

Value of Love in Nicholas Charles Sparks's *A Walk to Remember*

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Abstract

Nicholas Sparks is an American novelist, whose creations are inspired by his own life. People cannot live without love. People may even die if there is no love in their life. This need of love is not limited only between man and woman, but also between people and God. People need love to build their strength, to make life more meaningful, and even to survive. Love is capable of changing man's life. Love gives enormous strength to man to encounter even the worst in his life with courage and faith. Nicholas Sparks's novel *A Walk to Remember* brings to light this value of love. In the novel, Landon Carter, described as a naughty boy, the feeling of a real and pure love is a weird thing. He has never imagined before that it will happen to him, and also that it will change his life forever, but he falls in love with Jamie Sullivan, and his love for her changes him utterly.

Index Terms: change, love, strength, value

Nicholas Sparks, an American novelist, screenwriter and philanthropist, has published twenty-two novels and two non-fiction books, all of which have been *New York Times* bestsellers, with over 115 million copies sold worldwide in more than 50 languages. Sparks admits that much of the inspiration for his novels comes from his own life. Though it is true, it is worth reflecting on how much balance Sparks has achieved between imagination and his sources of inspiration. Indeed his life has been replete with peaks and valleys since graduating college, and through each of these experiences in his life, Sparks has matured and relished in the power of family, brotherhood, and above all love. Each of these characteristics shines at different moments in his novels.

Nicholas Sparks is predominantly a novelist of the different facets of love. He has vividly portrayed the value of love in his novel *A Walk to Remember*. Set in North Carolina, *A Walk to Remember* depicts the life of a jaded, aimless high school senior (Landon Carter), who falls in love with an innocent young woman (Jamie Sullivan) he and his friends once scorned. The two characters develop a powerful and inspirational relationship in which they discover truths that take most people a lifetime to learn.

In the beginning of the novel, Landon is described as a naughty boy, and he does not seem to have a love in his heart; even the feeling of a real and pure love is a weird thing for him. But being together and being in love with Jamie, he finally finds the true love and at least knows the real meaning of a pure love. He has never imagined before that it will happen to him; and he can never forget even a single part of this moment that at the end changes his life forever.

The power of love is that it makes the lover do the thing he never wanted, or even liked before. When one is not in love, he does not want to do things he does not like. Even if someone asks or forces him to do it, he will do it without all his heart. But once love embraces Landon, the thing he does not like becomes the thing he really wants to do: "The strange thing was, when she said it, I realized that Hegbert, Jamie's father, would be driving her home, and for once I wished that I would have had the opportunity to walk her there" (*A Walk to Remember* p.138).

When Jamie is playing her part as an angel, Landon is amazed by her appearance, and so do the audience. She is really beautiful and really gets that angelic look. It makes Landon fall in love with her at the first sight. Before he recognizes that Jamie can be so beautiful, he does not want to walk her home. Although he does it, it does not come from his heart. Finally when he loses his heart, he wishes he could have the opportunity to walk Jamie home. When the feeling comes, he is a sort of strange with himself.

Landon does the best to make Jamie happy, whenever she asks for his help. In the novel, when Jamie asks Landon to help her to collect the pickle jars and coffee cans, she has set out in businesses all over the town. She will collect the money she gets from those stuffs to buy Christmas gifts for the orphans at the end of the year. Landon, who has tests to study for and an application to be finished, cannot avoid it and will do it. It proves that love requires all kinds of sacrifice.

After Landon collects all the pickle jars and coffee cans, he counts the money in it. When he recognizes that the amount is not enough to buy the orphans Christmas gifts, he knows that it will make Jamie sad. She wants the Christmas to be very special, but with the amount, which is not enough to buy gifts for orphans, she is not happy and does not know how to get the money needed for buying the gifts. As Landon does not want to see Jamie sad, he reflects on what he should do. In love relationship, "Her happiness is his and her tears are also his" is what Landon feels towards Jamie.

Love makes man adore the one he loves. Even though she is not as beautiful as he first saw her, she can still make him have a feeling of amazement whenever he sees her; even he cannot take his eyes from the one whom his love is addressed. Those sentences are strengthened by the words of God written in the Bible, in Samuel 16:7. The Lord said to Samuel: "Do not look at this appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees: Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at inward appearance, that is, the heart: "Even without sparkles in her hair or a long white flowing dress, the sight of her was arresting. Without even noticing it, I'd been holding my breath" (*A Walk to Remember* p.148).

Landon is still amazed by Jamie when he sees her on Christmas night at the orphanage and she is telling the story to the kids. This is the second time Landon sees Jamie with her hair hanging loosely, just like the night of the play. In the text readers see how amazed he is by her and he even notices that he has been holding his breath.

When a man is in love, he really wants to know about her. It also happens to Landon; he is wondering what is in Jamie's mind. For him, she is still a little mystery and he is curious to know every little thing about her: "We were both gazing up at the lights on the tree, and I wondered what Jamie was thinking" (p.150). Deeply in love with Jamie, Landon evinces enormous interest to know what Jamie is thinking about.

