

October 22, 2026

Don't Close Your Heart

October Series: Love Your Neighbor

Week Focus: Don't Just Say It

Scripture – 1 John 3:17 – *“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?”*

Devotional Reflection

There is a difference between recognizing someone's need and allowing that need to affect our hearts. John presents a challenging picture: someone sees a brother or sister struggling, possesses resources that could provide help, yet chooses to withhold compassion. John's concern is not that this person lacks the ability to meet every need. The person in his example has the means to respond but deliberately closes their heart. His question challenges us to examine whether the love we profess is shaping our willingness to help. **A HEART BEING TRANSFORMED BY CHRIST SHOULD NOT BECOME COMFORTABLE WITH INDIFFERENCE.**

Indifference rarely begins with an open declaration that we do not care. Sometimes it develops through repeated excuses. We tell ourselves that someone else will help, that the situation is too complicated, or that we will respond when life becomes less demanding. There are times when these concerns reflect genuine limitations, and there are situations in which direct assistance may not be appropriate. But there are also times when our explanations become convenient ways to avoid responding to needs we have the ability to address. The Holy Spirit helps us examine the difference between a legitimate limitation and an unwilling heart.

Biblical compassion does not require us to meet every need, ignore our responsibilities, or abandon healthy boundaries. We cannot solve every problem, and attempting to do so may leave us overwhelmed or ineffective. Wise compassion considers what assistance is appropriate, what resources are available, and how to respect another person's dignity. Sometimes we can provide material support. Other times our response may involve encouragement, prayer, practical assistance, or connecting someone with a trustworthy resource. **COMPASSION DOES NOT MEAN WE CAN DO EVERYTHING; IT MEANS WE REMAIN WILLING TO CONSIDER WHAT WE CAN FAITHFULLY DO.**

Today, examine whether there is an area where your heart has gradually become closed. Perhaps repeated disappointment has made you hesitant to help. Perhaps busyness has made you less attentive. Or perhaps you have been carrying responsibilities that require rest and renewed strength. Ask God to give you both compassion and discernment. He can keep your heart tender while teaching you to serve wisely. **YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO MEET EVERY NEED, BUT YOU SHOULD NEVER BECOME COMFORTABLE IGNORING EVERY NEED.**

FOCUS FOR TODAY

You may not be able to meet every need, but you should never become comfortable ignoring every need.

PRACTICE

- Consider one need you have noticed.
 - Ask whether you have the ability and appropriate opportunity to respond, or whether another form of support would be wiser.
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PRAYER

Lord, examine my heart and remove indifference. Help me recognize the difference between genuine limitations and unwillingness to serve. Give me compassion that is sincere, wisdom that is practical, and a heart that remains responsive to Your leading.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Am I facing a genuine limitation, or have I allowed excuses to keep me from responding to a need I could reasonably address?