

One Month to Love: Thirty Days to Grow and Deepen Your Closest Relationships

By Kerry Shook, Chris Shook



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Improve your most important relationships—starting today.

At the end of the day in this all-too-short life, what matters most is relationships. Spouse, parent, child, friend—whoever your closest loved ones are, they warrant more than a passing glance; they deserve an intentional and meaningful relationship with you.


The *One Month to Love* thirty-day challenge is the greatest adventure you'll ever take, helping you deepen the important relationships in your life. Authors Kerry and Chris Shook use timeless, biblical wisdom to walk through three stages of relationships: *First Glance*, *Second Look*, and *Lasting Love*. Many of us have launched into the exciting First Glance phase. When we then tiptoe into the Second Look, reality sets in, and often friendships weaken, families suffer, marriages crack. Now learn how to experience the deep, satisfying lifelong relationships of lasting love.

All it takes is one chapter a day.

If your marriage is broken, restoration is possible. If your friendship is frail, a fresh start is possible. Even if you've made mistakes in all your relationships, lasting love is still possible. "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

Includes a weekly focus and daily readings to guide you through the process.

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for *Love at Last Sight*

“I love Kerry and Chris. And I love this book. One of my deep desires is to invest the best part of me in those who are closest to me. This book will give you the inspiration and practical tools you need to do just that.”

—**Mark Batterson**, pastor of National Community Church and author of *Primal*, *Wild Goose Chase*, and *In a Pit with a Lion on a Snowy Day*

“People are created for connection and community. We’re each designed with a desire for knowledge and intimacy. But it doesn’t just happen. It takes intentionality and a willingness to work. In *Love at Last Sight*, my good friends Kerry and Chris Shook reveal some practical and powerful steps that will help you cultivate your relationships. Whether you’re seeking to strengthen your friendships or looking for ways to enrich your marriage, the tools in this book will help you experience the most out of every significant relationship in your life.”

—**Ed Young**, pastor of Fellowship Church and author of *The Creative Marriage*

“Healthy relationships are essential for life, marriage, and family. *Love at Last Sight* provides counsel for developing a love that lasts and creating a legacy for generations to come.”

—**Jack Graham**, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church

“*Love at Last Sight* sheds new light on taking care of your relationships today. We have so many tools to help us communicate, yet so many relationships are in shambles. Chris and Kerry Shook give sound advice for putting those we love first and practical tips to make our love last.”

—**Craig Groeschel**, pastor of LifeChurch.tv and author of *The Christian Atheist*

Praise for *One Month to Live*

“If you want new urgency, fresh purpose, and a sharper focus for your life, then this book is for you. Read it and your future may be changed forever!”

—**Lee Strobel**, author of *The Case for the Real Jesus*

“*One Month to Live* by Kerry and Chris Shook will add value to the life of every person who reads it. The questions asked and the ‘Make It Count Moments’ in the book will stir your soul and inspire you to begin, today, to make the rest of your life more meaningful. What Kerry and Chris present in *One Month to Live* could be life altering.”

—**Ken Blanchard**, author of *The One Minute Manager* and *Know Can Do!*

“Regardless of where you are on your spiritual journey, *One Month to Live* will challenge you to passionately live the life you were made for and leave an eternal legacy.”

—**Bill Hybels**, best-selling author and senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church

From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author

Kerry Shook and his wife, **Chris Shook**, are the authors of the *New York Times* bestseller *One Month to Live* and the founders of Woodlands Church in The Woodlands, TX, one of the largest churches in America. The Shooks have been featured on Fox News, NBC, ABC, and PBS. Kerry and Chris have been married for twenty-eight years and have four children.

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The Most Important Thing

Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art.... It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things that give value to survival. — C. S. LEWIS

I don't wish to be everything to everyone, but I would like to be something to someone. — JAVAN

Right now, there are three relationships in your life that trouble you. Perhaps a good friend said something to you yesterday. It felt critical, but you're not sure what she meant. The two of you used to be so close, but lately you've been drifting apart. Something's not right. Oh, and your mother called. There's that. You know you should return her call, but you haven't. Why? You know there are things you should have said before, you avoided them, and now you feel it's too late. It's always so hard with her. Always messy.

And then...your son has been missing. Not missing physically, but he's been distant, quiet, silent. Missing emotionally. What's that about? What's going on in his life? You want to reach out, but he pushes you away. It worries you.

Maybe the relationships in your life aren't *exactly* like these, but I'm guessing these remind you of someone close to you, a problem relationship in your life right now. Maybe it's not your mother but your father, perhaps not your son but a daughter-in-law. It could be your best friend. Whoever it is, he or she is someone who matters to you—or else the relationship wouldn't trouble you, gnaw at you on the inside, make you question and grumble, or even bring you to tears.

I suggest you have at least three such relationships in your life right now that feel messy or troubling and make your heart ache a little. The number three isn't magic, of course. It could be just one or two, although it's likely to be more, not less. We all have relationships that aren't what we long for them to be. Now I'm not talking about business acquaintances, casual or distant friends, fourth or fifth cousins. We all have a lot of relationships in our lives—maybe too many (and we'll talk about that)—but, quite frankly, not all are created equal. All people are important, but not every connection in your life has equal value. The relationships we want to help you with in this book probably include your husband or wife, possibly a boyfriend or girlfriend. Your mother or father could be on this list, or maybe a son or daughter. And there could be a friend, someone close to you with whom you've shared deep things. It's these *meaningful, essential* people in your life—the *key* relationships you have right now—that we want to focus on.

