

“Love”

galatians

5:22-23

bearin

fruit

How have you grown
this past year?

Galatians

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Romans 14:5

One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.

Romans 14:6

Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.



2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Romans 6:11-12, 14-15,

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ... For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Romans 6:11-12, 14-15,

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! ... But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Galatians

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.





Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. (John 15:4)

Galatians

But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:13-14

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."





Shortly after one of my first Sunday evening sermons, I met up with a godly friend to get some feedback. We sat at his kitchen table over a cup of coffee and a box of Entenmann's pastries. Before he could say a word, I defensively assured him my message didn't measure up to my standards.

He listened as I lamented my performance. Of course, I secretly hoped he would interrupt and counter my assessment. I gave him every opportunity to correct me. "Aaron," he could have said, "your message was actually quite good; be encouraged."



I longed for him to explain how my insightful words changed his life. Instead, he thanked me for preaching and changed the topic.

A few days later, he placed a handwritten note in my mailbox. It began with 1 Corinthians 13:1, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." Paul's point is clear: when pursuing spiritual gifts to make us look good, we rob them of their value. My friend recognized that I focused on myself more than the people I had hoped to serve.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

At its core love is not about having warm, fuzzy feelings about others, but about seeking their good, being more concerned about their welfare than even your own.

1 Corinthians

“I have the right to do anything,” you say—
but not everything is beneficial. “I have the
right to do anything”—but not everything is
constructive. No one should seek their
own good, but the good of others.

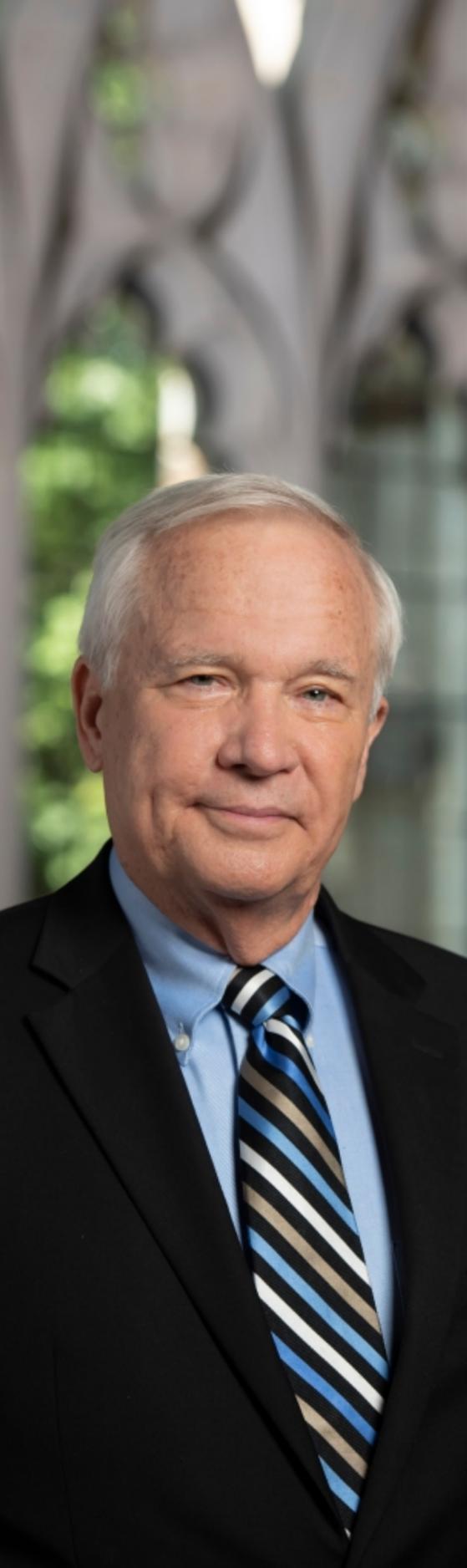


C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* makes a brilliant observation ... If we were to meet a truly humble person, Lewis says, we would never come away from meeting them thinking they were humble. They would not be always telling us they were a nobody (because a person who keeps saying they are a nobody is actually a self-obsessed person). The thing we would remember from meeting a truly gospel-humble person is how much they seemed to be totally interested in us. Because the essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less.



