

Loving those in need
Weekly Devotional

Memory Verse: Romans 12:16

"Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Think back to the last time you actually obeyed this verse (for some of us this may be harder than others!). Where were you? What did you do? Who was it you were kind to? What was their "low position?" How much of a sacrifice was it? How did you feel afterwards? Did you actually follow the commands of the *whole* verse?

For me it was a kid named Billy (of course, the names in this story have been changed to protect the innocent). He didn't have a great family life. He didn't have a ton of friends. He wasn't the "coolest kid in the world" (as least in the opinions of the "experts" – me and my friends). He didn't dress "right" like all the other "cool kids" did (again – in the opinions of the experts). He even lived "on the other side of the tracks" (GASP!). Basically, in our minds, he wasn't a lot of things. However, I was raised to be kind to those less fortunate than me, so I tried my best to befriend him. That usually meant going out of my way to drive him home every night after Youth Group. I know he appreciated it, because he told me he did. In the process, I felt good about being "willing to associate with people of low position."

If your example is anything like mine, then along with me, you might be thinking that you really didn't follow this verse as well as you thought you did – because that is what I am thinking right about now. I may have followed the part that said, "Live in harmony with one another." After all, there was harmony between "Billy" and I. I also followed the part that said, "be willing to associate with people of low position" (but that could be argued because my view of low position might not necessarily mean someone is actually in a low position).

But, along with me, did you forget the whole "do not be conceited" and "do not be proud" thing? While you were helping this person, were you thinking about how good you were to be helping this person? Did you find

yourself thinking about yourself as this person's "savior?" Did you consider yourself better than this person while you were supposedly serving him? Maybe you didn't, but I know I sure did. (*Thank the Lord that God can use even our feeble attempts to serve him...*)

If this is so, then the question is, how do we go about viewing it differently? The past few weeks in our study of Romans 12 we have been coming back again and again to the idea that a knowledge and understanding of the Gospel (i.e. the Good News, the Grace of God, our rebellion vs. God's love) in Romans 1-11 is foundational to our living the Christian faith with proper motives (I do not believe the two can be separated).

How does the "Amazing Grace" of Romans 1-11 keep us from being "proud" and "conceited" as we seek to minister to those who are less fortunate than us?

Who are some people in your life that are less fortunate than you that you can serve?

What are some practical ways that you can serve them?

Think of a time when you have been in need and someone has shown you the love of Christ. How were you impacted? How did it change your perspective of your circumstances?

Prayer for the week: God please allow me to be used by you to love someone in need. Please let them see not how great I am for loving them, but rather how great your love is. May you then be glorified as I seek to serve others.