Stalking Jesus: 1 John 3:11-20

1 John 3:18 “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and truth.”

In the book, “Love Does,” author Bob Goff begins by telling his high school story of experiencing love in action. You see, Bob decided to drop out of high school at the beginning of his junior year and make a move to Yosemite. Randy, Bob’s Young Life Leader, in an act of great love accompanied him. The duo set off in Bob’s VW Bug. Randy was “with” Bob the whole way. When Bob’s plan failed, there was no condemnation, no lecture, no laughing from Randy, simply an active love demonstrated through his presence and commitment to him. Upon returning back home, Bob discovers that Randy was on his honeymoon and yet chose to “be with” a foolish young man to actively show him the love of Jesus and support him.

Opening Question
What are characteristics of a person who only loves in word or talk? What are characteristics of a person who loves in deed and truth?

Reflective Thoughts
If we stalk Jesus rather than living the way He lived and loving the way He loved our lives can stay neat and tidy. However, if we lay down our lives for others the way Jesus laid down His life for us, our lives WILL become messy. Things might even be chaotic at times. When you consider what it might mean for you to love as Jesus loved, what thoughts do you have? Pay close attention to any fears that might arise, write them down and ask Jesus to help you overcome your fears.

Actively living out our faith requires us to be open to changes… changes in our priorities, changes in our schedules and changes in the way we view relationships. What changes would you have to make in your own life to be able to love in deed and truth? Talk about the changes with someone you trust and start with one small change this week.

In the book, “Love Does,” Bob Goff states, “I used to think knowing God was like going on a business trip with Him, but now I know He’s inviting me on an adventure instead.” Ahhhh, the business trip… luxury hotel, great meals, good entertainment, and perhaps even a little sightseeing along the way. Nice. We are bystanders. Adventure? We all know Adventure = Risk. The very nature of adventure means we don’t know what is going to happen next. Is your life an adventure with Jesus or are you a bystander? Every adventure begins with a wild kind of thought. Ask Jesus to help you identify one risk you can take this week to begin your new adventure with Him. Now, jump the cliff and take the risk!

Parting Thoughts
It is so easy to remain comfortable rather taking risks that put us in a place of unpredictability and seeming chaos. However, love for Jesus is more than a belief, more than conviction, more than gaining new knowledge. Jesus’ love is action. His love is active. JESUS’ LOVE DOES.
Love Revolution – Week Two


In the book “Love Does,” Bob Goff describes an audacious, persistent, totally “IN LOVE” young man named Ryan. Now, Bob had never met Ryan before the evening he came bounding up the path between Bob’s house and the Bay. Ryan begins a conversation with Bob in which he boldly asks permission to propose to his girlfriend on Bob’s back porch. A few days later, Ryan comes by again and asks if he could serve supper that night to his girlfriend. A few days later, Ryan comes by again and asks if he could have 20 of his friends make dinner in Bob’s kitchen and then serve supper. A few days later, Ryan comes by again…. Well, you get the picture. Turns out that Ryan and his girlfriend are served dinner by 20 friends, dance in the moonlight on Bob’s back porch, go for a ride in Bob’s yacht (captained by Bob himself!) AND have the Coast Guard shoot fireworks for them after she says “Yes” to Ryan’s marriage proposal. Talk about persistence!!

Opening Question
In Luke 18: 8 Jesus seems to be saying that the passionate, persistent kind of faith the widow demonstrated is rare. Why do you think this is true? Describe what influences us to “turn down” our persistence dial? Is it fear of rejection? Fear of failure? Too risky? Not politically correct?

Reflective Thoughts
“Love Does” by Bob Goff challenges us to think of Love as an action verb we choose to live out daily. Remember when you were “IN LOVE.” Perhaps it was that special woman or man… maybe, that kitten or puppy you got when you were in elementary school, or maybe even when you first fell in love with Jesus. Regardless, remember how everything in your life revolved around your LOVE. What changed? Where did your passion go? Take 15 minutes each day and ponder these questions. Be completely honest with yourself. Are you who you want to be?

In Matthew 22:37-39 Jesus basically says that all the Old Testament Law can be summed up in LOVE. Love God with everything you are and love your neighbor as yourself. It’s amazing. It sounds so simple. But, truth is, it’s often very complicated. First, not many of us can truly say that we LOVE, yes, really LOVE GOD with everything we are. We keep things hidden; we try to control our lives; we’re afraid of what God might ask of us. It’s hard to really love God with everything. Second, how many of us really love ourselves – just the way we are? If we can’t even love ourselves, then how can we really love our neighbor? Perhaps persistence is the key? Perhaps daily choosing to put LOVE into action by making persistent, intentional, conscious choices to love God, love ourselves, and love others will change us and the world in which we live. Identify one area in your life where your persistent love is needed. Write down what this active, persistent love looks like. Ask Jesus to walk beside you and guide your daily choices in this area.

Parting Thoughts
Both Ryan and the widow in Luke 18:1-8 allowed their passionate love to guide their persistent actions. The widow’s actions freed her and likely her family. Ryan’s actions resulted in the most outrageous, glorious engagement imagined. Wholeheartedly loving God and others causes us to cast aside our fear of rejection, fear of failure or political incorrectness, and simply ACT. Who in your life needs that kind of LOVE from you today? Make your plan. Remember LOVE DOES.
Writing a Love Story: Luke 7:36-50

In “Love Does”, Bob Goff writes, “I don’t think anyone aims to be typical, really. Most people even vow to themselves some time in high school or college NOT to be typical. But still, they just kind of loop back to it somehow. Like the circular rails of a train at an amusement park, the scripts we know offer a brand of security, of predictability, of safety for us. But the problem is, they only take us where we’ve already been. They loop us back to places where everyone can easily go, not necessarily where we were made to go.”

