

CAPTIVATING *Thoughts*

**Faith makes all things possible ...
love makes all things easy.**

DWIGHT L. MOODY

Love motivates. Love invites. Love secures. Love endures. Love is inviting. Love is a gift. Love protects. Love offers more. Love can be stirred. Love is restored, rekindled, and renewed. Love believes. Love overlooks. Love rewards. Love is patient. Love forgives. Love remains. Love corrects. Love is kind. Love hopes. Love redeems.

For God expressed His love for the world in this way: He gave His only Son so that whoever believes in Him will not face everlasting destruction, but will have everlasting life.

JOHN 3:16

Love is the source of mission & purpose. Love is the answer to our why.

– COACH ADAMS

The mission of C2C is to lead life transformation, facilitate family restoration, and support community healing.

Living from a Free Heart

Blog by Stacy Eldredge

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. – GALATIANS 5:1

Let me ask you, dear one, what would you love to be free from? Is it sorrow? Regret? Resentment, addiction, shame, fear, worry, doubts?

What would you love to be free to do? Live your life? Follow your dreams? Love with abandon? Worship God? Experience Jesus—follow him, know him, believe him?

We can be free. Jesus came to set us free.

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. (Isaiah 61:1)

If we look more carefully at this verse (one of his favorites), we see it involves two things: we must find healing for our brokenness, and we must find freedom from the strongholds the enemy has gained in our lives. You were born into a world at war, dear ones. Surely you are aware of this—your life is opposed. Your love is opposed. Your hopes, your

dreams, your friendships, your joy—all fiercely opposed. The sooner we come to terms with this, the sooner we can find victory.

God gave women a fierce heart; it is not only men who need to fight in the battle. Yes, yes—we ask Jesus to rescue us. We ask him to fight for us. But we have a role to play, and much of that begins with a choice to break the agreements we have been making with our enemy. He knows your wounds; he knows the story of your life. He knows what works—for some it is fear, for others it is shame or bitterness, envy, indulgence. Christ comes to free us, but we must participate in our freedom by breaking the agreements we have been making with our enemy.

It all begins here — with an internal choice to let Christ so invade our hearts that we cannot be held to any sort of bondage internally. We chose to love, to forgive; we choose not to fear; we choose life. ♥

Covenant of Silence Reflective Journal Exercise

What are you choosing that is limiting your freedom?

What area of your heart have you held on to, not surrendering to God?

Change Starts with Us

Change creates opportunity, fosters growth, and facilitates success. – Coach Adams

Anyone who knows me at all, knows I am a trail blazer and a refiner. So what does that look like in a real way?

Sadly it means I'm rarely satisfied. It's true. I'm always looking for a better, more efficient process, in order to deliver more for less. It's quite simple, in my mind, if I streamline, I get to add, bring, and do more!

That is exactly what has happened with the Team & ministry of Called to Change (C2C). We were blessed to add three new volunteers, each sharing their talents, skills, & story.

Nate Butler, founder of Comix35 out of Houston, is an artist and coach. Nate travels the world working with artists behind bars to put their talent and personal story into evangelistic visual literature (comic strips). Nate's drawing visuals during the MV Follow Up review blessed us all.

Cristen's two sisters joined us at this month's Captivating. Carrie, an artist, shares her talent with the ministry, and Kinsey shared a portion of her story. The response by the attendees was both moving & welcoming.

What does change look like for the ministry as an organization?

It looked like God's favor! We were able to put two additional units on our 2016 calendar.

It looked like our faith being stretched as we were tasked to deliver the 3-Day Experience in only two days! We are still amazed at how God did it.

What does change look like for me as a leader?

It means I'm headed to Cuba in November where I will learn from Prison Ministry "Generals". We will speak to 500 pastors & train 1,000 prison volunteers.

It means I travel to Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana Africa in late Jan. on behalf of COPE* for the purpose of planning the 2018 African Conferences.

It means I am being stretched to learn to do fundraising. Not my cup of tea, I like coffee! In fact, I prefer sharing what God is doing and let Him work out the provision! But you can't lead where you are unwilling to go.

I've always been happy to serve the one individual, the one class, the one unit, but God has other plans. Just like He said, "You will be the mother of many!" I may only have one child, but I have influenced many.

God is not human, that He should lie, not a human being, that He should change his mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise & not fulfill? NUM. 23:19

What has He said to you? What desires has He placed in your heart? ♥

In Defense of the Thank You

Blog by Stacy Eldredge

This isn't a vulnerable blog. It's an encouragement, or exhortation.

I just received the most lovely thank-you note in the mail. It made my heart so happy. I gave a gift, but they gave an even better one back to me. Thank-you notes do that.

After our wedding, 33 years ago (!), it took us three months to write all our thank-you notes. It seemed like they took FOREVER.

How amazing that we had so many to write! How incredible to be so blessed. When we got married we had nothing. We are still using the bounty we were given to help establish our home.

Writing thank-you notes has not been my strong suit. However, I'm trying to write them promptly so I don't forget, but I confess, sometimes they are written pretty late. I write them because I was taught to and I want to be

polite. And also because (thank you, Jesus!) I am growing in gratitude.

Ann Voskamp's book One Thousand Gifts really struck a chord with many people. The posture of being thankful is a soul-opening one. To see your life with a grateful heart opens up the possibility of a deeper connection with our good God and, dare I say it, the possibility to receive even more goodness from his generous hand! Being thankful takes our gaze off of what is wrong with us, our circumstances, and our world and places it on what is right. Ultimately, it turns our gaze to the Giver of all good gifts, who tells us in 1 Thess. 5:18 to give thanks in all things!

God loves a cheerful giver! 2 Cor. 9:10

He also loves a thankful receiver.

Col. 3:15

God's blessings may come as a surprise and how much you receive depends on how much your heart can believe. May you be blessed beyond what you expect!

Thank-you notes seem to have gone the way of rotary phones, and I've got to tell you, it's not progress. It's a regression we really need to stop.

There is something beautiful about receiving a hand-written note in the mail with stamp on it. Expressing your appreciation for a thoughtful (or even a strange) gift is important. You were thought of, planned on and given a gift. It cost them something. For heaven's sake, say thank you. Manners matter. Their hearts matter.

Okay, get out your pens and cards. Express your gratitude. Give your forgiveness. You'll be glad you did, and the receiver will be truly blessed.

Sing with a grateful heart. Write with one too. Exhorting done.

