

Megachurch Pastor: God Is Calling You to Love the Unlovable Today

As Christians, you and I are called to honor everyone because we all have value as God's creation. Honoring God's hidden gold goes a step further. God's hidden gold are the people we think cannot do anything for us—those who seem to have nothing to offer us: no money, no esteem, no power or position in society. We are to honor them because we see throughout Scripture that Jesus uniquely took time for those whom others despised and disregarded, and He encouraged His disciples to do the same.

This is a message Mark and Huldah Buntain, my wife's uncle and aunt, took to heart. They arrived in Calcutta for a one-year mission assignment in 1954, immediately set up a tent on a vacant lot and went to work. They invited the people to come to their tent meetings and started telling them about the love of Jesus. Before long, they saw that the people had physical needs that had to be met, not just spiritual needs. So they decided to honor the poor by meeting their physical needs as they continued to share the gospel.

They started feeding the community, and a one-year assignment turned into over 60 years of reaching out to the people of India. Calcutta Mercy Ministries now operates a hospital, has helped establish over 900 churches, and founded around 100 schools. The ministry also has a clinic to help sex-trafficking victims in an area known for prostitution. To this day, the ministry still feeds the hungry. Mark passed away in 1989, but Huldah continues to honor the poor by overseeing the ministry she and Mark started so many years ago.

It is all too easy to disregard that which we don't see as

personally valuable. Doing so, however, goes against everything we are taught in Scripture. As followers of Jesus Christ, we must learn to see the value of every individual. In Jesus' eyes, no one is unwanted. When Mother Teresa, who also served the poor of Calcutta, visited England, she was disappointed at the society's ability to ignore the "unloved." She said, "I have walked at night and gone into your homes and found people dying unloved. Here [in the West] you have a different kind of poverty—a poverty of the spirit, of loneliness and of being unwanted. And that is the worst disease in the world today; not tuberculosis or leprosy." We have the same problem in our country.

How many times have we walked by a homeless person and looked the other way, or read about a family who had lost everything but did nothing to help even though we were able? All of us are guilty of not truly seeing the value in every person around us at one time or another.

When we look for God's hidden gold, we are not just being good neighbors. We are not just caring for "the least of these." We are acting as stewards of God, using His resources to bless one of His children in His name. The great theologian Henri Nouwen once wrote, "As persons we are called to be transparent to each other, pointing far beyond our character to Him who has given us His love, truth and beauty." Loving and caring for all of God's children, even those deemed unwanted by society, reflects God's love and gives us an opportunity to help them find their way back into relationship with Him.

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*This article is adapted from I Choose Honor: The Key to Relationships, Faith and Life (Charisma House, 2019) by **Rich Wilkerson Sr.** Wilkerson is the founder of Peacemakers and the senior pastor of Trinity Church in Miami, Florida. He is also an evangelist and author. Since 1973, Wilkerson has ministered to youths and families through evangelism and local church ministry. His humorous style and power-packed speaking have*

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