

October 8, 2026

Just Be Present

October Series: Love Your Neighbor

Week Focus: Look Around

Scripture – Romans 12:15 — *“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”*

Devotional Reflection

When someone we care about is hurting, our first instinct may be to figure out how to make things better. We search for the right words, offer advice, suggest solutions, or try to change what they are experiencing. Sometimes practical help is exactly what love requires. But there are also moments when there is nothing we can say that will remove the pain and nothing we can do that will immediately change the situation. Romans 12:15 gives us another expression of love: **presence**. Paul does not tell us to explain away another person's sorrow. He tells us to enter the moment with them—to rejoice when they rejoice and mourn when they mourn.

Being present requires something different from fixing. Fixing focuses on changing the situation; presence begins by caring for the person in the situation. It listens without rushing to answer. It makes room for someone to speak without immediately turning the conversation into advice. It can sit beside someone when there are no perfect words available. Sometimes we hesitate to move toward hurting people because we think, **“I don't know what to say.”** But compassion does not always need an impressive response. **Sometimes compassion doesn't need an answer; it needs your presence.**

Jesus consistently demonstrated this kind of attentiveness toward people. He was never confused about what someone ultimately needed, yet He did not treat people as problems to be processed. He saw individuals, heard their cries, asked questions, and responded personally. As we learn to **look around**, we must remember that seeing someone does not automatically mean we have been assigned to solve everything they are facing. God may simply be inviting us to slow down long enough to listen, care, pray, and remind someone through our presence that they are not invisible.

This is especially important as we grow in community with one another. We need relationships where people do not have to arrive with everything already together. Sometimes the most loving thing we can offer is a safe moment for someone to say, **“This is what I'm carrying,”** without immediately being handed a solution. That does not mean we never offer counsel or practical assistance. It means we learn to discern what love requires in the moment. Today, resist the pressure to have every answer. **You do not have to solve someone's situation to faithfully stand with them in it. Sometimes you simply need to be present.**

FOCUS FOR TODAY

Sometimes compassion doesn't need an answer; it needs your presence.

PRACTICE

- Think of **one person who may need someone to genuinely listen to them.**
 - Reach out appropriately and ask a sincere question such as, **“How are you really doing?”**
 - If they choose to share, give them your attention without immediately preparing advice or a solution.
 - Resist the urge to compare their experience with yours or redirect the conversation toward yourself.
 - Before offering advice, consider asking: **“Would it help for me to listen, pray with you, or help you think through what to do next?”**
 - If appropriate, end the conversation by praying with them and reminding them that they do not have to carry everything alone.
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PRAYER

Father, thank You that You are present with me in every season of my life. Thank You that I do not have to hide my pain, questions, disappointments, or struggles from You. Teach me to reflect that same compassion toward the people You have placed around me.

Help me become a better listener. Deliver me from the pressure to always have the right answer or immediately fix what someone else is facing. Give me wisdom to know when practical action is needed and when love simply requires me to remain present. Make me attentive, patient, compassionate, and trustworthy so that the people around me can experience something of Your love through the way I listen and care.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

When someone shares what they are carrying, do you naturally listen to understand or listen while preparing a solution—and how might God be teaching you to become more present?