October 28, 2026

Love Takes the Initiative

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

Scripture – Luke 15:3–4 (NIV) – *"Then Jesus told them this parable: 'Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?'"*

Devotional Reflection

GENUINE COMPASSION DOES NOT ALWAYS WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE. In Luke 15, Jesus tells the story of a shepherd who discovers that one of his sheep is missing. Rather than dismissing the loss because ninety-nine remain, the shepherd goes after the one that is lost. Jesus uses this picture to reveal God's gracious concern for sinners. The shepherd's initiative reminds us that salvation begins with God's grace, not humanity's ability to find its own way back to Him. Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost, and through His death and resurrection, He provides the salvation we could never accomplish for ourselves. **OUR HOPE OF SALVATION BEGINS WITH GOD'S GRACE REVEALED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, NOT WITH OUR OWN ABILITY TO FIND OUR WAY BACK TO HIM.**

This truth should shape the way we approach people who do not yet know Jesus Christ. Sometimes we assume that if someone is interested in God, they will eventually ask us about church, faith, or salvation. We may wait for the perfect conversation, a convenient opportunity, or an unmistakable invitation before demonstrating concern. Yet the example of the shepherd challenges our tendency to remain passive. While we cannot save anyone or produce repentance in another person's heart, we can take faithful steps to make the gospel known. A thoughtful conversation, a sincere invitation, an encouraging word, or a willingness to listen may become an opportunity to point someone toward Jesus. **LOVE THAT REFLECTS CHRIST DOES NOT ALLOW CONVENIENCE TO DETERMINE WHETHER WE CARE.**

However, taking the initiative does not mean forcing conversations, pressuring people, or treating relationships as projects. Christlike witness requires humility, wisdom, patience, and genuine concern. We are called to love people, not merely pursue a response from them. The person we are praying for is not a number to increase, a goal to complete, or a testimony to claim. That person bears God's image and deserves to be treated with dignity. As the Holy Spirit transforms us, our concern for others should become increasingly sincere. We can pray faithfully, build meaningful relationships, demonstrate compassion, and share the truth of the

gospel when appropriate opportunities arise. **OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO BE FAITHFUL WITNESSES; THE POWER TO SAVE BELONGS TO JESUS CHRIST ALONE.**

Today, consider whether there is someone God has placed within your circle of influence whom you have been waiting to approach. Perhaps you have been meaning to check on a neighbor, reconnect with a family member, encourage a coworker, or speak with someone about your faith. You do not need to have every answer or know how the conversation will unfold. Begin by praying for wisdom and asking God to help you take one appropriate step. Remember that faithful initiative may be as simple as reaching out, listening with compassion, or making yourself available for a meaningful conversation. **WE DO NOT HAVE TO SAVE THE ONE. WE ARE CALLED TO FAITHFULLY POINT THE ONE TO THE SAVIOR.**

🔥 FOCUS FOR TODAY

Because God has graciously moved toward us through Jesus Christ, we should intentionally demonstrate His love and faithfully point others toward the Savior.

🛠️ PRACTICE

- Identify one person you have been meaning to contact, encourage, or speak with about your faith.
- Pray for that person by name, asking God to prepare your heart and provide wisdom for a meaningful interaction.
- Take one appropriate step today by sending a message, making a phone call, offering encouragement, or arranging time to connect.
- Look for a natural opportunity to share something about the hope you have in Jesus Christ, while listening respectfully and allowing the conversation to develop without pressure.

🙏 PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your gracious love and for sending Jesus Christ to seek and save the lost. Forgive me for the times I have allowed fear, convenience, or hesitation to keep me from reaching toward others. Through Your Holy Spirit, give me compassion that leads to faithful action, wisdom to recognize opportunities, and courage to share the hope of the gospel. Help me build genuine relationships and remember that salvation belongs to You alone. May my life faithfully point others toward Jesus Christ.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

✍️ REFLECTION QUESTION

Who is one person I have been waiting to reach, and what faithful step can I take today to demonstrate Christ's love and open the door for a gospel conversation?