

What is Love?

*We love because
He first loved us.
1 John 4:19*

Carrie Daws

What is Love?

DAY 1: Where are you today?

When you think about *love*, what's the first image that comes to your mind?

Now, think about one of your favorite people who also likes/loves you. How do you show love to them? How do they show love to you?

Finally, think about someone you really don't like. What do you think when you hear that God wants to deeply love and care for them just like He wants to deeply love and care for you?

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DAY 2: 1 John 4:7

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

Sometimes, the specific language Bible authors chose to use is very important. In this verse, *has been born* is the present perfect continuous verb form.

Has born is the perfect tense, indicating that at the point of our spiritual birth (the moment we ask Jesus into our heart and lives) we were born of God. Nothing else is required of us to become part of God's family.

John adds in the continuous verb *been* and then adds clarification with a conjunction and second verb *and knows*. All that fancy grammar talk means that the affects of your spiritual birth and the process of knowing continue to grow.

Think of it like this. When you were born (or adopted) into your earthly family, nothing more was required for you to be part of that family. The work, whether it was through the labor and birth process or through the legal system, had been done.

But, as you grew, the affects grew with you and the knowledge you had of your family grew. Think about how much more you understand belonging to your family now than you did when you were 5.

**As we grow and learn,
our knowledge of family also grows.**

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It works like that with God too. Even if we are loving right now with everything in us, the more we experience the realities of who God is and what He does for us and the more we learn about His incredible love, the more we are able to love and draw upon God's love so that we can love even more.

The fancy word for that is regeneration in Christ.

As the reality of that truth hits you, what comes to mind?

Which part do you most struggle to believe?

What is your favorite part of the truth of 1 John 4:7?

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DAY 3: 1 John 4:8

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Notice the words that John uses because they are important. Focus on the first phrase.

Whoever does not love

The word *does* is a singular present form of the word *do*. Dictionary.com defines it as:

1. To perform an act, duty, or role
2. To execute
3. To accomplish, finish, complete
4. To put forth; exert

The definitions go on but all within the same vein of thought. Each one requires a person's determination to perform, execute, accomplish, or exert effort.

So when John says, "Whoever does not love," he's saying that the person is choosing not to love.

In other words, love is a choice.

You may choose to love someone by hugging them, serving them, writing them a note, etc. Or, you may choose to not love them by ignoring them, refusing to make time for them in your calendar, or being outright rude to them.

The choice is always yours.

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I find that truth a bit uncomfortable. People I have purposely ignored or turned away from come to mind. As do people I dearly love but who never quite seem to fit in my busy schedule.

Who or what comes to your thoughts?

Do you hear God whispering anything to you? What is it?

Are you going to take steps to obey God's whisper, or will you tell Him why you can't obey right now? Be honest—He knows your heart.

If you are going to immediately obey, what is one thing that needs to change beginning right now?

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Books by Carrie Daws

Fiction: The Crossing series



Crossing Values

For years, Amber traipsed around the Northwest avoiding the skeletons in her closet. Job-hopping every few weeks, she refused to let anyone get close to her as she slowly made her way east. As winter plants itself firmly across the Rockies, she decides to take a chance on a job at a logging company with a family different from any she's ever known before.

Watching the family interact creates more questions than answers for Amber. Feeling like she's entered the happily-ever-after written at the end of fairytales, she watches for cracks in the façade. Surely as the days pass, the play-acting will cease and the real family will emerge.

Or could she be wrong? Could they truly be genuine? Could Faye understand the trauma from her past or Peter think of her as more than just the winter office help? Could this family really hold the key to what she's seeking?

Ryan's Crossing

After ten years, Ryan's found his runaway sister, Amber. Now, as he drives to meet up with her, his mind fills with the changes coming. Besides figuring out where she will fit into his life, a job change is on the horizon for him. But

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should he stick with small town life? Or should he move to Portland, Oregon?

Meeting the family his sister is marrying into only brings more questions. Maybe moving to nearby Portland is the better choice. But something about the town of Crossing calls to him. Is it the friendly people who openly accept him as Amber's brother or the cute brunette who happens to be sister of the groom?

As Ryan weighs the pros and cons, He decides to put God to the test. Will He answer? Will He let him know which choices to make? And what if Ryan doesn't like the answer?

Romancing Melody

Newlywed Melody Podell gives up everything she has ever known to follow her husband, a soldier in the US Army, across the country to his duty station at Fort Bragg, NC. Army life is not what she expected and she struggles to adapt to it and its constant call on her husband's time.

Soon after giving birth to their first child and dealing with her husband's deployment to a dangerous part of the world, tragedy strikes forcing Melody to travel back to home. Walking back into the lives of her old friends in Crossing, Oregon, is the last thing Melody wants to do, but could she be missing something? Is God really in control? Does He have a plan and a family for Melody in Fort Bragg?

