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"Over the years, I have come to realize that the greatest trap in our life is not success, popularity, or power, but self-rejection. Success, popularity, and power can indeed present a great temptation, but their seductive quality often comes from the way they are part of the much larger temptation to self-rejection. When we have come to believe in the voices that call us worthless and unlovable, then success, popularity, and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions. The real trap, however, is self-rejection. As soon as someone accuses me or criticizes me, as soon as I am rejected, left alone, or abandoned, I find myself thinking, "Well, that proves once again that I am a nobody." ... [My dark side says,] I am no good... I deserve to be pushed aside, forgotten, rejected, and abandoned. Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the "Beloved." Being the Beloved constitutes the core truth of our existence." — Henri J.M. Nouwen Henri Nouwen was a Dutch Catholic priest and one of the most influential spiritual writers of the 20th century. Through his famous books including *Life of the Beloved*, *The Wounded Healer*, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, and *In The Name Of Jesus*, Nouwen explored profound themes such as love, peace, gratitude, faith, God, and the importance of community. His insightful reflections on the human condition continue to inspire countless individuals seeking to live a more compassionate and fulfilling life. Here are the best Henri Nouwen quotes to guide you on your spiritual journey and foster personal growth. Born on January 24, 1932, in Nijkerk, the Netherlands, Nouwen was ordained as a priest in 1957. His passion for understanding the human psyche led him to pursue studies in psychology, which deeply influenced his compassionate approach to pastoral care and ministry. Throughout his distinguished career, Nouwen taught at prestigious institutions such as the University of Notre Dame, Yale Divinity School, and Harvard Divinity School. Despite his academic credentials, Nouwen found his true calling working with L'Arche, a community dedicated to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. His experiences at L'Arche shaped his writings, where he emphasized humility, empathy, and the transformative power of compassion in daily life. Nouwen's teachings have inspired readers worldwide helping them to embrace vulnerability, practice gratitude, and understand that our wounds can be sources of strength. So, if you are looking for answers to your questions, seeking solace, or wanting to make a deeper connection with the divine, then these powerful Henri Nouwen quotes will surely guide you on your path toward wholeness. Top 10 Henri Nouwen Quotes "Community is where humility and glory touch." — Henri Nouwen Henri Nouwen Quotes "Every time you reject yourself, you idealize others." — Henri Nouwen Quotes By Henri Nouwen "The only feelings that do not heal are the ones you hide." — Henri Nouwen Best Henri Nouwen Quotes "Our greatest fulfillment lies in giving ourselves to others." — Henri Nouwen Quotes From Henri Nouwen "The greatest trap in our life is not success, popularity or power, but self-rejection." — Henri Nouwen Famous Henri Nouwen Quotes "God is always in the moment, be that moment hard or easy, joyful or painful." — Henri Nouwen, Here and Now Henri Nouwen Sayings "What makes us human is not our mind but our heart, not our ability to think but our ability to love." — Henri Nouwen "You don't think your way into a new kind of living. You live your way into a new kind of thinking." — Henri Nouwen Henri Nouwen Quotations "Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day." — Henri J.M. Nouwen Inspirational Henri Nouwen Quotes "For Jesus, there are no countries to be conquered, no ideologies to be imposed, no people to be dominated. There are only children, women and men to be loved." — Henri Nouwen Inspiring Henri JM Nouwen Quotes "Forgiveness changes the way we remember." — Henri Nouwen "Joy is the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved." — Henri Nouwen "The spiritual life does not remove us from the world; it leads us deeper into it." — Henri Nouwen "Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them a space where change can take place." — Henri J.M. Nouwen "Pay attention to the people God puts in your path, if you want to discern what God is up to in your life." — Henri Nouwen "Gratitude is the most fruitful way of deepening your consciousness that you are not an "accident" but a divine choice." — Henri Nouwen "The fruits of your labors may be reaped two generations from now. Trust, even when you don't see the results." — Henri Nouwen "Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the Beloved." — Henri Nouwen "One of the main tasks of theology is to find words that do not divide but unite, that do not create conflict but unity, that do not hurt but heal." — Henri Nouwen "Community means that people come together around the table, not just to feed their bodies, but to feed their minds and their relationships." — Henri J.M. Nouwen "Every time we decide to be grateful it will be easier to see new things to be grateful for. Gratitude begets gratitude, just as love begets love." — Henri J.M. Nouwen "The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy." — Henri J.M. Nouwen "Once we deeply trust that we ourselves are precious in God's eyes, we are