

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

May 31, 2026

Power of Extraordinary Love

On April 6, 2000, Ricky and Toni Sexton were taken hostage in their home in Wytheville, Virginia, by a fugitive couple on a violent crime spree. Toni had taken her poodle outside when Dennis Lewis, 37, and Angela Tanner, 20, sped into her driveway, pointed pistols at her, and ordered her back into the house. Yet, inside that home, the Sextons transformed their terrifying hostage situation into an opportunity to display Christian love.

Rather than responding with hatred or fear alone, the Sextons listened to their captors' struggles, fed them, showed them gospel videos, read Scripture to them, and prayed and wept with them. During negotiations with law enforcement, Ricky Sexton even refused his own release when Lewis and Tanner suggested they might end the standoff by taking their own lives.

The standoff ended in an unusual way. Before surrendering to the police, Angela Tanner left the Sextons \$135 and a handwritten note that read:

"Thank you for your hospitality. We really appreciate it. I hope he gets better. Wish all luck & love. Please accept this. It really is all we have to offer. Love, Angela and Dennis."
(Illustrations for Every Topic and Occasion – Perfect Illustrations: For Every Topic and Occasion.)

This kind of love reflects God's redemptive story toward mankind. Even if, by worldly standards, we considered ourselves "good people" before salvation, God declares that our righteousness is like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Scripture teaches that we did not seek after Him (Romans 3:11), that we were born in sin (Psalm 51:5), and that, apart from Christ, we were without hope and separated from the promises of God (Ephesians 2:12). We were destined for eternal judgment.

Yet, despite our condition, God demonstrated extraordinary love: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This is why the Bible says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love." (1 John 4:7-8, NASU) It is this kind of love that transforms both the person receiving it and the person sharing it.

F. W. Farrar recounts how, when Dwight L. Moody was an ignorant, ragged, shoeless boy walking the streets of Chicago, he found his way into a Sunday school through one of those unseen providences' people often call chance. He was shy, sensitive, and nervous that the other boys would laugh at him because he could not locate passages in the Bible. His teacher noticed his embarrassment and, with quiet gentleness and thoughtful tact, spared him humiliation by helping him find the Scriptures.

That small, nameless act of love and compassion may have changed history. Without it, a life of extraordinary ministry and service might have been lost to the world. Dwight L. Moody went on to become a widely known preacher and founded Moody Bible Institute, a ministry that continues to impact people around the world.

Love may seem like a small act that leaves a person vulnerable, but when directed by God, it becomes a force powerful enough to change lives and influence the world. True love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).



UPCOMING Events



MORE THAN US — NEW SERMON SERIES
Throughout this summer, Dr. Paul and Pierre Cannings will deep dive into what The Word of God says about family, relationships, and healing from heart and trauma caused by broken relationships.



FAMILY BIBLE ENCOUNTER
Join us for FBE 2026, June 2-5 at 7PM for praise and worship followed by a message by our guest Pastor Lawrence Scott. We have something for the whole family, including children and youth. Parents, please register your children online! Dinner for children and youth will end promptly at 6:20pm.



DEACON FELLOWSHIP & GRAD SUNDAY
Graduates wear your cap & gowns, Sunday May 31st to our ONE service at 9:30AM. All graduates are welcome to participate, high school, college, or grad school. Please submit your graduation photos online to be recognized throughout May.



PICNIC IN THE PARK—
The Marriage Ministry is hosting a picnic and EVERYONE is welcome to attend! The festivities kick off at 10:30AM at Dussen Park. Please register online, the cost is \$5 per person over 3 years old. Children 3 and under are free!



ABC WORD ACADEMY SUMMER CAMP—
Summer Camp enrollment is now open! Register your student today by calling (281) 445-9673



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Song

Communion

Praise & Worship

Visitor's Welcome

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

The Word of God
"First Love"
Ephesians 5:1-2, 21
Dr. Paul Cannings

*Sermon notes available online at lwfellowshipchurch.org
Under the "Resources" tab click "Sermon Outline"*

Call to Discipleship
Please remain seated at this time

Benediction & Closing Song

Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children's wing.
Infants—6th grade

LEGACY
EFFECTING TODAY FOR TOMMORROW
youth ministry of LIVING WORD FELLOWSHIP

MIDDLE SCHOOL - HIGH SCHOOL
2:30 4:00 & TUESDAY NIGHTS
SUNDAY
7:30 PM

First Love
Ephesians 5:1-2, 21
Dr. Paul Cannings

- A. Walk It (v. 1):
- B. Grow It (v. 21)

Scan To View Full Notes



Family Bible Encounter

LWFC Houston
7350 TC JESTER BLVD.

Please Register Children to Attend

June 2-5

5:45pm-6:20pm Dinner Served	6:30pm-6:45pm Devotionals	7:00pm-8:00pm Break-Out Sessions
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LWFC HOUSTON
7350 TC JESTER BLVD.

JUNE 2-5, 2026
7PM

ADULTS, KIDS, YOUTH

Family BIBLE ENCOUNTER

REGISTER CHILDREN

OVERCOMING FAMILY TRAUMA

SPECIAL GUEST PASTOR LAWRENCE SCOTT

PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Al and Ruth Cranford & family.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eric White, Pat Crawford, Tanisha Collins, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Kevin Carey, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clarke, Clara Williams, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Patsy Gatterson, Arleatha Housley, Patrina Johnson, Ruth Cranford, Walter Banks, Arnie Glover, Diana Doyle, Shannon Rice, Freddie Reid, Yolanda Barnes, Rochelle Carter Brown, Terrance Ford, Robert Edwards, Jessie Austin, Shinell Clark, Eugene Reese, Donna Ross, Sylvia Edwards, Rita Hughes, and Leo Banks.



First Love

EPHESIANS 5:1-2, 21