enemies into His friends. He didn't do it with twenty-dollar words or lectures or by waving a bony finger at people who had made mistakes. He didn't appoint sheriffs to manipulate people's conduct either. He convinces us with love, and He does it without fear or shame. He doesn't raise His voice and shout over the noise in our lives. He lets the power of love and acceptance do all the talking for Him. We have the same shot in other people's lives every day.

Loving each other is what we were meant to do and how we were made to roll. It's not where we start when we begin following Jesus; it's the beautiful path we travel the rest of our lives. Will it be messy and ambiguous and uncomfortable when we love people the way Jesus said to love them? You bet it will. Will we be misunderstood? Constantly. But extravagant love often means coloring outside the lines and going beyond the norms. Loving the neighbors we don't understand takes work and humility and patience



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and guts. It means leaving the security of our easy relationships to engage some tremendously awkward ones.

We need to love everybody, always. It makes the math easy, but it also makes my stingy love more obvious. Truth be known, I only want to love the people I understand, the ones who are like me. Or, if they aren't like me, at least they're nice to me. But God didn't put that qualifier on who we're supposed to love. In fact, instead of loving people who are wonderful and loving and the ones we understand, I think God wants us to start with people we don't get.

Find a way to love difficult people more, and you'll be living the big life Jesus talked about. Go find someone you've been avoiding and give away extravagant love to them. You'll learn more about God, your neighbor, your enemies, and your faith. Find someone you think is wrong, someone you disagree with, someone who isn't like you at all, and decide to love that person the way you want Jesus to love you.

Jesus never said doing these things would be easy. He just said it would work.






## TWO

# Meeting Carol

*God doesn't just give us promises;  
He gives us each other.*



Shortly after Sweet Maria and I got married, we bought our first home. We got it at a foreclosure sale. It was more my idea than hers. Walking through the house after we bought it was the closest thing I've had to a near-death experience. Sweet Maria looked at me with her hands in her pockets and nodded in disbelief as we walked from room to room. Unconvincingly and with a hint of uncharacteristic sarcasm, she looked inside each of the ramshackle rooms and said, "Nice," from time to time as she shook her head in absolute denial. Translated, that meant, "We're still married, but just barely."

The house was in terrible shape. It was so nasty, the mice reported us. Rather than move in, we lived in a motorhome in the driveway while we made it habitable. After waking up with a steering wheel and a parking brake in our bedroom for a year, we decided we'd take a step down in our lifestyle and move from the



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car to the house. There was a heater, but it didn't work. There was a bathroom, but it didn't work either. The house came with twenty feral cats that were apparently afraid of rodents but not afraid to shed. With a spinning wheel and enough allergy medicine, I could have made a hundred really gross sweaters with all the cat hair we collected.

On the day of the move, I picked up Sweet Maria and carried her across the threshold. As I did, we both saw something move in the corner of the living room but pretended we didn't. This house wasn't much, but it was ours.

We fixed up the house and swapped it for another house and then another and then another. During the first ten years we were married, we moved six times. It was like being in the witness protection program, but we hadn't done anything wrong. After many moves and remodels, we were exhausted. One day after work, I drove home to the wrong house and walked in the front door. It got a little weird for a couple of minutes.

A short time later, I was at breakfast with a friend and overheard a guy in the next booth say he was planning on selling his house. I eavesdropped a little more on their conversation and learned his house was at the top of a cliff right above my favorite surfing spot in Point Loma called Garbage Beach. This surf spot had a very nice, workable right-breaking wave at low tide. Who wouldn't want a house there, right?

I slid into the booth next to the guy and told him I wanted his house. The guy at the restaurant and I worked out all the details over waffles. I did a lame move and threw in our china to seal the deal. *Sweet Maria's going to love it*, I thought as I drove home from the restaurant, having just traded the house she had poured her heart into for years for a house at a place called Garbage. I



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blindfolded Sweet Maria and drove her to our new home. I did the big reveal when we got there. I pointed out to my surf spot and then back toward the house a couple of times. I asked if she could believe what a smart guy I was.

