October 26, 2026

See Them Differently

October Series: Love Your Neighbor
Week Focus: For the One

Scripture – Luke 15:1–2 (NIV) – *“Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, ‘This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.’”*

Devotional Reflection

HOW WE SEE PEOPLE OFTEN DETERMINES HOW WE TREAT THEM. In Luke 15, two groups looked at the same people but responded very differently. The Pharisees and teachers of the law saw tax collectors and sinners as people whose association with Jesus deserved criticism. Jesus saw people who needed to hear God's truth and experience His grace. The religious leaders focused on their reputation, while Jesus recognized their spiritual need. His willingness to welcome them did not mean He approved of their sin. It demonstrated His compassion for people who needed a Savior.

Sometimes, we can develop similar attitudes without realizing it. We may form opinions about people because of their appearance, reputation, past decisions, or circumstances. We may assume someone is not interested in God, unwilling to change, or too far removed from the life of faith. Yet **WE CANNOT KNOW WHAT GOD MAY BE DOING IN A PERSON'S HEART SIMPLY BY LOOKING AT THEIR PRESENT CONDITION.** The very people we are tempted to dismiss may be the ones God is calling us to notice, pray for, and approach with compassion. When assumptions determine how we see people, we may miss opportunities to demonstrate the love of Christ.

Seeing people differently does not require us to ignore sin, compromise biblical truth, or pretend that every decision is acceptable. It requires us to remember that every person bears God's image and that we, too, stand in need of His grace. Before we came to faith in Christ, we needed forgiveness and salvation. Even now, we remain dependent upon God's mercy as the Holy Spirit continues transforming our hearts. Remembering what Christ has done for us should produce humility rather than spiritual superiority. **THE GRACE WE HAVE RECEIVED SHOULD SHAPE THE COMPASSION WE DEMONSTRATE.**

As you begin this week, ask the Holy Spirit to examine the way you see the people around you. Is there someone you have overlooked because of their reputation? Someone you have avoided because of their past? Someone you have silently decided is unlikely to respond to the gospel? Instead of allowing assumptions to determine your response, begin with prayer. Look for an opportunity to listen, offer encouragement, or demonstrate genuine concern. You do not have to know how someone's story will end to take a faithful step toward them. **THE ONE STILL MATTERS TO GOD, AND THE ONE SHOULD MATTER TO US.**

🔥 FOCUS FOR TODAY

The people others overlook may be the very people Jesus is calling us to notice.

🛠️ PRACTICE

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any assumptions or judgments that may be influencing how you see others.
- Identify one person you may have overlooked because of their reputation, circumstances, or past.
- Pray specifically for that person, asking God to help you see them with compassion and recognize their spiritual needs.
- Take one appropriate step toward demonstrating Christ's love through encouragement, a thoughtful conversation, or simply listening without judgment.

🙏 PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for seeing me with compassion and extending Your grace through Jesus Christ. Forgive me for the times I have allowed assumptions, judgments, or personal opinions to influence how I treat others. Transform my heart through Your Holy Spirit and help me recognize the dignity and spiritual needs of every person. Give me compassion that reflects Your heart and wisdom to respond faithfully to the opportunities You place before me.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

✍️ REFLECTION QUESTION

Who have I been overlooking or judging, and how can seeing that person through the compassion of Jesus change my response?