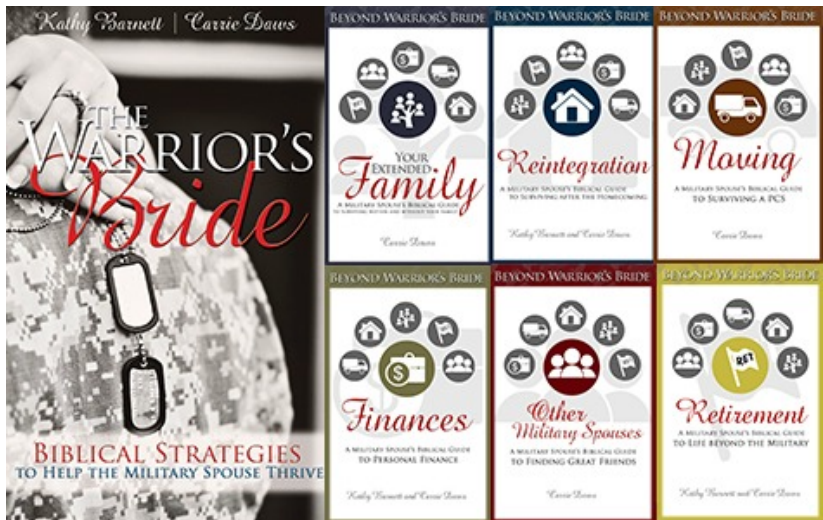
Crossing's Redemption

Many in Crossing, Oregon, would describe long-time resident Patricia Guire as an eclectic force to be reckoned with, one who speaks her mind. Yet something is changing. She seems to be dropping out of her normal activities, becoming scarce around town and less available to her friends.

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Amber Yager feels called to check in on Patricia. Yet as she spends time with her and discovers Patricia's hidden past, she is drawn in to a group that brings disquiet to her own soul, ripping open old wounds. Will the love she's found in *Crossing* be taken from her? Or could both Amber and Patricia finally find peace as God shines light into the darkest places of their hearts?

Nonfiction: The Warrior's Bride series



The Warrior's Bride: Biblical Strategies to Help the Military Spouse Thrive

The call came down from Command, and your warrior husband is out the door, leaving you behind to handle whatever he has left undone. Whether it's the day-to-day monotony, the inevitable appliance that breaks, or the months without his presence beside you, being a military spouse brings challenges few appreciate. Yet God sees you and longs for you to boldly step into His plan. He purposely chose you for this moment- for your man. He wants to give

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you abundantly more than what you have right now and desires you to thrive as your warrior's bride.

Beyond Warrior's Bride: Your Extended Family: A Military Spouse's Biblical Guide to Surviving Within and Without Your Family

Family. They can be one of our biggest blessings and one of our biggest stressors. Family members that don't understand the military system can complicate your life, and sometimes the best-intentioned relative can undercut everything you are trying to build with your husband.

Living far away can also be hard if you have a medical emergency. Deployments and high ops tempos give loneliness and depression the opportunity to take over. Are there really any practical answers? What does the Bible say about dealing with and living apart from family.

Beyond Warrior's Bride: Reintegration: A Military Spouse's Biblical Guide to Surviving After the Homecoming

Deployments are inevitable in military life. Short or long, relatively safe or extremely dangerous, time away from our men is standard issue. How can the family left behind best deal with the transition before and after deployment? And what should we do if he comes home different?

Those who deal with long separations due to a career know that the first weeks back can be trickier than when you first began living together as a couple, particularly if the mission was stressful or life-threatening. While the Bible doesn't specifically mention reintegration, God still gives us great advice on preparing our hearts and minds so that our marriage can thrive even through Reintegration.

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Beyond Warrior's Bride: Moving: A Military Spouse's Biblical Guide to Surviving a PCS

We've got orders! As many military spouses know, these simple words change your life. Whether you are moving just a couple of states over or around the world, a flurry of activity is about to consume your calendar. Where do you start? How do you begin to process all your emotions or prepare your children to say goodbye to their friends? How do you know if you need to host a yard sale or even what your weight limit is? Take a deep breath and know that help is available. This book and the free moving checklist will get you started in the right direction.

Beyond Warrior's Bride: Finances: A Military Spouse's Biblical Guide to Personal Finance

Money. It's one of the biggest stressors in marriages. Many live paycheck-to-paycheck, struggling to both cover all the bills and save for retirement. Often husband and wife disagree over petty expenses, forgetting that they are on the same team. But money doesn't have to be a constant battle. Not only does the Bible give a lot of guidance, but God also provided examples of people getting it right. With a shift in focus and a little disciplined effort, you can gain control over your finances instead of your finances controlling you.

Beyond Warrior's Bride: Other Military Spouses: A Military Spouse's Biblical Guide to Finding Great Friends

Other military spouses can be one of the biggest stressors in a wife's life. From gossipers to back-biters to spouse shamers, the problem is reaching epidemic proportions, and many don't know what to do about it. What if you could find a better way? Instead of attacking the problem-women head on or avoiding all women entirely, what if you could find women worth knowing and

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cherishing? No matter where you are, God placed around you women of great value, women who strive to love Him first, and women who want to love and encourage you. Instead of resigning yourself to a life of loneliness, let me show you who to avoid and what characteristics to look for in quality friends.

Beyond Warrior's Bride: Retirement: A Military Spouse's Biblical Guide to Life Beyond the Military

The years have been hard, filled with deployments, trainings, moves, forced flexibility, and uncertainty. Retirement finally looms, yet a fresh uncertainty takes hold. Gone are the days of someone telling you where to live and providing a house for you. No longer will someone tell your man where to go and what to take with him. Now all those choices are yours and his. Where do you start?

Among the plethora of options open to you, pieces of the military will likely always follow you. As your ETS (End of Time in Service) nears, learn from retired military spouses Kathy Barnett and Carrie Daws who have already walked the road you face. Make the journey forward a little easier by arming yourself with what they've discovered in retirement.