able to recognize the preciousness of others and their unique places in God's heart." — Henri Nouwen "The mystery of God's love is not that our pain is taken away, but that God first wants to share that pain with us. Out of this divine solidarity comes new life." — Henri Nouwen "In a world so torn apart by rivalry, anger, and hatred, we have the privileged vocation to be living signs of a love that can bridge all divisions and heal all wounds." — Henri Nouwen "Did I offer people today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love? These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and the life to come." — Henri Nouwen Famous Quotes By Henri Nouwen "This brief lifetime is my opportunity to receive love, deepen love, grow in love, and give love." — Henri Nouwen "Gratitude goes beyond the 'mine' and 'thine' and claims the truth that all of life is a pure gift." — Henri Nouwen "Our glory is hidden in our pain; if we allow God to bring the gift of himself in our experience of it." — Henri Nouwen "If you feel loved, you can do a thousand things. If you feel rejected, everything becomes a problem." — Henri Nouwen "Spiritual identity means we are not what we do or what people say about us. And we are not what we have. We are the beloved daughters and sons of God." — Henri Nouwen "Listening is a form of spiritual hospitality by which you invite strangers to become friends, to get to know their inner selves more fully, and even to dare to be silent with you." — Henri J.M. Nouwen "Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human." — Henri Nouwen "The real enemies of our life are the 'oughts' and the 'ifs.' They pull us backward into the unalterable past and forward into the unpredictable future. But real life takes place in the here and now." — Henri Nouwen "Who am I? Where have I come from? Where am I going?-are not questions with an answer but questions that open us up to new questions which lead us deeper into the unshakable mystery of existence." — Henri J.M. Nouwen "The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing... not healing, not curing... that is a friend who cares." — Henri Nouwen "We are called to be fruitful - not successful, not productive, not accomplished. Success comes from strength, stress, and human effort. Fruitfulness comes from vulnerability and the admission of our own weakness." — Henri J.M. Nouwen "Hope is willing to leave unanswered questions unanswered and unknown futures unknown. Hope makes you see God's guiding hand not only in the gentle and pleasant moments but also in the shadows of disappointment and darkness." — Henri Nouwen "Our life is full of brokenness - broken relationships, broken promises, broken expectations. How can we live with that brokenness without becoming bitter and resentful except by returning again and again to God's faithful presence in our lives." — Henri Nouwen "When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand." — Henri Nouwen "Solitude is very different from a "time-out" from our busy lives. Solitude is the very ground from which community grows. Whenever we pray alone, study, read, write, or simply spend quiet time away from the places where we interact with each other directly, we are potentially opened for a deeper intimacy with each other." — Henri Nouwen Best Henri Nouwen Quotes From His Books "The way to 'God alone' is seldom traveled alone." — Henri Nouwen, The Genesee Diary "It is God's glory that becomes visible in a loving community." — Henri Nouwen, The Genesee Diary "A spiritual life cannot be formed without discipline, practice, and accountability." — Henri Nouwen, Spiritual Direction "We must learn to live each day, each hour, yes, each minute as a new beginning, as a unique opportunity to make everything new." — Henri Nouwen, Here and Now "When we have come to believe in the voices that call us worthless and unlovable, then success, popularity, and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions." — Henri Nouwen, Life of the Beloved How can we prepare ourselves for our death in such a way that our dying will be a new way for us to send our and God's spirit to those whom we have loved and who have loved us?" — Henri Nouwen, Our Greatest Gift "The spiritual life is not a life before, after, or beyond our everyday existence. No, the spiritual life can only be real when it is lived in the midst of the pains and joys of the here and now." — Henri Nouwen, Making All Things New "Through this common search, hospitality becomes community. Hospitality becomes community as it creates a unity based on the shared confession of our basic brokenness and on a shared hope." — Henri Nouwen, The Wounded Healer "Each day holds a surprise. But only if we expect it can we see, hear, or feel it when it comes to us. Let's not be afraid to receive each day's surprise, whether it comes to us as sorrow or as joy. It will open a new place in our hearts, a place where we can welcome new friends and celebrate more fully our shared humanity." — Henri Nouwen, Bread for the Journey "It is into this deeply tired world of ours that God sends Jesus to speak the voice of love. Jesus says, "Follow me. Don't keep running around. Follow me. Don't just sit there. Follow me." The voice of love is the voice that can completely reshape our life from a wandering or just-sitting-there life to one that is focused and has a point to go to." — Henri Nouwen, Following Jesus "Home is the center of my being where I can hear the voice that says: "You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests"—the same voice that gave life to the first Adam and spoke to Jesus, the second Adam; the same voice that speaks to all the children of God and sets them free to live in the midst of a dark world while remaining in the light." — Henri Nouwen, The Return of the Prodigal Son "Maybe it is exactly the experience of loneliness that allows us to describe the first tentative lines of solitude. Maybe it is precisely the shocking confrontation with our hostile self that gives us words to speak about hospitality as a real option, and maybe we will never find the courage to speak about prayer as a human vocation without the disturbing discovery of our own illusions." — Henri Nouwen, Reaching Out "For all ministers are called to recognize the sufferings of their time in their own hearts, and make to that recognition the starting point of their service. Whether we try to enter into a dislocated world, relate to a convulsive generation, or speak to a dying world, our service will not be perceived as authentic unless it becomes from a heart wounded by the suffering about which we speak." — Henri Nouwen, The Wounded Healer Conclusion What are your favorite Henri Nouwen quotes and sayings (with images, posters, and pictures) that has inspired you the most? If there is a quote that we've missed then let us know in the comments section what your thoughts are. So, feel free to share with friends and family on Facebook, Tumblr, X, Pinterest, Instagram, WhatsApp, and more to spread positive vibes. Enjoy reading and share 22 famous quotes about Henri Nouwen Life Of The Beloved with everyone. Am I afraid to die? I am every time I let myself be seduced by the noisy voices of my world telling me that my "little life" is all I have and advising me to cling to it with all my might. But when I let these voices move to the background of my life and listen to that small soft voice calling me the Beloved, I know that there is nothing to fear and that dying is the greatest act of love, the act that leads me into the eternal embrace of my God whose love is everlasting. — Henri J.M. Nouwen Every time we make the decision to love someone, we open ourselves to great suffering, because those we most love cause us not only great joy but also great pain. The greatest pain comes from leaving. When the child leaves home, when the husband or wife leaves for a long period of time or for good, when the beloved friend departs to another country and dies ... the pain of the leaving can tear us apart.Still, if we want to avoid the suffering of leaving, we will never experience the joy of loving. And love is stronger than fear, love stronger than despair. We have to trust that the risk of loving is always worth taking. — Henri J.M. Nouwen A love for humanity came over me, and watered and fertilised the fields of my inner world which had been lying fallow, and this love of humanity vented itself in a vast compassion. — Georg Brander Home is the center of my being where I can hear the voice that says: "You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests" - the same voice that gave life to the first Adam and spoke to Jesus, the second Adam; the same voice that speaks to all the children of God and sets them free to live in the midst of a dark world while remaining in the light. — Henri Nouwen In Genesis 3 the fire keeps the man who is under the curse away from the tree of life, away from God as the source of life, but in Exodus 3 the flame of fire visits the thornbush and indwells it. This indicates that through the redemption of Christ the very God Himself, the holy One whose holiness excludes sinners from His presence, can come to visit us, to stay with us, and even to dwell in us. Hallelujah, Christ has taken away the curse and has cast down to earth the fire of the Holy Spirit! Now that the curse has been taken away, we are no longer excluded from God as life. — Witness Lee When I wake up each morning, I praise the Lord for the gift of being alive. — Lalah Gifty Akita I kept running around in large or small circles, always looking for someone or something able to convince me of my Belovedness.Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the "Beloved!" Being the Beloved expresses the core truth of our existence. — Henri J.M. Nouwen Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the "Beloved." — Henri Nouwen The closer I get back to being who I really am, the stronger the music gets. — Billy Corgan Kissing is much easier than smoking. — Kieran Shipka As those who are chosen, blessed, broken, and given, we are called to live our lives with a deep inner joy and peace. It is the life of the Beloved, lived in a world constantly trying to convince us that the burden is on us to prove that we are worthy of being loved. — Henri Nouwen Genius? Nothing! Sticking to it is the genius! ... I've failed my job. — Thomas A. Edison But what I would like to say is that the spiritual life is a life in which you gradually learn to listen to a voice that says something else, that says, "You are the beloved and on you my favour rests." ... I want you to hear that voice. It is not a very loud voice because it is an intimate voice. It comes from a very deep place. It is soft and gentle. I want you to gradually hear that voice. We both have to hear that voice and to claim for ourselves that that voice speaks the truth, our truth. It tells us who we are. — Henri Nouwen It's a required part of your film history to know who Woody is. His movies are so wonderful, and not just funny but so insightful about human behavior. — Scarlett Johansson This love was tricky; it had no hard-and-fast rules - it might be given for free, as with Jamie, or earned through time and hard work, as with Ian, or completely and heartbreakingly unattainable, as with Jared. Or - Stephanie Meyer If it is true that we not only are the Beloved, but also have to become the Beloved; if it is true that we not only are children of God, but also have to become children of God; if it is true that we not only are brothers and sisters, but also have to become brothers and sisters . . . if all that is true, how then can we get a grip on this process of becoming? If the spiritual life is not simply a way of being, but also a way of becoming, what then is the nature of this becoming? — Henri J.M. Nouwen There were so many ways he could have answered her snarky question. But sometimes, direct worked best. Leaning forward, he hooked a finger in the waistband of her pants and tugged. She stepped forward without hesitation and met his mouth with hungry lips.Well, hello I... [She wound her hands into his hair, arching against him so that her thighs pressed against his. With the added height from her heels, everything lined up perfectly. Center to center, mouth to mouth, heart to heart. — Carl Quinn Solitude is listening to the voice that calls you the beloved. It is being alone with the one who says, "You are my beloved, I want to be with you. Don't go running around, don't start to prove to everybody that you're beloved. You are already beloved". That is what God says to us. Solitude is the place where we go in order to hear the truth about ourselves. It asks us to let go of the other ways of proving which are a lot more satisfying. The voice that calls us the beloved is not the voice that satisfies the senses. That's what the whole mystical life is about; it is beyond feelings and beyond thoughts. — Henri J.M. Nouwen Dear friends, I want you to hear this: what is said of Jesus is said of you. I know this can be hard to affirm. You are the beloved daughter or son of God. Can you believe it? Can you hear it not only in your head through your physical ears but in your gut, hear it so that your whole life can be turned around? Go to the scriptures and read: "I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have written your name in the palm of my hand from all eternity. I have molded you in the depths of the earth and knitted you in your mother's womb. I love you. I embrace you. You are mine and I am yours and you belong to me." You have to hear this, because if you can hear this divine voice speak to you from all eternity, then your life will become more and more the life of the beloved, because that is who you are. — Henri J.M. Nouwen If you lead an active intellectual and emotional life, your ideas will grow with you. — Scott Brinkun And I would discover how much of life is defined by what you want to keep and what you are forced to lose. — Cristina Henríquez Over the years, I have come to realize that the greatest trap in our life is not success, popularity, or power, but self-rejection. Success, popularity, and power can indeed present a great temptation, but their seductive quality often comes from the way they are part of the much larger temptation to self-rejection. When we have come to believe in the voices that call us worthless and unlovable, then success, popularity, and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions. The real trap, however, is self-rejection. As soon as someone accuses me or criticizes me, as soon as I am rejected, left alone, or abandoned, I find myself thinking, "Well, that proves once again that I am a nobody." ... [My dark side says,] I am no good... I deserve to be pushed aside, forgotten, rejected, and abandoned. Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the "Beloved." Being the Beloved constitutes the core truth of our existence. — Henri J.M. Nouwen "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is My Body."—Matthew 26:26 I spent last week reflecting on some of my favorite quotes from my latest spiritual reading book, Henri Nouwen's "Life of the Beloved," and I'd like to continue along the same lines with this next post. In my last post, I drew from the majority of the book, focusing on the idea of being God's Beloved. This week, I'd like to focus on a very particular section of his book. At the beginning of "Life of the Beloved," Nouwen spends some time reflecting on the Beloved of God in whose divine Image we have all been created: Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the Gospel story of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, witnesses hear a voice coming from heaven that exclaims, "This is my Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). We are all Beloved sons and daughters of the Lord who have been made in the Image and Likeness of God Himself. As such, we are meant to live like Christ. And how did He manifest His 'Belovedness,' as Nouwen calls it? By being taken, blessed, broken, and given. That's how we are meant to love as well. Nouwen goes on to explore these four themes throughout several chapters of "Life of the Beloved," and I've selected a few of my favorite quotes from this part of his book. Taken: "The greatest spiritual battle begins- and never ends- with the reclaiming of our chosenness. Long before any human being saw us, we are seen by God's loving eyes. Long before anyone heard us cry or laugh, we are heard by our God who is all ears for us. Long before any person spoke to us in this world, we are spoken to by the voice of eternal love" (48-49). "The limited, sometimes broken, love of those who share our humanity can often point us to the truth of who we are: precious in God's eyes. This truth is not simply an inner reality that emerges from our center. It is also a truth that is revealed to us by the One who has chosen us" (50). "When we keep claiming the light, we will find ourselves becoming more and more radiant" (52). "Deep friendship is a calling forth of each other's chosenness and a mutual affirmation of being precious in God's eyes" (54). Blessed: "The blessings that we give to each other are expressions of the blessing that rests on us from all eternity. It is the deepest affirmation of our true self. It is not enough to be chosen. We also need an ongoing blessing that allows us to hear in an ever-new way that we belong to a loving God who will never leave us alone, but will remind us always that we are guided by love on every step of our lives" (59). "The real 'work' of prayer is to become silent and listen to the voice that says good things about us. This might sound self-indulgent, but, in practice, it is a hard discipline. I am so afraid of being cursed, of hearing that I am no good or not good enough, that I quickly give in to the temptation to start talking and to keep talking in order to control my fears. To genuinely push aside and silence the many voices that question my goodness and to trust that I will hear a voice of blessing...that demands real effort" (62). I think this is particularly pertinent to our culture, in a way that might not have been the case in times past. More often than not, we are being pushed to work harder, to play better, to be smarter, prettier, faster, etc., and until we are, we're just not good enough. We're not worth as much. And somehow, we just never seem to be 'enough' for this world. It's no wonder that we seem to live in a perpetual state of fear in our society, since there is always the voice whispering that we aren't worth as much if we can't become better, prettier, faster, smarter, etc. Our worth is directly related to our ability to produce. We are objects to be used, and then disregarded when we cease to serve a purpose. And if worth is associated with what we can do and not who we are, it can be taken away, and that scares us. We will live in fear until we choose to stop listening to the lies that society feeds us, if we stop listening to that little voice that is constantly telling us that we are not good enough. In the silence, God speaks, and He tells us that we are good, that we have worth, that we are loved. But before we can hear that, we must quiet our fears and silence our hearts so that God can speak to us. "Not claiming your blessedness will lead you quickly to the land of the cursed. There is little or no neutral territory between the land of the blessed and the land of the cursed. You have to choose where it is that you want to live, and that choice is one thing that you have to keep making from moment to moment" (66). "Claiming your own blessedness always leads to a deep desire to bless others" (67). Broken: "Our brokenness is truly ours. Nobody else's. Our brokenness is as unique as our chosenness and our blessedness. The way we are broken is as much an expression of our individuality as the way we are taken and blessed" (71). "The deep truth is that our human suffering need not be an obstacle to the joy and peace we so desire, but can become, instead, the means to it. The great secret of the spiritual life, the life of the Beloved Sons and Daughters of God, is that everything we live, be it gladness or sadness, joy or pain, health or illness, can all be part of the journey toward the full realization of our humanity" (77). "When we keep listening attentively to the voice calling us the Beloved, it becomes possible to live our brokenness, not as a confirmation that we are worthless, but as an opportunity to purify and deepen the blessing that rests upon us...[G]reat and heavy burdens become light and easy when they are lived in the light of the blessing. What seemed intolerable becomes a challenge. What seemed a reason for depression becomes a source of purification. What seemed rejection becomes a way to a deeper communion" (79). Given: "Our greatest fulfillment lies in giving ourselves to others" (85). "True joy, happiness, and inner peace come from the giving of ourselves to others. A happy life is a life for others" (87). "As the Beloved ones, our greatest fulfillment lies in becoming bread for the world" (89). As the Body of Christ, is it any surprise that we too should be taken, blessed, broken, and given to the world? Having been made in the Image of the Beloved Son of God, is it any surprise that like Him, we should become bread for the world? As I've mentioned many times in the past, the world is starving for Christ. It is empty, longing to be filled. It knows well the feeling of hunger, but it does not know where to go for food. Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life who has come into the world so that the world might have life. We were dead, but Christ can give eternal life, if we would just accept it from Him. He has offered Himself, the blessed Son of God, to be broken and given to the world for food. But to be filled, we must follow Him. We must do as He did. We too must be taken, blessed, broken, and given if we are to have life within us. Do you accept your place as a chosen child of God? Do you accept God's blessing in your life? Do you accept your brokenness as something that draws you closer to Christ? And finally, are you ready to give yourself? As a closing thought, meditate on this: God has called us all to give ourselves, but we cannot give what we do not have. In order to give ourselves, we must have something to offer. What do you have to offer the world? Mary Help of Christians, pray for us! A Nouwen classic. Nouwen began writing this book in 1990 in response to his friend Fred Bratman's suggestion that he write a book about spirituality for people in secularized society who were wondering "what is life all about after all." Nouwen writes in his prologue: "He was asking me to respond to the great spiritual hunger and thirst that exist in countless people who walk the streets of big cities." The result is a book written in the form of a letter to Fred and his friends about Nouwen's signature insight that we are all the beloved children of God and that we can live our lives trusting in this truth of our identity. Bratman found the book too religious for his secular vision of the world, but this book has touched thousands of readers and continues to be one of Nouwen's best-selling books. Themes: Identity, Spiritual Life, Reality, God's Presence, The Sacred, Secularity, Identity, Being the Beloved, Suffering, Self-rejection, Arrogance, Burn-out, 'Digging' for God, True inner freedom, Claiming the truth of who we are, Becoming, Second innocence, Second childhood, Movements of the Spirit of love, Taken, Blessed, Given, Gratitude, Spiritual disciplines, Blessing, Moodiness, Prayer, Silence, The ear of faith, The ear of the inner heart, Eknath Easwaran, Mantra, Cultivation of presence/Attentiveness to blessings, Adam, Blessing of the cursed, Brokenness, Suffering, Secularity, AIDS crisis, Befriending brokenness, Real care, Living under the curse, Joy, Addictions, Nathan Ball, Interpersonal addiction, Dependency, Leonard Bernstein, Meals together, Giving oneself in life, Giving oneself in death, Talents and gifts, Handicapped people, L'Arche, Death and dying, Murray McDonnell, Pauline Vanier, St. Francis, Fruitfulness, Unified reality, Divisions and wholeness, Eternity Crossroad, 1992 Excerpts: "All I want to say to you is "You are the Beloved," and all I hope is that you can hear these words as spoken to you with all the tenderness and force that love can hold. My only desire is to make these words reverberate in every corner of your being — "You are the Beloved". (p.30) "Although it remains true that everyone has to learn for himself or herself, I still believe that we can prevent those who love from making the mistakes we did. In the terrain of the spiritual life, we need guides. In the pages that I know want to write you, I would like to be your guide. I hope you are still interested in walking along." More Reviews: "Nouwen's prose is refreshingly straightforward and jargon-free. . . For those unfamiliar with his work, this latest volume is a wonderful place to begin. For others who have benefited from Nouwen's insights, Life of the Beloved will be welcomed as yet another significant achievement." —Circuit Rider "Gentle and searching. This Crossroad book is a spiritual primer for anyone seeking God." —The Other Side "A beautiful and sensitive book that reaches out to the believer." —Church and Synagogue Library Association Moment to Breathe from Episode 32 "The Beloved of God" Aren't you, like me, hoping that some person, thing, or event will come along to give you that final feeling of inner well being you desire? Don't you often hope: "Maybe this book, idea, course, trip, job, country, or relationship will fulfill my deepest desire." . . . But as long as you are waiting for that mysterious moment you will go on running header skelter, always anxious and restless, always lustful and angry, never fully satisfied. You know that this is the compulsiveness that keeps us going and busy, but at the same time makes us wonder whether we are getting anywhere in the long run. This is the way to spiritual exhaustion and burnout. This is the way to spiritual death. Well, you and I don't have to kill ourselves. We are the Beloved. We are intimately loved, long before our parents, teachers, spouses, children, and friends loved or wounded us. That's the truth of our lives. That's the truth I want you to claim for yourself. That's the truth spoken by the voice that says, "You are my Beloved." Listening to that voice with great inner attentiveness, I hear at my center, "You are my Beloved." I have called you by name, from the very beginning. You are mine and I am yours. You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests. I have molded you in the depths of the earth and knit you together in your mother's womb. I have carved you in the palms of my hands and hidden you in the shadow of my embrace. I look at you with infinite tenderness and care for you with care more intimate than that of a mother for her child. I have counted every hair on your head and guided you at every step. Wherever you go, I go with you, and wherever you rest, I keep watch. I will give you food that will satisfy all your hunger and drink that will quench all your thirst. I will not hide my face from you. You know me as your own as I know you as my own. You belong to me. I am your father, your mother, your brother, your sister, your lover, and your spouse...yes, even your child...wherever you are I will be. Nothing will ever separate us. We are one." Henri Nouwen (an excerpt from Life of the Beloved) "First of all, you have to keep unmasking the world about you for what it is: manipulative, controlling, power-hungry, and, in the long run, destructive. The world tells you many lies about who you are, and you simply have to be realistic enough to remind yourself of this. Every time you feel hurt, offended, or rejected, you have to dare to say to yourself: "These feelings, strong as they may be, are not telling me the truth about myself. The truth, even though I cannot feel it right now, is that I am the chosen child of God, precious in God's eyes, called the Beloved from all eternity, and held safe in an everlasting belief." — Henri J.M. Nouwen, Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human. Nobody escapes being human. We are all wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not, 'How can we hide our wounds?' so we don't have to be embarrassed, but 'How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?' When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers. When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares. Page 2 Real grief is not healed by time. . . if time does anything, it deepens our grief. The longer we live, the more fully we become aware of who she is for us, and the more intimately we experience what her love meant for us. Real, deep love is, as you know, very unobtrusive, seemingly easy and obvious, and so present that we take it for granted. Therefore, it is only in retrospect - or better, in memory - that we fully realize its power and depth. Yes, indeed, love often makes itself visible in pain. Jesus has to be and become ever more the center of my life. It is not enough that Jesus is my teacher, my guide, my source of inspiration. It is not even enough that he is my companion on their journey, my friend and my brother. Jesus must become the heart of my heart, the fire of my life, the love of my soul, the bridegroom of my spirit. He must become my only thought, my only concern, my only desire. Forgiveness changes the way we remember. Page 3 Your heart is greater than your wounds. Life is precious. Not because it is unchangeable, like a diamond, but because it is vulnerable, like a little bird. To love life means to love its vulnerability. asking for care, attention, guidance, and support. Life and death are connected by vulnerability. The newborn child and the dying elder both remind us of the preciousness of our lives. Let's not forget the preciousness and vulnerability of life during the times we are powerful, successful, and popular. Page 4 Joy is what makes life worth living, but for many joy seems hard to find. They complain that their lives are sorrowful and depressing. What then brings the joy we so much desire? Are we people just lucky, while others have run out of luck? Strange as it may sound, we can choose joy. Two people can be part of the same event, but one may choose to live it quite differently than the other. One may choose to trust that what happened, painful as it may be, holds a promise. The other may choose despair and be destroyed by it. What makes us human is precisely this freedom of choice. Henri J. M. Nouwen (2009). "Bread for the Journey: A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith", p.30, Harper Collins Page 5 Of one thing I am sure. Complaining is self-perpetuating and counterproductive. Whenever I express my complaints in the hope of evoking pity and receiving the satisfaction I so much desire, the result is always the opposite of what I tried to get. A complainer is hard to live with, and very few people know how to respond to the complaints made by a self-rejecting person. The tragedy is that often, the complaint, once expressed, leads to that which is most feared: further rejection. Henri J.M. Nouwen (2016). "The Return of the Prodigal Son Anniversary Edition: A Special Two-in-One Volume, including Home Tonight", p.80, Convergent Books Page 6 Page 7 Page 8 Through prayer we can carry in our heart all human pain and sorrow, all conflicts and agonies, all torture and war, all hunger, loneliness and misery, not because of some psychological or emotional capacity, but because God's heart has become one with ours. Henri J. M. Nouwen (2016). "The Spiritual Life: Eight Essential Titles by Henri Nouwen", p.36, HarperCollins Page 9 Forgiveness indeed heals memories One of the experiences of prayer is that it seems that nothing happens. But when you start with it and look back over a long period of prayer, you suddenly realize that something has happened. What is most close, most intimate, most present, often cannot be experienced directly but only with a certain distance. When I think that I am only distracted, just wasting my time, something is happening to immediate for knowing, understanding, and experiencing. Only in retrospect do I realize that something very important has taken place. Page 10 Page 11 All the great spiritual leaders in history were people of hope. Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Mary, Jesus, Rumi, Gandhi, and Dorothy Day all lived with a promise in their hearts that guided them toward the future without the need to know exactly what it would look like. Let's live with hope. Henri J. M. Nouwen (2009). "Bread for the Journey: A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith", p.16, Harper Collins Page 12 Page 13 Page 14 Page 15 Page 16 Page 17 Page 18 Page 19 in our production-oriented society, being busy, having an occupation, has become one of the main ways, if not the main way, of identifying ourselves. Without an occupation, not just our economic security but our very identity is endangered. "The Essential Henri Nouwen" by Henri Nouwen" (p. 152), 2009. Page 20 January 9, 2022 by Father Richard Conlin "All I want to say to you is "You are the Beloved," and all I hope is that you can hear these words as spoken to you with all the tenderness and force that love can hold. My only desire is to make these words reverberate in every corner of your being — "You are the Beloved." (30) Claiming the truth: Each of us has already been noticed, chosen, and taken by God to be "the Beloved" in a totally unique, precious, and non-competitive way. This is the core truth of our Baptismal identity. Rejecting the lie: "Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the "Beloved." (33) Self-rejection is a lie that makes us believe that we are no good, ugly, worthless, despicable, nobody - unless we can prove the opposite. As a result, we must reject this voice.Reflection Questions: Have you claimed being "the Beloved" as the core truth of your life? Have you experienced how being "the Beloved" has impacted the way you think and behave? "When our deepest truth is that we are the Beloved and when our greatest joy and peace come from fully claiming that truth, it follows that this has to become visible and tangible in the ways we eat and drink, talk and love, play and work" (47). Claiming the truth: "It is not enough to be chosen. We also need an ongoing blessing that allows us to hear in an ever-new way that we belong to a loving God who will never leave us alone, but will remind us always that we are guided by love on every step of our lives" (72). As fearful, anxious, insecure human beings, we need to be blessed. In Latin, to bless is benedicere, which literally means to speak (dicere) well (bene) of someone. We do this by speaking words of affirmation. "To give a blessing is to affirm, to say "yes" to a person's words, to be more than that. To give a blessing creates the reality of what it speaks... A blessing touches the original goodness of the other and calls forth his or her Belovedness" (69). Rejecting the lie: Often, instead of feeling blessed, we feel cursed. We feel like victims of a world that we cannot change. But these curses are lies. The best way to reject the curses is by claiming the blessing both for yourself (eg. Repeat slowly, "I am the Beloved") and for to bless others ("The blessed one always blesses" (82).Reflection Questions: When's the last time someone gave you a real blessing, that spoke about your Belovedness? If you can remember, how did you feel about that? And when's the last time you gave someone else a blessing, that revealed their Belovedness? How did you feel about that? "The greatest gift my friendship can give to you is the gift of your Belovedness. I can give that gift only insofar as I have claimed it for myself. Isn't that what friendship is all about: giving to each other the gift of our Belovedness?" (30) Claiming the truth: We are broken people living in a broken world. We must be-friend this world, claim this fact, and face the pain. Second, we must put it under the blessing to allow our Belovedness to touch our brokenness and thereby allow our brokenness to become a blessing.Rejecting the lie: We must reject the lie that brokenness is a barrier to being chosen and blessed. And remove the brokenness under the curse. Reflection Questions: Do you see your brokenness as a barrier to being chosen and blessed? Have you experienced how brokenness can lead to blessing? If so, explain. "The great spiritual call of the Beloved Children of God is to pull their brokenness away from the shadow of the curse and put it under the light of the blessing" (97). Claiming the truth: When we place our brokenness under the blessing, we will discover how much we have to give - much more than we may ever have dreamed (110). "We are chosen, blessed, and broken so as to be given" (105). The expression "breaking bread together" expresses beautifully how the breaking and the giving are so clearly one. "As the Beloved Children of God, we are called to become bread for each other - bread for the world" (121). And in the giving, there will be an abundant multiplication for many years to come, far beyond our death.Rejecting the lie: Reject the lie that competition and greediness is the path to fulfillment. Reject the lie that happiness is based on having. Reflection Questions: Our real gift to be given is not so much in what we can do, as in who we are. In other words, our talents might be few but our gifts are abundant. Our talents are a part of who we are: friendship, kindness, patience, joy, peace, forgiveness, gentleness, love, hope, trust, and many others. These are the true gifts we have to offer to each other (114). "In our highly competitive and greedy world, we have lost touch with the joy of giving. We often live as if our happiness depended on having. But I don't know anyone who is really happy because of what he or she has. True joy, happiness, and inner peace come from the giving of ourselves to others. A happy life is a life for others" (109).

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