

## Actions Impact The Heart

By MaKayla Harvey

I can clearly remember, as if it happened yesterday, events that showed my family and me love through actions. Those moments taught me that love is often quiet, gentle, and shown in ways we might not immediately notice. In 1 John 3:18, John the Apostle said, *“Dear children, let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions.”* (NLT) When I think about that verse it brings a saying that I have heard so many times before.

### Actions Speak Louder Than Words

That phrase confused me for a long time, because an action is something which cannot speak. I understood it though, when I read this verse along with the saying. My comprehension grows even more solid as I continue to go through experiences that really put it into practice. This first event in my life is the most recent.

I remember the shock in my stomach as I overheard my parents talking. I certainly must have misunderstood. Sadly, the news was only too true. Someone close to me had been diagnosed with a disease which was treated as a form of cancer. It all happened so quickly, and I felt sad that none of us had

realized how serious her illness truly was at first. It was not long before it was decided that my mother would travel to spend time with her. To help us during that time, some of our friends put together a meal train and people brought dinner a few nights during that week and the week after my mom returned. Those small acts of kindness spoke volumes to my family.

Two years earlier, I had experienced that same heavy feeling in my stomach. My family was moving and packing a house with five children was no small feat. There was so much we used daily that could not be packed yet, while other things needed to be boxed up right away. I remember feeling frustrated because I wanted to help my mom and dad, but everything felt chaotic. Then, as we neared the week before we left, small acts of kindness began appearing everywhere, some in person and some through simple texts.

“I have a group of people willing to help load the trailers if you would like.”

“Do you need help packing today?”

“Here is some money so you and your family can go out to eat tonight.”

“I was in town and wondered if I could bring your family a pizza for dinner.”

These things showed that my family was cared for and loved. Many people sympathized with us through words, and that was kind. But what I remember most are the actions, people taking time out of their own lives to show they cared.

That is what shaped my thoughts on the matter. When someone loves us enough to step out of their way and perform an act, whether big or small, it often feels more meaningful than words alone.

There have been times when I have used phrases that come almost automatically. When someone is sad and shares their troubles, what can I say except, “I am so sorry, that must hurt.” When a friend talks about a fishing trip or the latest trend, things I may not understand or enjoy, I still respond, “Wow, cool.” Sometimes those words are sincere. Other times, they are simply what I know to say. That is part of the danger of words. We can become almost robotic in our responses.

It made me realize that true care is shown not just by speaking, but by noticing what someone really needs and responding with thought and effort. Yet words are still sweet and powerful. Words can clarify our actions, just as our actions can prove our words. They work side by side.

So I urge you as I begin to urge myself, not to speak hasty or insincere words. Speak with kindness and love, but do not rely on words alone. Step out of your comfort zone and perform an act of compassion. It does not need to be something big. It could be as simple as doubling a casserole recipe when you only need one. Though it may not always be food that is helpful. Sometimes service is worth more than a gift. Be attentive and read the room. Do they already have five lasagnas in the fridge and freezer? Maybe what they truly need is someone to sit quietly beside them and listen or perhaps they need someone to gently distract them from their pain.

I caution against relying only on the phrases, “Do you need anything?” or “Is there any way I can help?” Sometimes those offers are appreciated and accepted, but there are moments when people do not even know what they need. They are simply trying to find their way out of grief, as if walking through thick mud. In conclusion, words may be some of the sweetest

sounds we hear, but our actions speak just as loudly and leave a lasting impression on the heart. I have seen it in my own life, and I hope to carry this lesson forward.