



# Called To The Ones

*A 5-day devotional*

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**The Called to the Ones** 5-day devotional seeks to reorient our hearts to God's command to love our neighbor—the ones who are on our path.

In a society driven by clicks, likes and follows, we are conditioned to think that loving our neighbor looks like going overseas for missions or having a platform that gives us a wider reach. However, God has called us to faithfully love the ones whom He has placed in our lives. He isn't impressed by what we can do for the masses. He delights in our obedience to the ones.

The hope is that these devotionals will stir our hearts to ask the Holy Spirit to give us *eyes* to see, *ears* to hear, *minds* to know, *hearts* to love and *hands* to serve the ones.

At the end of this 5 day devotional, there will be 4 practical ways that you can put Called to the Ones into *action*!

**\*\*\*All Scripture verses in the ESV Translation\*\*\***



# Day 1: Eyes To See The Ones

## *A 5-day devotional*

The psalmist writes, “keep my eyes from worthless things” (119:37).

There are many worthless things that our eyes will be distracted by, but people will never be one of them.

A couple of years ago, I challenged myself to make eye contact and smile at people when I walked down the street and through the halls of my job. The reactions I received made me realize how uncomfortable it was for people to be seen. Some people quickly turned away while others were confused by my audacity to lock eyes with them. However, there were those who responded with a hesitant smile and a nod that revealed to me how good people felt to be seen.

In a day in age where we constantly see people through our screens, we’ve become desensitized to the reality of what it means to see the people who are right in front of us—while we are walking in our neighborhoods. In the grocery store. In our work place. In our schools. And dare I say in our churches.

When we take the time to make eye contact with people, we acknowledge their existence and their presence. We say “you are worthy,” without words.

The prayer is that we would lift our eyes away from our phones and let go of the disillusion that the people we see on the screens replace the need to see those right in front of us.

May God give us eyes to see, not just with our natural eyes but with the eyes of a faith that upholds them as the image bearers of our Gracious Father.

Eyes that push through societal labels that marginalize people.

Eyes that meet people where they are and loves them through it.

Eyes that draw people closer and not push them away.

Eyes that open the door for conversation to hear their stories and the experiences that have shaped them.

Eyes that remind others they are worthy regardless of what’s happened to them.

Will you look up?

**Prayer: Father, keep my eyes from seeing worthless things but lift my eyes to see Your image bearers whom You place on my path. Forgive me for being afraid to see people and dignify their worth. Help me see others the way you see them.**



# Day 2: Ears To Hear The Ones

## *A 5-day devotional*

Technology has opened the way for anyone to speak on whatever they choose to speak on.

Have an opinion? *Tweet it.*

Have a story? *Blog it.*

Have a complaint? *Yelp it.*

Have a picture? *Instagram it.*

This access has given many a voice to speak their mind but it has inadvertently eroded our ability to listen well. We are slowly being wired to avoid listening and go straight into sharing our take on any given topic, at any given moment.

I've seen how the way we engage with technology can easily translate to how we can lack the will to listen to those right in front of us.

In Scripture, James writes, "Let every person be quick to hear and slow to speak..." (James 1:19)

Our sinful nature doesn't have a problem talking more than we listen. Most of us would admit that we actually like talking. But this command in James isn't just a good tip on how to be a good communicator; rather, it's helping us understand how listening is a way of loving others well.

In the passages that follow James 1:9, we are reminded that we aren't called to be just hearers of the Word but doers—why? Because that's what shows that we love God (John 14:15).

Therefore, when we forget that listening is a central component to the credibility of our love, we won't seek to cultivate listening ears.

Listening shows that we respect others. It turns our attention towards the ones we love and what they are saying and how they are saying it. Even when some of what they say isn't all right, it is a way we learn to dignify others.

If we are going to understand our neighbors, we have to be willing to intentionally listen to their stories. their thoughts and perspectives. And not the kind of listening that can't wait until they finish so you can share your thoughts but a listening that takes the time to process and understand and empathize.

So, how are we inclining our ears towards those in our lives?

1. Are we quicker to respond with an answer or a solution when someone opens up to us?
2. Are we quicker to give our opinion about a matter before understanding and processing the issue?
3. Have we allowed our preconceived notions get in the way of hearing what they are saying?

As we seek to love those in front of us, let's seek to listen well.

**Prayer: Father, give me ears to hear the ones in my path. Help me relinquish the need to always have to speak before listening intently. As I seek to incline my ears towards the ones on my path, allow me to grow in empathy and compassion. Pour out your wisdom in me so that after I listen, I can speak gracious words to build up and exhort.**

**In Jesus Name, Amen.**



# Day 3: Minds To Know The Ones

## *A 5-day devotional*

Have you ever been misunderstood? I don't know about you, but it's one of the worst feelings.

One thing I've learned about being misunderstood is there is always the lack of fully knowing the circumstances and more importantly, the person, by the one who is misunderstanding.

The internet is certainly a hotbed where misunderstanding thrives. Daily, we take in snapshots of people's lives and thoughts and it's so easy to misunderstand people when we choose to cling to the little that is presented.

While misunderstanding plays out on the internet, we see it in the day to day of life when we don't seek to know our neighbors. It's hard to obey God's command to love our neighbors when we don't even know them. We can't love well those whom we don't know or seek to know.

