

Hope and Healing: The Principle of Loving

Ready:

“Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.” — 1 Peter 4:8

Set

1 Corinthians 13:7 says “Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.”

God commands His children to love one another. Jesus said the two greatest commandments were to love God “with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. The second is to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39).

So, who is your neighbor? Jesus gives context to this question in Acts 1:8 by saying “...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The fact that Jesus mentioned Samaria, who the religious Jews of that day would not associate with because of their mixed race, solidifies the point that the Gospel was and is for all. Therefore, our neighbor is the person across the street, across the states, and across the world. Our neighbor is our family, friends, strangers, and even those we disagree with.

I remember the day my husband, who was coaching with the Tennessee Titans, was running late for an away football game. After hearing why he was late, my heart was warmed by the generosity and love God placed in his heart. It started when one of the players came up to my husband to say that his teammate, who was too embarrassed to say, didn't have the proper clothing to get on the bus to travel. But rather than reprimand the player, he took him to get all the clothes he would need for his first preseason game. In this way, my husband truly loved his neighbor in that moment.

So, how do we love our neighbor today when the pain of racism is so strong?

We can start by following King David's prayer in Psalm 139:23-24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” King David knew he needed his heart analyzed daily by the Lord to help him not sin.

Additionally, we must celebrate the differences that make each person unique by fervently loving and humbly forgiving each other as God has done for us through His Son, Jesus.

1 Peter 4:8 says, “Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.” So, as believers, even when others sin or hurt us, we must love others by allowing Christ to love through us. So, as we desire a heart change and participate

with the Holy Spirit's work in our lives, our hearts are transformed and our capacity to love increases until it becomes a second nature.

Go

- Does anything hold you back from loving coaches and athletes who come from a different socio-economic background, community, race, gender, or ethnicity?
- When have you last conducted a “heart” evaluation and asked the Lord to remove any obstacles that prevent you from ministering to those from a different ethnicity or gender?
- What known challenges, hurts, or fears do you have that prevent you from seeking opportunities to love others who come from a different background than you? Share that with a trusted advisor or friend to seek healing.

Workout

1 Corinthians 13:1; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 2:2

Overtime

“Almighty God, You are love and You are my hope. I put my trust in You to reveal any biases in my heart towards others. Forgive me, Lord, for those biases and create in me a clean heart that honors You and my neighbors. Use me to love others like You did and empower others to do the same. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Bible Reference:

1 Peter 4:8

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8701 Leeds Road | Kansas City, MO 64129 | 800.289.0909
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