

## LESSON EIGHT: THE FACE OF LOVE

Some days are disasters, broken, dreary, failures. You walk out of your place of work feeling low and depressed. As you get into your car, you sink into the driver's seat with a sigh. You've tried so hard to be a success, to please your boss, to be respected. You want to feel important, to be respected. Then you arrive home or pick up your child at the day-care center. As soon as your child sees you, he or she gets excited and runs to you, jumps into your arms for a hug. You discover that all the love you think you need to earn is right there in your arms. Your performance at work is unimportant. You have love offered as a free gift without any conditions.

**PRAY:** Father in heaven, You demonstrated Your love to us by sending Your Son, Jesus, into this world to be our Savior. Send us Your Holy Spirit to remind us to seek Your face always. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

**INTRODUCTION:** Carl Coleman was driving to work one morning when he bumped fenders with another motorist. Both cars stopped, and the woman driving the other car got out to survey the damage. She was distraught. It was her fault, she admitted, and hers was a new car, less than two days out of the showroom. Coleman was sympathetic, but he had to pursue the exchange of license and registration data.

She reached into her glove compartment to retrieve the documents which were in an envelope. On the first paper to tumble out, written in her husband's distinctive hand, were these words: "In case of accident, remember, Honey, it's you I love, not the car."

—Paul Harvey Jr., *Paul Harvey's for What It's Worth* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 31.

**BIBLE BASE:** Read Luke 7:36-50.

**DISCUSS:** (The following questions are for discussion. You may fill in the answers in the space provided.)

Why did the Pharisee invite Jesus to his house for a meal?

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What does it mean that the woman was a sinner?

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How did the woman gain access to the Pharisee's house?

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Why did the Pharisee refer to Jesus as "this man"?

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When Jesus referred to the two debtors, what point was He making?

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The woman took care of what Simon had neglected. Why?

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Why did Jesus say that her sins were many?

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Why did the other guests express shock that Jesus forgave sins?

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**CHALLENGE:** Make a private list of those people whom you find difficult to forgive. Develop a strategy by which you can develop ways to demonstrate God’s forgiveness and love to others.

**CLOSING THOUGHTS:** Many years ago, when a famine was bringing misery in Russia, the writer, Leo Tolstoy, passed by a bridge in Moscow where many beggars gathered. They were on the verge of starvation and were asking him for alms. Seeing a beggar, Tolstoy searched in his pocket for a coin, but discovered that he had nothing with him, not even a copper coin. Embarrassed, Tolstoy took the beggar’s hands in his own and said, “I’m sorry, brother. Don’t be angry with me. I have nothing with me today.” The thin face of the beggar became illuminated, and he said in reply, “But you called me brother—that was a great gift, sir.”

—Ronald E. Vallet, *Stepping Stones of the Steward* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 129.

Jim Arends of Trinity Lutheran Church in Spring Grove, Minnesota, tells of an old cartoon that pictures a preacher at the pulpit and a deacon sitting behind him with a grumpy expression on his face. The preacher says, “So until next Sunday, remember that God loves you, I love you, and Brother Al here is working on it.”

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Teach us to love, O Lord. Empower and equip us to love not just those who love us, but also to love the unlovable. As we bask in the glow of Your love, help us to seek Your face always. Help us not only to tell others of Your love and our love for them, but also by showing them the face of love. In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen.