

Methodical Love

Susan Verstraete

They loved her. The rest of the world remembers Frances Ridley Havergal for writing such great hymns as “Take my Life and Let it Be,” “Like a River Glorious” and “Count Your Many Blessings,” but to her fourteen students, she was just Miss Havergal, the dear woman who taught their Sunday school class.

Though Frances taught her class as a group, she thought of them as individuals, and it made all the difference. She created a register with a page for each of her students. She kept track of their attendance, noted and acknowledged their birthdays and faithfully recorded their prayer requests. She often wept as she prayed for her students, begging God to convert them and for Him to help her to teach. She visited her charges in their homes and invited them to hers. She talked with them about their souls and about their everyday life. She methodically invested in the lives of her students, and they loved her for it.¹



I don't think anyone handed Miss Havergal a Sunday school teacher job description on her first day that included bullet points like “weep over their souls” or “send birthday notes.” She just loved her students. That love was expressed through simple, practical means, like remembering a birthday, or noticing an absence.

You don't have to be a teacher or church leader to methodically express love in your own situation. Pick a small group of people, and look out for them. Decide what you are going to do, start small and consider using a checklist to help your memory.

Peter tells us to “love one another earnestly” (1 Peter 1:22). Are you *methodically* planning to do it? Can you imagine what your church would be like if everyone did?

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¹ Information about Frances Ridley Havergal was taken from the biography titled, *Frances Ridley Havergal, Hymnwriter* by Esther Enock, Ambassador, 2001.

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