Taking the time to know our neighbor requires us to not just get out of our comfort zones but first, be aware of the comfort zones we are in. These comfort zones aren't always about safety. It can sometimes be the routines of life that keep us trapped-- so much so, that we don't even know how to step out of it in order to step into someone else's context.

How many of us have worked with someone for years but never knew much about them? Or how about our own family members?

Stepping out looks like slowing down enough to ask the ones in front of us to share their story with us. We will be surprised by what we learn.

The consequence of not knowing our neighbor is making assumptions about them. And anytime we assume, we make conclusions about people that are not holistic to the totality of who they are, leading us to fear them and not love them the way God instructs us.

The more we make time to know the ones in front of us, the quicker we dismantle the preconceived fears we hold, leading us into cultivating richer relationships.

***Prayer: Father, would you give me the mind to know the ones whom I see on my path? I admit that I am often consumed in my world and in my comfort zone so I don't intentionally seek out knowing people in my vicinity. Push my heart towards my neighbor and give me the desire to know them—their story and their heart.***

***In Jesus Name, Amen.***



# Day 4: Hearts To Love The Ones

## *A 5-day devotional*

“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth”  
(1 John 3:18).

When John wrote these words, my assumption is that he wrote this because there were people who thought they could simply love with words but not have the love they profess impact what they do and how they do it.

God’s living and active word is applicable today because if we are honest, we need to be reminded of this truth.

Words come naturally to us. Words don’t require much commitment. But actions of love are harder to commit to. Why? Perhaps because it requires sacrifice. It demands truth. It calls us to confront when we are wrong. It pushes us towards forgiving when we feel justified to not forgive. Love requires a power outside of ourselves to submit to, namely God, who is Love Himself.

When much of our interactions with people happen online, it’s very easy to think we “love” people—especially people we don’t really know.

But the question is, how are we loving the ones in front of us? The ones who don’t agree with us. The ones who don’t think like us? The ones who aggravate us? The ones who inconvenience us?

When love is reserved for those who respond favorably to us, love ceases to be the kind of love God has called us to because it’s a love that lives within our limited bubble. It’s limited to our understanding and our response.

The kind of love that God calls us to is greater than what we are capable of giving in and of ourselves. That is why we need the Holy Spirit to help us love how He loves. In the same way, we need the Holy Spirit to help us understand God’s love for us.

Ephesians 3:19 calls us to “know the love of Christ, that surpasses knowledge...” A love that surpasses our knowledge is a love that needs the help of the Holy Spirit to know it and walk in it.

As we grow in the awareness of that kind of love, the more we are empowered to love others according to His truth. And while we are commanded to love everyone, we will know how to love the ones in front of us over the illusion of loving the masses whom we can’t see or don’t know.

***Prayer: Father, would you give me a heart to love the way you love? I often think I am loving but the moment it takes me out of my comfort, I retreat. Give me the mind to first perceive your love for me and use that to drive the way I love the ones on my path, with grace and truth.***

***In Jesus Name, Amen.***



# Day 5: Hands To Serve The Ones

## *A 5-day devotional*

We are inclined to look at the person with a big platform, with some form of power or with a lavish life and describe them as someone who has achieved greatness.

When Jesus talked about greatness He said, “The greatest among you will be your servant.” (Matthew 23:11).

In a society that bombards us with messages about what it takes to reach greatness, it glorifies the meaning of service by attaching it to a work that is considered more impactful when done for the masses.

But Jesus’ words remind us that the kingdom’s definition of greatness is opposite of the world’s definition. The Kingdom’s definition of greatest is marked with humility seen through how we serve the least of these—not because it’s seen by others.

The greatest example of servanthood is seen in the life and work of Jesus. Philippians tells us that, “Christ, though He was in the form of God...emptied Himself, by taking on the form of a servant...” (Philippians 2:7).

There was nothing showy or glamorous about how He served. In the same way, our posture shouldn’t be to glory in how many people we serve. After all, what good is it to serve the masses but neglect serving the ones who are right in front of us, daily? The ones whom we actually engage in real life?

He’s called us to serve with what we’ve been given, no matter how much or little we have. We are told in 1 Peter that each of us “should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).

This call to serve the ones won’t always be convenient. In fact, it will often confront us with our own selfishness and call us to die to ourselves. It won’t always be seen or acknowledged by others, but we know God sees it and delights in our obedience.

As you walk with God, know that serving others is part of stewarding God’s grace. And God is glorified when we steward His grace well.

***Prayer: Father, would you give me the desire to serve my neighbor in the ways you show me? Forgive me for seeking my own glory in how I serve. Help me see the joy of using what I have to serve another and help me seek your glory above all. Remove the parts of me that want to hold onto my selfishness. I want to be a faithful steward of the measure of grace you’ve given me. In Jesus Name, Amen.***



# Practical Ways To Put Called to the Ones Into *Action*:

*A 5-day devotional series*

- Challenge yourself to look people in the eye and say hi as you are going about your day and make note of the responses you receive.
- Next time you are talking with someone, choose to not speak until they are done speaking and whisper a prayer to the Holy Spirit, “help me respond in wisdom” before you respond.
- Think of at least 3 people in your life and make it a point to ask them if they would be willing to share their story with you.
- Think of a couple who has children in your local church body and serve them by asking the parents if they need someone to babysit so they can have a date night.



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