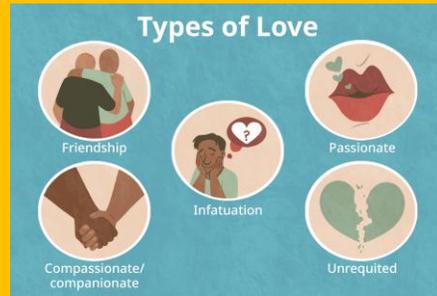


“Love in Motion” Inspired by Mark 12:28–34 & James 2:14–17



Raymond adjusted his glasses as he stepped out of the chilly February air and into the bustling community center lobby. His arms were struggling to hold a clipboard, tote bag of donated gloves, and an extra coat draped over his shoulder. The Saturday volunteer shift was just beginning, but already the lobby buzzed with conversation and the scent of fresh coffee.

He spotted Lucille at the far table, arranging hygiene kits into tidy rows. Her warm smile brightened the room more effectively than the fluorescent lights.

“Morning, Ray,” she called without looking up. “You’re early again.”

Raymond grinned. “Early is on time. Isn’t that what you always say?”

Lucille smirked. “Don’t quote me back to me. It’s too early for that.”

He walked over, setting down the bag of gloves. “Got a fresh batch from the school’s lost-and-found extras. Cleaned and sorted.”

“You’re a wonder.” She paused, examining him. “Tough week?”

“Kids have been anxious. Hard to teach algebra when half the class is thinking about things outside my classroom.”

Lucille nodded knowingly. “Which is why we’re doing this. Love in action, Ray. That’s the good stuff.”

Raymond chuckled. “You and your sermons.”

She tapped him lightly with her elbow. “Not sermons. Reminders, Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with everything you’ve got and love your neighbor the same way. I’m just doing the math.”

“And James says faith without works is dead,” Raymond added. “I know, I know.”

“Then let’s keep it alive.” She winked and turned back to her kits.

The Encounter



Hours later, as they packed the final boxes, the front doors opened and a man shuffled in wearing thin coat, hair matted, and eyes weary.

Lucille was the first to approach him.

“Hi there. I’m Lucille. What’s your name?”

“Eddie,” he answered, voice gravelly. “Just... need a warm place for a bit.”

“Of course,” she said gently. “Come in and have a seat.”

Raymond watched from a distance as Lucille fetched coffee and a sandwich, sitting beside Eddie rather than across from him. She listened more than she spoke with her presence patient and steady.

After a moment, she lifted her hand and motioned Raymond over.

“Ray, this is Eddie. He’s looking for warm clothing. Think we can help?”

Raymond nodded quickly. “Absolutely.”

He reached into his tote bag and pulled out the coat he’d carried in earlier. “This was meant for someone today. Looks like you’re the guy.”

Eddie hesitated, eyes moistening. “You sure?”

“Very sure,” Raymond replied, helping him into the coat. “Fits you perfectly.”

Eddie swallowed hard. "I... I don't really have words. Just thank you."

Lucille smiled softly. "You don't owe us anything. Just take care of yourself. And if you need more help, come back anytime."

As Eddie left, shoulders straighter than when he came in, Raymond exhaled deeply.

"You didn't just give him a coat," Lucille whispered. "You gave him dignity."

Raymond shook his head. "We both did."

Faith That Breathes

Later, as they cleaned up, Raymond leaned on a table and looked at Lucille thoughtfully.

"You know," he began, "I've taught Mark 12 plenty of times in Sunday school. But today... watching you... I saw it lived out."

Lucille raised an eyebrow. "Saw what?"

"That loving God and loving your neighbor aren't two separate things." He paused. "They're the same motion."

She smiled warmly. "Exactly. Love isn't a feeling; it's movement."

"And faith," he added, "isn't belief; it's action."

"Now who's preaching?" she teased.

Raymond blushed. "I guess you're rubbing off on me."

She laughed. "Good. Because the world doesn't need more good intentions, Ray. It needs people who actually *do* something."

Raymond nodded. "I want to be that kind of person."

"You already are," she said softly. "And today proved it."

