

“Love Completely”

Dear Friend,

Living without regret is a bigger challenge than it sounds. I have been thinking about the very human conflict of accepting people in their uniqueness instead of attempting to change them. The Shooks note in their book, One Month to Live, that we fail to love completely because we are driven to change people instead of seeing their strengths and beauties. Perhaps these three ideas will help us refocus from the desire to change to the commitment to love:

- **Praise is more motivating than criticism** – In the misguided attempt to change others, we become critical. But through the motive of love, we recognize and praise that which is best in those we love.
- **The splinter and the beam** – Christ said before we attempt to take the splinter from someone else’s eye, we should remove the beam from our own. I think this means we each have a full time job dealing with our own flaws.
- **True love delights in uniqueness** – If we lived in a utopia where everyone was exactly the same – even if we were all perfect – how would our love for individuals be distinguished? Instead of attempting to change the uniqueness of others, we should be stimulated to love them for their uniqueness.

I hear someone reply, *“But the person I love has life ruining flaws! Do you expect me just to live with it?”* I am not suggesting that we facilitate the ruinous attitudes and behaviors of those we love. Yet, we must be realistic about our ability and responsibility to force our good desires on others. I am also saying that to live with no regrets requires us to confront how we love people when they are unlovable.

Yes it is challenging. And so I am grateful to God that I can call upon Him for help in a daily way as I attempt to love the people in my life completely.

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