



REFLECTIONS

June 25, 2017

Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:37-40

Backstories

The people passing by, some with faces aglow, some twisted with stress, many appear hurried, and a few show no expression at all. But usually what we see doesn't tell the full story. Most often there's a mask covering the whole of it; and if told, the truth would be revealed. A happy face may cover anguish, arrogance disguising fear, or burdensome debt hidden behind fancy cars and a lavish lifestyle. The point is, there is almost always more to the story than meets the eye.

Maybe we should call them backstories since there is something going in the background, past or present, that makes people appear as you perceive them. The disgruntled clerk behind the counter might be hiding the breakup of a romantic interest; or maybe a recent death in the family, or the bill collector's daily call, or simply weariness from a few sleepless nights. The list of possibilities is endless of course, but one thing is certain. Life issues are lurking in the background. What we see combined with what we can't explain the demeanor we see.

We all have backstories, those impactful experiences that shape the way we see the world. Think back. Can't you remember times when you had to fight back emotions to conceal your troubles. How about the time when you wanted to celebrate with a close friend, but your work schedule conflicted; or when your child lay ill at home but the boss required you alongside on a business trip. These are testing times in our personal lives, but duty calls and emotions get set aside. Only they aren't set aside.

Emotions hover on the edge of life's routines. Those emotions are reactions to the personal matters hiding in the backstories. So, when transactions fail, tempers flare, and accusations made, there is almost always another story hidden somewhere to explain it all. But no one bothers to ask. Even worse, no one even considers there might be one.

No, I'm not suggesting we invade someone's privacy by prying into their personal life. But we can allow them the benefit that a backstory would disclose the truth. Love your neighbor as yourself.

In the face of *your* troubles, wouldn't you want the same from them.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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