

Your Mark 12:31 Prayer for True Love

I was four people deep in line at the post office, which placed me next to greeting card racks on either side of me. My eyes went to the cards on the right, but after looking at a few, immediately I turned away. (Is there any greater sign of human depravity than in some greeting card lines these days?)

Averting my eyes to the left, the other card rack held beautiful cards, and I gave it a spin. Every card made me think of someone, and I wished I could load up a big handful, take them home and send meaningful notes to every person who was coming to my mind.

That brings me to the people in my life and how I feel like I'm failing most of them most of them.

"You need to work on calling on all of your students," said my principal. This has been the same constructive criticism I've received in all of my reviews with him. But there are so many students, and it seems impossible to make sure 18 in a class are receiving my full attention—no one sliding by. It's hard. I vowed to keep trying to improve my skill, to get all of them to participate.

The classroom is a microcosm of my life. So many people with birthdays and sickness. Moms, aunts and in-laws. People who need an encouragement and the attention of a friend. Husband and kids. Students who are struggling. Neighbors whose names I can't seem to remember.

Always someone sliding by.

Jesus tells us the second great command of God: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31b).

Every day, I fall short of loving all of my people well. This makes me sad, and I come to the Lord today with his commandment in one hand and my inability to keep it in the other.

How, Lord? I ask. How can I love the way you want me to love?

He brings to mind John 3:16a: "For God so loved the world ..."

God is capable of loving the whole world—no sliders. He asks me to love my neighbor, but there sure are a lot of neighbors. My heart and hands feel too small for the job. I start to crumble with guilt, but then I think, *No, God wants me to succeed here. He wants me to obey and to love blamelessly.*

Don't you think that second commandment is too big for us to keep on our own?

So I'm coming to the Lord needy today. I'm bringing him this little heart of mine that needs to grow in love, and I'm asking him to help me. And while I'm at it, I pray he'll help you love your people, too. {eo}

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