

October 5, 2026

Slow Down Enough To Notice

October Series: Love Your Neighbor

Week Focus: Look Around

Scripture – Philippians 2:4 — *“Not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”*

Devotional Reflection

It is possible to move through an entire day surrounded by people without truly noticing anyone. We see coworkers, neighbors, family members, people in stores, people at church, and familiar faces throughout our normal routines. Yet seeing someone's presence is not always the same as paying attention to the person. Our minds can become so occupied with where we are going, what we need to accomplish, and what is happening in our own lives that the people around us slowly become part of the background. **Sometimes people aren't hidden—we're just moving too fast to notice.**

Paul challenges us to look beyond ourselves when he writes, *“Not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”* He is not telling us to neglect our responsibilities or pretend that our own needs do not matter. The word **“also”** is important. We can faithfully attend to what God has entrusted to us while becoming increasingly attentive to the people He has placed around us. Transformation does not make us responsible for everybody, but it should make us less consumed with ourselves. As Christ changes our hearts, we begin to recognize that the people around us are not interruptions to our lives—they are people made in the image of God.

This connects directly with Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan. The wounded man was not invisible. The priest saw him. The Levite saw him. The Samaritan saw him. **The difference wasn't whether they saw him; the difference was what happened after they saw him.** Sometimes we imagine that loving our neighbor begins with an extraordinary opportunity to make a difference. But often it begins much more simply. We slow down enough to notice the person who seems unusually quiet. We listen carefully enough to hear what may be underneath someone's words. We become attentive enough to recognize the person we normally hurry past.

As we begin this first week of **Transformed Community**, do not start by looking for something enormous to do. Start by looking around. Before we can love, serve, or reach the people around us, we have to become attentive enough to truly see them. Ask God to make you more aware of the people already within the ordinary rhythms of your life. The first step may not be solving a problem, meeting a need, or knowing exactly what to say. **The first step may simply be slowing down enough to notice who God has already placed around you.**

FOCUS FOR TODAY

Before looking for someone new to help, become attentive to the people God has already placed around you.

PRACTICE

- Identify **one part of your normal day where you tend to move quickly** and intentionally slow down.
 - Put away unnecessary distractions for a few minutes and pay attention to the people around you.
 - Notice whether someone's demeanor, words, or behavior seems different than usual.
 - Resist the pressure to immediately fix or solve anything—today, simply practice being attentive.
 - Ask God throughout the day: **“Who have I been seeing regularly without really noticing?”**
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PRAYER

Father, thank You for the people You have placed around me. Forgive me for the times I have become so focused on my own plans, responsibilities, concerns, and schedule that I have looked past people You created and love. Slow me down enough to notice. Give me eyes that are attentive and a heart that is available to You.

Teach me to look not only to my own interests, but also to the interests of others. Help me recognize the people I have become accustomed to seeing without truly noticing. As You transform me, change the way I see the people around me. Let Your work within me become visible through greater attentiveness, compassion, and love.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Who have you been seeing regularly without really noticing, and what might need to change in your pace or attention so you can begin to see them differently?