She started quietly crying and told me in a very kind but direct voice that every marriage gets one of these kinds of mistakes. I had just used mine up. We moved in, and she did the same thing she does in the lives of people around her. She took the garbage I brought and transformed it into a life and a home for our young family. Our children had arrived two years apart up until that point. There was a much larger gap before our last child arrived.

Unfortunately, it wouldn't be my last mistake. A short time later, we bought another house, this time at a probate court auction. The auction was held at the courthouse, and quite a few people came to bid on the house. I've always had trouble sitting still, and while I was at the auction I pulled on my ear, scratched my chin, and wrinkled my nose. When I was done fidgeting, I guess we'd outbid everyone, so we ended up with the house.



A few years later, Sweet Maria told me she wanted to move from the house we were living in. There was a long, awkward pause while I mustered up the courage to sheepishly ask, "Can I come?" It's one of the few rules in our marriage—we agreed if Sweet Maria ever decides to leave me, she has to take me with her.

I started getting caught up in Sweet Maria's excitement about moving again and pointed at the house across the street. "That one's for sale. What if we move there?" Maria thought I was just too cheap to get a moving van, but the truth was—I was just too



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cheap to get a moving van. We bought it and put a For Sale sign in the front yard of our previous home to see what would happen. Within a day or two, five people wanted to buy our house. Because we were moving across the street, we weren't just looking for a buyer; we were looking for a neighbor. There's a big difference. You do business with buyers; you do life with neighbors.

We started boxing up our things. We put the small items in red wagons and wheelbarrows and put roller skates and skateboards under the bigger things like refrigerators and washing machines and me. All the while, we continued to interview people for the job of being our new neighbor.

Because I'm the honorary consul for the Republic of Uganda, the last thing we did when we moved in across the street was to raise the Ugandan flag over our new home. Not many people know this, but where the consul lives and the flag of Uganda flies, it's actually Ugandan soil. It's hard to believe, but our house is the diplomatic mission of a foreign country to the United States. I suppose if you mess up big enough in your life, you could come over and seek asylum at my house. When things happen at our home now, we don't call the police. We call the Feds, and agents come in black Suburbans and with lots of firepower. I've only called once, but it's pretty cool.

After meeting all the people who wanted to buy our home, our family unanimously picked Carol to be our neighbor. She was a standout. Carol was a widow in her early fifties. She was moving to San Diego to be closer to her family and was hoping to live near the bay. The Bible talks a lot about how we should care for widows. I don't think God did this just to be nice to them. I bet He knew we'd find out a great deal about ourselves if we did. We gave Carol a group hug as we all said, "Carol, welcome to the neighborhood."



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A few weeks later, we found ourselves in the blast radius of her stunning love and kindness.



In the decades that passed after we gave Carol the house keys, I would call her a couple of times a week to see how she was doing. Nobody should have to feel alone in the world. It's probably why God made so many of us, to make sure nobody would feel lonely for long.

As they grew up, our kids would run across the street to Carol's house to show her their art projects or tell her stories about how we used to let them play dodgeball in the hallway, having coined the game "hall-ball." They told her how our son Richard lost a frog in the living room and how our daughter, Lindsey, once officiated her brother Adam's marriage to a life-size Barbie at the house when he was four. With each story, Carol would put her hand to her mouth to half cover genuine expressions of wonder and amazement while giggling like a schoolgirl. Never satisfied with the kids' first attempt at their stories, she would beg them to tell her more—usually about the frog that got away. All the while, she would feed them mountains of cookies. Years later, when Richard married Ashley in our backyard, Carol sat next to us in the front row. She wasn't just a neighbor; she had become part of our family.

My phone calls to check on Carol were never long, but they were always meaningful. One day, I called Carol to see how she was doing, and she struck an uncharacteristically serious tone. Her voice broke a little as she said, "Bob, I just got back from the doctor, and she gave me some bad news. I have cancer." Her words hung over the phone like they were stuck in the wires. I was sad for



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Carol and could tell she was terrified. I thought for a second, then said, “Carol, I’m coming over with something.” No doubt, she was a little puzzled.

