

Published based on [Love Letters](#)

Love Letters

Do you keep little notes and cards that people have given you? I have notes from my husband and children and friends that I keep in a special place. I have messages on my phone that I don't erase. While I may not consciously think about the scripture "The power of life and death are in the tongue", my actions almost always tell me that it is true.

I have a note on my desk that my husband wrote to me this year. In fact, I have an entire box of love letters that he and I wrote to each other over 30 years ago when we were dating.

I keep a note in my purse that my son Andrew wrote to me for Mother's Day one year. I have a message saved on my phone from my son Elliott because it captures his sweet heart as he tells me he loves me. I keep a card from my daughter Kara Beth which expresses her heart for me. I have a note from my son Nathan that pictures his love for me. I have a card my brother wrote for me right before I got married.

My friends and I laugh at each others and say we are "wordy" girls or "wordsmiths". We love a good card or a book that reads us.

Maybe it is because I am a woman and women are sentimental. But I think it is more than that. I think it is the reality of our humanness. We need to hear words of love and affirmation, and we need to give them to others as well.

Some of my most painful memories are of words spoken to me. I remember being openly criticized in school for the way I walked because I was and still am somewhat "pigeon-toed". I blame that on being a twin. There wasn't much room in that womb!

I was often criticized for my southern accent. I remember my teacher in fourth grade ridiculing me for the way I pronounced "egg". She recorded me and made me listen and then made me pronounce it over and over again as I stood in front of my class. I still can identify with the pain and humiliation of the moment.

I remember the pain of my "boyfriend" in seventh grade writing me and telling me I was just too emotional to be his girlfriend. Of course, at this point it is so hilarious as I think about what 12-13 years olds are like and the fact that this guy was one of most emotional boys I ever met!

And I could go on and on, but you get the idea. All of you could also make a list of the life-giving words you received from someone and also the words that crushed your heart.

Sometimes I have felt that those words were too personal to share with anyone else. They were too revealing of my faults or too revealing of the deepest needs of my heart. So I read them in private and tuck them away so they are for my eyes only.

Interestingly I find that God doesn't have a problem with words as we often do. He has recorded the good, bad, and ugly words that paint a picture of the life-stories of His children and His enemies.

Yet the organized church has struggled to identify with this part of God. We frame His words oftentimes in ways that we can be comfortable with. We sometimes choose not to read His words if they are too disturbing to our level of comfort.

The acceptance of the Song of Solomon in what is considered to be the canon of the Scripture by the church has been a point of controversy throughout the history of the church because the words contained within are so raw and emotional and yes, even sexual. As the church we have wrestled within ourselves to accept the image of God as a passionate lover although we have identified the Bible as God's love letter to us. It seems that we want to cut out the sections of the love letter that are too revealing of the intensity of God's heart. We are uncomfortable with the way the Scripture uncovers what God says to be true of our own hearts. We are more readily accepting of a picture of God which says we are despicable sinners than a picture of God which says that we are the apple of his eye, His beloved, the desire of His heart.

So just as we sometimes hide our love letters or other intensely personal letters and messages so that no one else can read them, we have at times hidden God's love letters because we have been uncomfortable reading them or sharing this picture of His love with humanity.

Yet the more I discover God's heart, the more I find that the world rejects the image of God that we Christians often try to paint. What they want and desperately need is a God of passionate desires because we are all people of passionate desires. To hide that part of God's character from the world is a disservice to God; it is taking our box and trying to put God in it. Perhaps that is one of the significant reasons that lost humanity is not interested in our picture of God. We paint him as tame in his loving desires and yet, on the other hand, angry in his responses.

Yet God is the most desirable of lovers. He is always faithful. He always pursues the depths of our hearts. He always sees our intentions even when we don't get it right with our words and actions. He never runs from us. We can always look into His eyes because they are safe. Humanity is crying out for a God who can look into their souls and still love them.

I have been thinking about that a lot as of late. I have been thinking about how difficult it is for us to intensely look into one another's eyes for to do so is to offer others a view into our souls. We are not always pleased with what is inside us or we don't trust others to hold our hearts in their hands without hurting us. So we live in our boxes. We live behind walls. We will share parts of our hearts, but not all of our hearts. Life has taught most of us that it is just plain 'ole risky to be vulnerable.

And it is. We will be hurt at times, yet the dilemma we face is whether or not we had rather live in what we consider to be safety, not risking the pain that often comes in relationships, or will we live deeply engaging God and others?

One of the beautiful things about God is that he allows us to choose. He will not force us. He will not violate our humanity. He desires lovers who freely choose Him. So today I choose to read one of His love letters to me. I choose not to run from His intensity. I choose to lock eyes with Him and believe that in experiencing His passionate love for me, I can increasingly know His heart and my own. I am "naked and open" or as some versions state, "open and laid bare to the eyes of Him" Hebrews 4:13

How can we resist such a lover who sees all and loves completely?

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