So take a moment and think, who are these three key people in your life? Which meaningful relationships are troubling you? Relationships you wish were closer. Relationships you'd like to be deeper and richer. Relationships that trouble you, bother you, even make you a little crazy right now. Seriously, think about it. Who are they? And now take a moment to name these three key relationships out loud.

THE HIDDEN ADVENTURE

The journey you're about to take over the next thirty days will help you improve, grow, and deepen those three relationships you just named. I'm not saying it will fix everything (relationships aren't machines—you

can't replace a broken part and be good to go). But if you apply what you read over the next thirty days, your key relationships will grow and deepen. Something will change for the better.

Trust me, this is important for you. In fact, this may be the most significant thing you do in your life right now. Why? Because life is way too short. At the end of the day—at the end of The Day—in this all-too-short life we share, all that really matters is relationships.

Our relationships with the God who created us and with the people we love. Compared to these relationships, the job or career goals we set now aren't really so important, the ladders we try to climb don't matter so much, and the objects we long to own and possess seem utterly trivial. What really counts in the end is that special knowing look you share with your spouse, the arms of your child reaching up to you, or the quiet comfort of a friend who stands by your side in a difficult time. The award-winning animated movie *Up* contains some profound truths about relationships. In a breathtaking sequence early in the film, we see the entire arc of the life of Carl, a balloon salesman, as he meets Ellie, falls in love, and gets married. They share a dream to travel to South America and save every penny for their big trip. But there's something familiar about the way their savings are constantly being used for the urgencies and emergencies of daily life. Before Carl and Ellie know it, they're in their seventies, and although they have a beautiful marriage, they never realized their dream adventure. Ellie dies, and Carl is overwhelmed with regret about the trip they never took. In a desperate attempt to escape loneliness and recapture memories of Ellie, Carl attaches a bunch of balloons to his house and sets out for South

America!

You begin to realize as the movie progresses that this dream trip they were saving for, this object of their future plan together, wasn't really that important after all. The *real* adventure was the life they shared along the way. The same is true for us: the adventure of a lifetime is right in front of us. It's just cleverly disguised as a familiar face.

Think about the possible loss of the relationship with one of those three people you named. You can't do anything about death and the physical departure of one of them from this earth. That's in God's hands. But you can do something about your relationship with them in life.

UPSIDE DOWN

Everything you've been told about relationships is upside down and wrong. Researchers tell us that a baby sees everything upside down for the first few days of life until the brain can adjust the visual picture to right side up. Most relationships today are stuck in this same infant stage; we tend to see relationships upside down, and our culture only reinforces this view. The concept of love at *first* sight permeates our music, movies, television, and books. What we learn as children and continue to believe as adults is that a fairy-tale relationship somehow just happens.

Now, I'm not bashing romance, but meaningful relationships depend on seeing other people as they are and looking at them right side up. Real love—whether romantic love, a close friendship, or a family relationship—happens long after first sight. It shows up as people get to know each other more deeply and often after they work through tough things together. Real love in relationships isn't a magic act; it's a journey. When people say, "It was love at first sight," what they really mean is "I was attracted to that person the first time I saw them." There is nothing wrong with being infatuated with someone at the start of a relationship. The real question, however, is, do you have a love that is growing stronger and deeper every day?

I don't believe in love at first sight; I believe in love at last sight. *Each of my relationships has the potential to be better the next time we're together than it was the previous time so that the last time we see each other on this earth we're closer than ever before.*

FRIEND ME

It's ironic that even though our society is more technologically connected than ever before, most people feel increasingly isolated and completely disconnected from deep and rewarding relationships. You can have hundreds of Facebook friends, but how many of them can you truly sit down with face to face and share your heart? It's more important to have one good friend than a thousand acquaintances.

Don't get me wrong: there's nothing wrong with social networking. Those sites can serve a useful purpose in connecting us to people. Technology is, after all, neutral. What matters is how you use it. A fire can burn you or warm you, and technology is no different. You can go online to research a medical question, pay your electric bill—or view pornography. The ability to connect with people online can be incredibly useful as long as you're smart about it, but it has its downside too.

The canary in the coal mine is this: social networking has changed our society's definition of *friend*. For instance, if I find someone named Joe online, all it takes is a simple right click, and my computer screen flashes a message assuring me that, yes, Joe and I are now friends. Hmm...now that we're friends, I wonder if Joe would drive me to the doctor when I'm too sick to drive myself or hold my hair back from the toilet when I'm throwing up. Should I count on him to help me out on moving day? Can I call him when my loyal dog has to be put down and I just can't do it alone? Will he tell me when I have spinach in my teeth, dandruff on my shirt, or my foot in my mouth? We have bought into the false idea that if we're connected to huge numbers of people in cyberspace, we must be important and loved. There's nothing wrong with having lots of online friends as long as you realize that they're a random collection of people you might know or that someone you might know might know. A real friend is someone who is with you—present in your life—someone who gives you their time, shares your hurt, and feels your ache.

HOPE

Almost every day we hear about another high-profile marriage meltdown or a lifelong friendship falling apart. We look at the relational carnage around us and wonder, is it eve...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kristy Lange:

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Thomas Palmer:

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those possibilities will not happen within you if you take One Month to Love: Thirty Days to Grow and Deepen Your Closest Relationships as the daily resource information.

Adriana Cornell:

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