

A Note from Pastor Wendy 11

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Hello Everyone! You will be glad to know that our preparations for reopening are progressing quite well.

I have been listening to several Christian programs recently, several of which have been speaking about how we as Christians need to be more aware of the people around us. We need to begin to really look at who they are as Jesus did. Jesus did not look at color or for what a person was labeled, for example: sinner; tax collector; leper. He looked into their heart and soul, He saw their worth and potential and He loved them. He did not say they had to change before He would heal them or love them. He immediately touched the leper; healed the blind; ate with tax collectors. He showed compassion to all regardless of who they were.

We have come to the point in our lives where it is easy to overlook the people around us, sometimes even in our own families and neighborhoods. How often are we walking down the street, with our earbuds in our ears, listening to music or talking on our phones—and we do not notice the people we pass by. We look at people all around us every day; but do we really see them for who they are? As you scroll through the myriad of photos and selfies on Facebook, do you really see the people in those photos? Who are they? What are their needs? What have they been going through? Are they really happy or are they just crying out for attention?

Did you know that a recent study showed that 24 billion selfies were uploaded last year, and in one day one million selfies are taken? It was also suggested that a single person is likely to take 25,000 selfies in their lifetime. We are raising a bunch of #selfies.

Do you speak kindly about the person who passes you on the highway and pulls right in front of you? Or are you grumbling some unkind words under your breath? Do you look down on the homeless people on the side of the streets as they ask for handouts?

It seems that we have learned how to pretend to love others—how to speak kindly, avoid hurting feelings, and appear to take an interest in them. We may even be skilled at pretending to feel moved with compassion when we hear of other's needs, or become indignant when we hear of injustice. But God calls us to a real and sincere love that goes far beyond politeness. Sincere love requires concentration and effort. It means helping others become better people. It demands our time, money and personal involvement. No individual has the capacity to express love to a whole community, but the body of Christ does in its' own town.

In John 13:34, Jesus says, "I give you a new command: Love one another Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another."

We are to love others based on Jesus' sacrificial love for us. Such love will not only bring unbelievers to Christ; it will also keep believers strong and united in our hostile world. We need to be a living example of Jesus' love.

Jesus even went on to say that our "Christlike love will show we are His disciples." Do people see petty bickering, jealousy and division in our lives? Or do they see that we are Jesus' followers by our love for one another?

Love is more than simply warm feelings. Love is an attitude that reveals itself in action. We need to help others when it is not convenient, not complain when others hurt us. This kind of love is hard to do. That is why people notice when you do it and know you are empowered by God.

The more we become like Christ, the more love we will show to others. The point is, at some time we have to stop "looking" and start "Seeing". We have to start seeing what God wants you to see—a people made in the image of God. There is nothing more important than people and helping them. If everything we believe about God is really true, we need to take the love of Jesus Christ to a broken, hurting and dying world.