Do you ever have those nights when you can’t sleep? Last night I woke up in the middle of the night and could not get back to sleep. That does not happen often. When it does, I don’t like lying in bed not being able to sleep. What helps me is to get up and read my Bible until my mind and body relax and I start falling asleep.

So last night I got up and sat on the couch and turned to the book of Galatians. I chose chapter 6 of Galatians because our church is currently studying it. Galatians 6 deals primarily with how we treat one another. What a great topic for our current environment or any environment that involves more than one person!

As I sat on the couch and read, the passage that seemed to jump out to me most was Galatians 6:10. “Therefore, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

The concept of “do good to all people” caused me to reflect. All people? Is it easy for me to do good to those I like or agree with, but what about the others? I think if we are honest with ourselves there is typically a person or group of people that we have a hard time liking and doing well to.

The Bible gives us a good example of this struggle to do good to all in the story about the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). When we focus on ourselves and our own needs it is hard to be in touch with our neighbors’ needs and to be able to set aside time and resources to help them.

I have often pondered and shared the story in Mathew 22:37-40 about the religious leader who asked Jesus “Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus summed it up in say.

1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your souls and with all your mind.
2. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus said these two commandments sum up the whole Law. Now loving your neighbor sounds a lot like “doing good to all people.” Note that it does not say love only the neighbors you get along with or like. Recently I heard a message by Tyler McKenzie, a pastor from Louisville, KY, that helped me to find the truth that can help me to better love my neighbor and do good to all people.

First, he says, “All people deserve dignity because we are all stamped with the divine image of God.” We are made in His image. We all have worth and deserved to be treated with dignity because we are all made in His image. None of us are any better than the other. Genesis 1:27

Second, he says, “All people should get unconditional love because Jesus gave his life for all and we should do the same.” Galatians 1:4

Third, he said, “Until dignity and love come, we are called to stand up for those that don’t have that.” The teaching by Jesus in Matthew 25:35-40 gives us this principle. Christ explains when we feed the hungry, give a drink to the thirsty, invite in the stranger, or cloth the naked, then it is as if we are doing it to Him. Through this passage, God is calling us to take action to help bring dignity and love to those who don’t have it.

I hope you are as touched by these teachings as I have been. Thinking like this helps us to overcome bitterness and prejudice which cause us to lack passion and not act lovingly toward an enemy or stranger. It is the truth like this with the conviction and transformation of God in us that will allow us to stop living only for ourselves and start recognizing the dignity of others and being able to love. It is insight like this that will allow us to improve our relationship with our neighbors, so it is easier to sleep at night. Maybe this will help with those sleepless nights.
August 7th was a big day for us when our 5th child, Jed was married to Shelbie. It was one of those COVID events where we were not sure where or how big the wedding would be until that week. Jed and Shelbie were very flexible, and the day turned out to be amazing with about 160 guests attending an outdoor wedding in our church parking lot.

Following the wedding there was a drive-through reception in the parking lot then a small rain shower drove us inside where a smaller group of mainly family were able to have a small reception.

Now they live about 20 minutes from us. Jed is busy as a 911 operator and Shelbie is the housing supervisor for Northwest University. Pray for her as she tries to manage student housing challenges in this complex environment.

The rest of the family is doing well. This summer Zeb & Lauren and Brandon & Hosanna bought their first houses close by so we have enjoyed helping them remodel and move into their homes.

I continue to work from home and most likely will through the end of the year. Fall is usually a busy time of travel with CVM but all my trips this fall has been canceled due to COVID.

We have several international missionaries back in the US and praying that travel restriction will start to be lifted so they can return.

We have had several that have been able to go back in September.

This has been an interesting year but honestly, I have enjoyed the challenges, changes, and seeing God's faithfulness through the current times. Despite the challenges, I pray you can see God at work and the opportunity to join Him and love your neighbor.

Serving with Him,
Brad

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A Note of Encouragement for Brad and Angela

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