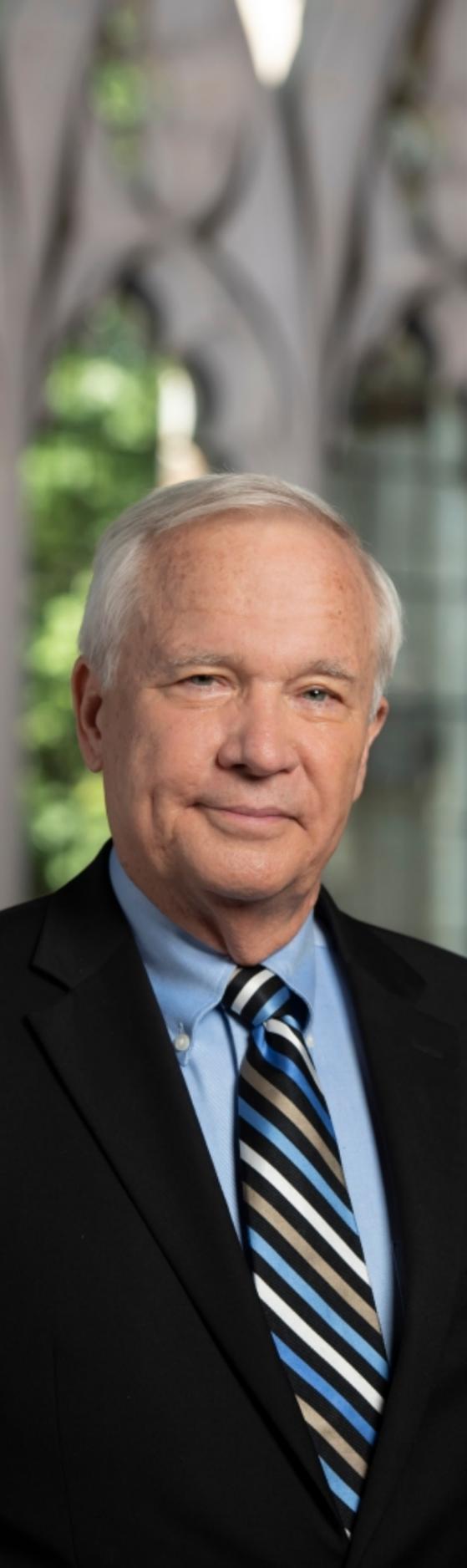
Gospel-humility is not needing to think about myself. Not needing to connect things with myself. ... True gospel-humility means I stop connecting every experience, every conversation, with myself. In fact, I stop thinking about myself. The freedom of self-forgetfulness.

... A truly gospel-humble person is not a self-hating person or a self-loving person ... The truly gospel-humble person is a self-forgetful person whose ego is just like his or her toes. It just works. It does not draw attention to itself. The toes just work; the ego just works. Neither draws attention to itself.



I've told seminarians that ministry defined as "meeting people's needs" is dangerous in a society where the more affluent and privileged among us have solved with a credit card most of our biblical needs like food, housing, and clothing. So we move on to assuaging personal needs the Bible doesn't give a rip about—meaning making, a purpose-driven life, balance, freedom from anxiety, or a sense of personal well-being. Fulfillment of desire becomes elevated to the level of need, and need gets jacked up to the status of a right.

William Willamon, *The Christian Century*, "The Dangers of Providing Pastoral Care"



Because my desires are a bottomless pit, no wonder so many clergy become exhausted rushing about in service to my right to be cared for. Running errands for the anxiously affluent is hardly worth a life.

... I sometimes think that contemporary North American Christians are so beset by personal psychological problems because the church has failed to give us any assignment more interesting than the care of our own souls.



When people expect their pastor to help them display and then heal their wounds, the Christian faith is reduced to a technique for gaining control over your life so you can be happy. ... Church is where Christians have themselves—wounds and all—caught up in an ongoing narrative that reflects God’s glory in the world. That glory is manifest in the existence of a people who have been storied by a gracious God so that they might reclaim the pastoral office as an expression of the work of the Holy Spirit. ... What matters is that we show the world what it looks like for wounded people to care for one another in the name of that wound called “the Christ.”

Stanley Hauerwas, *The Christian Century*, “The Dangers of Providing Pastoral Care”

If our search for wholeness and inner healing leads us only to an even more self-absorbed, self-centered life, then something has gone woefully wrong.

1 John 3:16-18

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

1 John 4:7-12

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

1 John 4:7-12

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.