Opening Question
* We live in a culture where our every moment can easily be captured and distributed. Capturing moments is typical; writing a passionate love story is not. Take a few moments to think about your life. Are you capturing moments or writing a love story? How satisfied are you with your answer?

Reflective Thoughts
* Luke 7:37-38 describes a sinful woman, likely a prostitute, who, out of great love and gratefulness to Jesus, takes a very expensive jar of perfume and anoints Jesus’ stinky feet with it. Yep. That’s right. Chanel No. 5 on Jesus’ dusty, dirty feet. You see, love is just like that. It’s radical. It’s atypical. This sinful woman took a profound risk by ignoring all cultural norms and chose to demonstrate the depth of her love for Jesus. Think of the last few months. How have you shown the depth of your love and gratitude for Jesus? Was it typical? Will your love story be told for generations to come?

* In “Love Does”, Goff writes, “God decided to have us intersect history, not just at any time, but at this time. He made us to dream. We were meant to dream a lot. We’re not just a cosmic biology experiment that ended up working. We’re part of God’s much bigger plan for the whole world.” What are your dreams? What are your passions? What do you feel you were made to do? Write it down and share it. What keeps you from accomplishing this dream? What needs to change so that you can be all that God made you to be?

* For so many of us, we have fallen into a typical, safe, controlled “capturing the moments” kind of life. How do you move past typical to writing a “Love Story”? Bob Goff expresses it like this, “When I don’t know what to do to move my dreams down the road, I usually just try to figure out what the next step is and then do that. For most of us, that next step is as easy as picking up the phone, sending an e-mail, writing a letter, buying a plane ticket, or just showing up. After that, things start happening. Things that perhaps have God’s fingerprints on them. You’ll know which ones do and which ones don’t. Pick the ones that do.” What is your next step? Write it down, share it, then DO IT!

Parting Thoughts
* When you choose to intentionally write your Love Story, your life will be full of adventures with God’s fingerprints all over them. Is it risky? Sure, but when you are in LOVE with Jesus, your love can’t be passive. Your love will become an active, passionate, persistent love witnessed by everyone around you. Remember, LOVE DOES.
**Love Revolution – Week Four**  
*Based on the book by Bob Goff*

**Love Always Says YES: Ephesians 3:14-21**  
In the book, “Love Does”, Bob Goff describes a young law student named John. Upon graduation, John wants to live a life of extravagant love…off the map. John was in the “Yes” position. Bob invites John to go to war-torn Uganda and watch God show up. No real plan, just a strategy to go and make friends. The population in Uganda had an average age of fourteen and a half – a nation of uneducated children. Bob and John tried to work through the government officials to open a school, but bureaucracy won. Two months after their arrival in Uganda, Bob and John decided to open a school anyway. Today, Restore Leadership Academy has over 300 teachers and students on 40 acres. AND, the students test scores are the highest in the nation.

**Opening Question**  
When you read John’s story, what thoughts do you have? Could you ever see yourself saying, “YES!” to something “off the map” like John? Why or Why not? Write down your answers.

**Reflective Thoughts**  
Our world operates on some basic physical principles… Newton’s laws of gravity and motion, Archimedes’ buoyancy and Einstein’s general relativity to name a few. It is no surprise then that our spiritual lives would also be guided by principles. Regarding LOVE: The extent to which you have experienced Jesus’ unconditional love and acceptance is the extent to which you are able to unconditionally love others. In other words, you can only give what you have received. This is why the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:14-21 is on his knees praying for the Christians in Ephesus “to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ . . . so that they may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God”. Find 30 minutes to be alone with Jesus. Meditate on His love for you. How would your life be different if you knew, really knew Jesus’ complete and utter unconditional love and acceptance? Be still and listen. Write down His answer to you.

YES: an affirmative reply. It’s interesting though, inherent in saying “Yes” to something, we say, “No” to something else. If you say, “Yes” to full-time graduate school, you temporarily say, “No” to a full-time career. If you say, “Yes”, to marriage, you say, “No” to intimate relationships outside of marriage. If you say, “Yes” to Jesus, you say, “No” to your old sinful ways. If you say, “Yes” to housing a pregnant teenager because her parents disowned her, you say, “No” to living a comfortable, peaceful life. Jesus does not ask us to say, “Yes” to everything, rather, He asks us to stand with our palms open in the “YES!” position with an attitude of extravagant love that confidently says, “Jesus, I will do whatever you ask of me.” Take inventory of things you are currently doing. Write them down. Now, take your list and pray about each one. Do the things on your list reflect the extravagant love you have been shown? Be brutally honest. If not, what needs to change? How will you begin to change? Invite someone you trust to pray with you about this.

**Parting Thoughts**  
Bob Goff in the book, “Love Does” states, “We’re God’s plan, and we always have been. We aren’t just supposed to be observers, listeners, or have a bunch of opinions. We’re not here to let everyone know what we agree and don’t agree with, because, frankly, who cares? Tell me about the God you love; tell me about what He has inspired uniquely in you; tell me about what you’re going to do about it, and a plan for your life will be pretty easy to figure out from there. We get to be God’s plan for the whole world by pointing people toward Him.” Posture yourself in the “YES!” position and see how God uses you for the unique purpose for which He created you. Remember, LOVE DOES.