

Day One Meditation: Reduce Me to Love

1st Principle and Foundation

The Holy Spirit said to me with an outstretched stopping hand as I stood at the door of our house, now empty of my family,

"You are going to need help with this. Can I help you?"

Void of power to do anything to restore my wife and family to our home, the Spirit was asking my permission to do for me what I could not do for myself. I could not speak as the grief was too much, so I nodded my head in a plea for him to rescue me from the crushing weight of the loss of what matters most. Immediately, the Spirit reminded me of what my former Spiritual Father, Father Doug Lorig, would often say to me, *reduced t*

"Brendan, ask the Lord to reduce you to love."

Grace stirred in my heart to embrace the cross that was being handed to me. I knew that what lay before me was the path to holiness, which was for my sake, but more importantly, for the sake of my beloved and our children. That same path is before you if, in the midst of your brokenness from being separated from your from the one you love, you choose to walk on it. What you are facing in your loneliness and abandonment, maybe even betrayal, is the opportunity to learn a way to love beyond what you have known.

In response to what the Spirit brought to me, I said out loud, as if I were saying, "Be it done to me according to your word."

"Father, reduce me to love."

With that, these words of life-giving grace began to echo throughout my soul, constantly rising in my thoughts.

"Father, reduce me to love."

I would awaken in the night with a crushing sense of being alone. My lips could not hold back what was planted in my heart, and I would, again, say it,

"Father, reduce me to love."

Whatever you are facing in your marriage, be it divorce, separation, or living with a distant, non-involved spouse, I am sorry you are in this place. Your dreams and expectations of marriage are greatly falling short of what they should or could be. This is probably one of the most difficult things you will face.

I pray you are not hiding from the truth of the pain of your loss. Many choose this response, protecting their soul from the feelings of rejection or the dull, constant discomfort of being ignored. Your mind races to figure out exactly what happened, so you can fix it or at least understand it. Moments of insight come, but prove themselves to be fleeting. For hours, you could find yourself sitting before a screen, seeking to escape the hard reality in which you now dwell. Whatever you do, do not turn to the numbing and elating effect of a substitute relationship. Beware of inappropriate relationships with those of the opposite sex who are your age, or that of

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seeking emotional solace in your children. At the bottom of your soul, what you are longing for is to be at peace as your life is being tossed up and down in the unsettling reality of what once was, and is now beyond your any influence. Do not run away from the pain; face it and learn to live from it.

The fallen man, the carnal man, wants what it wants, and it wants it now. What it offers is limited to the supply and solutions of this world. Your resources will be of no avail. Dependence on the self to push and cojole to bring about your will is known as the flesh, and the flesh is opposite and opposing to God, whose supply and solutions are not of your making. This is a dangerous place, as it will cloud your heart, moving you to see the one whom your heart loves as your enemy.

You need God! As you squarely face the plan facts, there are moments when this is so clear to you, but then you move back to you wanting to do what you cannot. You need God! This is a realization of the truth that never changes. As what you thought to be sure crumbles through the fingers of your reach, your heart cannot but face the fact - "I need you, God."

To access the provision of God, which you desperately need, is to allow the ways of heaven to flood your soul to carry you along the only lasting way of peace, the Way of Love. There is no other stance that will satisfy your soul as you stand in this confusion and darkness. Without your heart dwelling in and living from love, you are faced with blame, anger, self-justification, and punishment of the very one you once so passionately loved.

Much in you will see the difficulties in your marriage as the place from which you must escape, rather than being the very thing which is offered to you by a loving Father so that you might love your spouse with a love that is beyond your ability, a love their Father and yours longs to give them through you. What is needed is what my Spiritual Father taught me, *".... ask the Lord to reduce you to love."*

Consider the process of reduction. Put to a constant, uncomfortable heat, all else becomes steam, leaving behind the essence of what one is making. `And so it is with your soul. If that which the Spirit is desiring to produce in you in the reduction process is removed too quickly from the fire, the concentrated flavors are lost in the watery substance that holds within that for which you hope will bring the flavor of goodness back to your life. Do not flee, even though it is painful. Remain in the difficulty, knowing that you can choose a gift that your spouse and family need by you being reduced to love.

I invite you, above all else you could or need to do, to allow this to become your constant prayer -

Father, reduce me to love.

This will protect you from your flesh, the carnal man, the fallen man, from taking charge, rising up to attack the one you vowed to love and honor all the days of your life. This is your opportunity to love beyond love's possibility to love and in this way of loving your spouse, fulfilling what God, your Father and theirs, has provided through the Sacrament of Matrimony.

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The next 40-Days will be a persistent call for you to fulfil the vows you made when you stood at the altar with the one you have cherished, turning your heart back to them, relying on the help of the Holy Spirit to love as the Father has called you to love His son/daughter.

Father, reduce me to love.