

## The One Question No One Asks

I have heard it said that if you want to get to know a person very well in a short amount of time, play a round of golf with that person. You will, in four short hours, find out if the person has integrity, is respectful of other people, and is not self-centered with an it's-all-about-me attitude. These traits, or lack thereof, cannot be hidden while playing a round of golf.

Is there a quicker way to find out who a person really is? I believe there is by just asking one simple question. When a person comes face-to-face with another person – any person, stranger or acquaintance – what does that person first see? If the answer is God, then only good will follow. God is in each and every person in the world, whether the person acknowledges it or not, and God loves each and every person unconditionally as they are, not as they should be, from the beginning of time and forever. This is the faith of a Christian. When we wait with open hands and undefended heart, God comes, and he approaches us from the inside outwards. When we look for God, we will find Him. God is present in each and every human being.

For those who freely accept God's unconditional love, their acceptance has enormous consequences. They cannot pay God off, for they are loved by God. God delights in forgiving; forgiveness is the completion of love. They cannot beg God in prayer because they don't beg those who love them. They cannot look on others without realizing the mystery of God's unconditional love for them too – see God in all, seek God in all is the challenge to the human spirit. There is no escape from social justice and respect for human dignity and integrity. We are loved by God who is with us in all our living, our joy, our toil, our suffering, and our dying. Even this world of ours, with all its defects, cannot be seen as a place of exile and evil, but as God's beloved creation, crying out to be improved and made just. Our lives cannot be imagined as a time of testing, for we are loved by God; our lives can only be a time of growing and maturing. A Christian's commitment to moral behavior and full human living is a consequence of being loved by God, not a condition for being loved by God.

Almost 90% of the people in the United States say they believe in God, and almost 75% of the people in the United States say they are Christian. Ask any of these people whose life is more valuable: a Mexican immigrant, a Native American, an African-American, a Syrian Refugee, an Asian-American, a Homeless Person, or their own life. The answer will tell you all you need to know about who that person is. There is only one answer and it is absolute. Tragically, there are few people who really believe this and religion clouds the issue with rules and regulations that lead people to think they can simultaneously be good Christians while viewing others, of different religions or nationalities, as something less. The hypocrisy is indisputable, yet it is ignored by religious leaders; it is too sensitive an issue. Ignoring this fact leads to the chaos we are all now experiencing.

Our life is a journey and a relentless pursuit to infuse God's love into the world. God wants our whole being and becoming a person who lives a life of response to God's love is a full-time job, 24/7, never ending, with always more to be done. That is the challenge. The fire this view fosters in each of us cannot help but change the world for the better, the way God intends.

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