

Daily Devotional, October 26, 2021 Loving as we Wish to be Loved

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” John 15:12 (NRSV)

There are people in life, even those we may love dearly or live with closely, who we sometimes find ourselves “at odds” with at any particular time or situation. There are many other people in our lives who we definitely find ourselves “at odds” with over different topics or opinions. We have been continually reminded throughout these many months that these moments, issues, or people are no exception to our commandment from Jesus to find ways to “love one another”.

I don’t know who you are “at odds” with at this moment. Maybe it’s your spouse or your child as your struggle with stress that you bring home (or keep home if you’re working from there and not leaving much!). Maybe it’s the education system that has changed and turned your world upside down as a parent, as a student, or as an educator. Maybe it’s new and difficult expectations at work, coupled with financial tension. Maybe it’s new guidelines in the medical field or in the public domain that have caused frustration or limitations that have proven challenging.

It’s important that in all of these situations to pause and consider the other perspective. You may have your own stress at home, but your other family members have their own stress as well. Those in the education system and the medical field are bobbing up and down in quickly changing demands. It’s easy to make quick judgments and harsh comments on those we see in a store or those in the public eye. You will not always know the battles that someone else is trying to overcome. But fighting with and judging others has not really proven itself useful when living out the command “love one another.” Instead, we should choose to listen and understand more deeply. Communicate your own needs and worries to trusted individuals, and remember that we can still choose kindness in our words and actions to all. And we can always pray for one another.

This past year and a half has not been a period of perfection, but it has definitely proven to be a time of perseverance. It’s hard work to be kind and loving, especially when we are “at odds” with some who we love the most. But it’s important, and it’s necessary. Take a moment to pause and consider someone that you are “at odds” with today. Pray for God to open your heart in grace and your mind in gratitude. Pray for them and then determine a way that you can show kindness to them in spite of your differences or the difficult moment you may have shared recently. And then you may need to do this again tomorrow or the next day with others.

This is not only hard work, but it’s everyday work. God will strengthen you and guide you, so trust in Him. Don’t be discouraged if you don’t get it right in a day, or a week, or even a month. God doesn’t give up on us; God is faithful and supports us, so we can continue to persevere in these harder moments. Therefore, take another moment to pause and pray. Express your gratitude to God. Then, choose kindness, and show grace and love.

Lord Jesus Christ, by your patience in suffering you deified earthly pain and gave us the example of obedience to your Father’s will: Be near me in my time of weakness and pain; sustain me by your grace, that my strength and courage may not fail; heal me according to you will; and help me always to believe that what happens to me here is of little account if you hold me in eternal life. Be with me my Lord and my God. Amen.