

Transformation Story – Learning That I Am Loved – Becky Spahr

It's funny how you can grow up hearing something over and over again and it still just doesn't sink in. I heard it a million times in Sunday School and before bed time: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so ..."

I've always known my parents and my family loved me. I knew my friends loved me. But somehow, deep down, I was living out the lie that I was unlovable. I knew cognitively that God loves everybody, but somehow I just was convinced he didn't love *me*.

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I didn't even know that I believed this, until one day I was reading a book called *Present Over Perfect* by Shauna Niequist. What she said was short but profound: "I used to believe, in the deepest way, that there was something irreparably wrong with me. And love was a lie. Now I'm beginning to see that love is the truth and darkness is a lie."

I read those words and it was like a shock of electricity went through me; Shauna put words to what I didn't even know I had been believing all this time.

I began to pray earnestly that I would believe the Truth. I started going through a short reading plan, pouring over Scriptures that told of God's great love. I compiled a list on the inside cover of my Bible, scrawling Scripture references on sticky notes and index cards to remind myself that this love was true. I wrote out and prayed through verses, focusing my mind on nothing but love, love, love. I took long walks and prayed and listened and sought. I knew that God was the only one who could change my mind on this matter; I couldn't make myself believe it.

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I struggled for about a month through this, but I didn't want to give up. I wanted to know in my heart what I knew in my brain. And then, Saturday, September 10, 2016: It was just an ordinary day. I was sitting in my bedroom in my corner chair, reading my Bible as I have a thousand times before. I was puttering along in Ephesians when I came across this small snippet of verses 17 and 18, "... *and I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power ...*"

And from those fourteen words, I got it. I understood. I couldn't tell you what changed. I really don't know what happened. I just read those words, "you, being ... established in love," and they came alive for me at that moment. It was as if the Lord told me He loved me, as He has a million times before, and this time, *I just believed Him*. The words, "I love you for no reason other than I love you," came to mind, and they stayed there. I actually believed it, and I still do.

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This is what revelation from the Holy Spirit looks like. Revelation changes lives. If I tell you God loves you, sure, you might believe me. But then there are those moments when you encounter Jesus. The Father. The Holy Spirit. And something within you just knows it's him speaking. And it finally clicks, and your eyes are opened, and you can never be the same. One word from God can literally change your entire perspective.

I won't say that I've never struggled with feeling unloved again, but it definitely hasn't been as hard to come back from or as long-lasting or as deeply rooted. I know with my head and my heart and my soul and everything else that I'm loved. Sometimes I can forget in my mind, or I find myself reminding my heart, but it

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doesn't take as long to remember. Some of it is surely tied to the fact that I desire marriage and that hasn't happened for me yet, some of it is tied to lies I believe about myself, and some of it is because I'm human and I just don't understand how a God so perfect and holy and awesome could love little ol' me so much.

But to ultimately know that I am loved has given me freedom to be myself. It's given me a confidence I didn't have before, and it's allowed me to rest with confidence in my Savior even when life gets hard.