When there is something that makes a man's loved one happy, he just does not know what happens inside and also does not seem to care about it, but he feels happy for her solely because of his love for her. It always happens to everyone in love relationship, because seeing one of them happy makes the other one feel happy, too. In the text, we can see that Landon feels happy for the moment he spends with Jamie. That is the first time he spends Christmas Eve with someone he loves and in a different situation. Knowing that Jamie is pleased by the moment, he also finds himself happy in the company of his beloved.

People cannot choose love, but it is love that chooses people: “She smiled at me and I smiled at her and all I could do was to wonder how I’d ever fallen in love with a girl like Jamie Sullivan” (p.154). From the passage above, we can understand that Landon himself wonders how he has fallen in love with Jamie Sullivan: The girl he never imagined before; the girl whom he considered as a stranger at first; the girl whom he never liked before. This shows that he cannot find love, but love finds him.

When love is making its way into one’s life, he cannot stop thinking about the one he loves: “I planned on hitting the books pretty hard that week, then doing the application at night before I went to bed. Even so, I couldn’t help but think about Jamie” (p.138). In the novel, Landon finds himself thinking about Jamie often. Even though he has so much to do, he cannot let his mind off. This is what really happens to a person who is in love. He cannot help, but think about the one he loves intensely.

Love is to give and to share. It is worth noting that when a man really loves a woman, he wishes to give something nice to her even though it means the last thing he has: “I’d spent my last few dollars on a nice sweater because that was all I could think to get her. She wasn’t exactly the person to shop for” (p.146). The word “last” means that there is no money left with him; this is the only thing he has. But he is ready to give that also to his ladylove. But for love, he could not have done it.

Love is indeed about truth and honesty. Love necessitates the lovers to be truthful and honest towards each other. Landon says: “The truth is always the truth, and I’d just promised her that I would never lie again” (p.189). Through the passage above, we can conclude that experiencing a true love really influences Landon through his character and personality. He becomes a high quality admirable person and assures that he will never tell a lie anymore. He is able to keep his words even though it may hurt Jamie’s feeling.

Love is always patient; it does not take offense and it is not resentful. Although Landon says something rude and even hurts Jamie’s heart, she is not mad and never says something bad back to him. Love makes Jamie accept whatever people say about her and to her. In the Bible, it has been said that when somebody loves the other, he or she may not boast herself and she may not get mad easily. One will be able to do those things once he or she experiences true love. Love is never selfish. Landon does not do the things he usually does with other girls. He has not kissed Jamie and he has not even hugged her and taken her to fun places where he used to go to have fun. Landon feels that everything is different with Jamie.

Love is never rude or selfish. Landon does not force Jamie to respond to his kiss, but it happens naturally. And the way they are kissing is not the same as a kiss scene on TV, but it has its own way very different from others.

The value of Love is stated in the Bible, in 1 Corinthians 13:47 and also written in Nicholas Sparks’s *A Walk to Remember*, on page 215. The analysis below is based on the understanding of love:

Love is always patient and kind. It is never jealous. Love is never boastful or conceited. It is never rude or selfish. It does not take offense and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people’s sins, but delights in the truth. It is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. (P.215)

When a man has a profound feeling for a woman, he does not want to be harmed by her. All he wants is to protect her and wants her to be comfortable by his side. When he kisses her, he does not want to do more, but it is enough for him. In Christmas life, unmarried couples are forbidden to have sex. From the passage, we can see that there is nothing else they want to do. Even from the bottom of Landon's heart, he does not want to do more than a kiss.

In the beginning of the story, Landon does not like Jamie; even he feels that Jamie is a strange person in the world and never thought of falling in love with her. When he comes to know about her better, he changes his mind utterly. Then he loves her, and he sees that everything about her is beautiful. It is his love that makes him have such a perception about her. He realizes that she is the best thing in his life. It proves that love changes a person, who really experiences it:

"You're a wonderful person, Jamie. You're beautiful, you're kind, you're gentle ... you're everything that I'd like to be. If people don't like you, or they think you're strange, then that's their problem." "I love you, Jamie," I said to her. "You're the best thing that ever happened to me." (p.188)

He tries to take Jamie out of her mind. He really loves Jamie, and he wants to make her sure that she is not what she is or what other people are thinking about her. People may think about her in their own way, but Landon is trying to make her sure that she is a wonderful person and he loves her: "You're a wonderful person, Jamie. You're beautiful, you're kind, you're gentle...you're everything that I'd like to be. If people don't like you, or think you're strange, then that's their problem." (p. 133)

The novel, from the beginning till the end, centers on highlighting the profound value of love: Teaching people to live in love and respect each other and be loyal to each other. It is indeed a miracle that Landon who once looked down upon her has changed his perception totally once he becomes intimate to her and knows everything about her: "You're the best person I'll probably ever know" (150). Although Jamie is dying, she is always happy until the end of her life all because of their everlasting love for each other and her belief in miracles that she also experiences it through an everlasting love that not all have it in their life.

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