I rushed to RadioShack and got us two walkie-talkies. I set up one next to Carol’s bed, and I set up the other one next to ours. So Carol and I started talking exclusively on walkie-talkies. The first time I called her over the radio waves, I said, “Hello, Carol?” The walkie-talkie made that static sound they make in the movies. A few long seconds later, Carol’s voice came crackling over the radio. “Bob, is that you?” I laughed as I thought, *Who else would it be?*

Something happens when you’re talking on walkie-talkies. You get the same feeling when you connect two peach cans together with a string—you’re both instantly transformed into nine-year-olds. No one has cancer, nobody is alone, and no one is terrified anymore. Our houses became the tree forts; walkie-talkies were the cans. Carol and I talked for the next couple of years on the walkie-talkies. These walkie-talkies didn’t fix her cancer. Something much bigger happened—she wasn’t afraid anymore.

When some of Jesus’s friends were arguing about who would get to sit closer to Him when they got to heaven, Jesus told them unless they changed and became like children, they’d never enter the kingdom of God. I think what He was saying is we need a childlike faith to understand Him. That makes a lot of sense to me. It’s not acting childish that will get us to heaven. Plenty of people do that. It won’t be our big prayers and fancy language that will help us get there either. Big faith doesn’t need big words. We don’t need to make faith easier, because it’s not; we need to make it simpler, because it is. Children have mastered what most of us are just beginners at. One of the things about kids, in addition to their simple faith, is they aren’t afraid of the things many of us are afraid



of. Their curiosity about what they don't know outdistances their fears about what they do know.

Three words stand out to me in the Bible. They aren't big and deep and theological words, yet that's probably what makes them big and deep and theological. Here they are: *Be. Not. Afraid.* God whispered, *Be not afraid* to Joshua when he didn't think he was the right guy to take over for Moses; He shouted those same words to Abram before a big battle when He said He'd be his shield and great reward; and Jesus said these words confidently to a boatful of scared fishermen when He walked out to them on the water. *Be. Not. Afraid.* These words have exactly as much power as we give them in our lives. People who are becoming love experience the same uncertainties we all do. They just stop letting fear call the shots.

If we take to heart Jesus' words about having a childlike faith and not being afraid, they can move us from merely wishing things would get better for us to bearing up under the circumstances God actually gives us. They let us move from running away and hiding from our problems to engaging and embracing them. These words can fill us with quiet confidence and contagious hope. What's crazy is when we're not afraid and engage the world with a childlike faith, the people around us won't be afraid either. Hope and courage do the same things. When we let them, they'll spread like a cold. A good kind of cold.

Carol began a long and ferocious fight with cancer, which had laid claim to many parts of her body. But cancer could never touch her spirit for one simple reason: she wasn't afraid anymore. She was playing offense, not defense.

I gave Carol a ride to one of her chemotherapy treatments. We sat in heated chairs next to each other and laughed a lot. I brought



## Meeting Carol

little colored umbrellas to put in the chemo bags and asked the nurse to hook me up with a bag of my own. Carol and I pretended we were in Hawaii sitting by a pool. When you're together with someone you love, you get to decide where you are, even if it's different from where you actually are.

Carol made huge progress in the fight of her life, and she had more than a few setbacks too. During one of the turns she took early on, she ended up in the hospital for an emergency operation. After her surgery, I went to the recovery room. A snarl of tubes disappeared under the curtain surrounding Carol's bed. I found the nurse who was looking after Carol, turned on a walkie-talkie, and gave it to her to take to Carol. I snuck in and lay down on the other bed in her room behind my own curtain.

I sat quietly for several minutes and asked God again if He'd heal my friend and let her live. Then I turned on my walkie-talkie and whispered into it, "Hello, Carol?" It made the crackling static sound again. There was a long silence, and I could hear some fumbling around on Carol's side of the curtain. Then a weak voice said, "Hello, Bob? Is that you?" We both laid our heads back on our pillows and laughed through the tears.