



Should We Be Our Brother's Keeper?

Galatians 6:10: (NASB) *So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*



Sometimes there are things - seemingly small things - that can change the world. Compassion and caring, for instance. By just showing a little compassion or by acting in a way that shows you care can have a dramatic effect not only on the giver and recipient of these actions, but on those who witness them as well. A few weeks ago we talked about loving our enemies. Today we ask how can we better care for our friends? How can we, in practical terms, be our "brother's keeper"?

 **Candy from kids, *The Science of Greed*, Paul K. Piff, TED Talk**

- *We ran another study where we looked at whether people would be inclined to take candy from a jar of candy that we explicitly identified as being reserved for children. (laughter) I'm not kidding. I know it sounds like I'm making a joke. We explicitly told participants this jar of candy is for children participating in a developmental lab nearby. They're in studies. This is for them. And we just monitored how much candy participants took. Participants who felt rich took two times as much candy as participants who felt poor.*



Let's go back to the original "brother's keeper" question: Cain and Abel.

Their births and lives are the very first thing spoken of after Adam's choice to sin and their expulsion from the Garden:

Genesis 4:2-10: (NASB) ²*And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions...*

Here are two brothers with two different and necessary focuses. Tilling the ground was about survival and about food, right in line with what God had told Adam he would have to do as a result of his sin. Immediately after the pronouncements of sin's consequences, God made coverings for Adam and Eve from animal skins. Abel was a keeper of flocks. This, too, was about survival. It was about clothing now needed in the harsher environment of the outside-the-Garden earth.

...And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; ⁵but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

Perhaps the regard for Abel's sacrifice was all about remembering God's sacrificing of an animal so they could be clothed and protected both physically and emotionally as a result of sin. Perhaps this sacrifice was instituted as a



constant reminder that the cost for sin is a life. The first animal sacrificed was for clothing. This cost of blood shed would be a precursor to Jesus' sacrifice.

⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.

God is compassionate in the face of Cain's anger and lets him know there is still hope, but that hope depends on righteous choices. The alternative is to feed sin and let it go unrestrained. God showed him how to make it right.

 **Pizzled, Compassion, Daniel Goleman, TED Talk (2012)**

- *The Harvard Business Review recently had an article called "The Human Moment," about how to make real contact with a person at work. And they said, well, the fundamental thing you have to do is turn off your BlackBerry, close your laptop, end your daydream and pay full attention to the person. There is a newly-coined word in the English language for the moment when the person we're with whips out their BlackBerry or answers that cell phone, and all of a sudden we don't exist. The word is "pizzled." It's a combination of puzzled and pissed off. I think it's quite apt.*

We are so self-absorbed that others no longer seem to matter.

Similarly, Cain was self-absorbed and it changed the course of history:

⁸Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. ⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, Where is Abel your brother? And he said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?

First a lie and then insolence, which leads to the question, *Am I my brother's keeper?* The mere fact of the excessive use of *brother* here is sufficient answer to Cain's question! It was all about his brother.

¹⁰He said what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.

God's question is piercing and includes the several steps it took for Cain to get to this point.

**How Did Cain get to this point?
How did he become the first murderer of the human race?**



First, let's realize that our care for one another is different, depending upon our relationships with one another.

- Family obligations
- "Brotherly" love; those in the faith
- Care for our neighbor
- Strangers and those who may oppose us

Should we be our brother's keeper with all of them, or do we treat them all differently?



Family obligations are perhaps the hardest area because it is so instinctively close to our heart. Cain and Abel were obviously blood brothers, and being your brother's keeper is most fully applied in this situation:

Keeper: Strong's #8104 shamar (shaw-mar'); to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; generally, to protect, attend to

The word includes the thought of building some kind of protection around that other person.

Here are some other times this word *keeper* is used:

Psalms 17:8: (KJV) **Keep <8104>** me as the apple of the eye; hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

Psalms 116:6: (KJV) The LORD **preserveth <8104>** the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

To preserve someone is to help and nurture them.



Observations from Genesis 4 about how Cain WAS to have been his brother's keeper:

- Verse 2 - Both were contributors to their community with food and clothing. These were complimentary vocations. They both needed what each were doing.
- Verses 4-5 - Sacrificing to God appropriately was a requirement. Both had access to and shared the proper tools of sacrifice.
- Verses 6-7 - Cain's emotions and reactions were his choice and God showed him how to manage them so he could maintain his relationship with those around him instead of letting his emotions get the best of him.
- Verse 8 - Abel's life was more valuable than Cain's anger, but Cain chose blind rage. When we decide we do not want to be our brother's keeper, the principle of this verse takes over. Our anger becomes more important than the other person's experience.

Having emotions is not wrong, but we cannot let those emotions dictate our lives.

How Cain was NOT to be his brother's keeper:

- Regarding what particular occupation/contribution his brother made - each chose their actions. We each have our own ability to make choices.
- Regarding God's acceptance - each chose a path to present themselves to God. For us, we ask what is that path driven by and should we be altering the path we are on? Are we walking towards God or are we on a path of putting ourselves as God?



🔊) Small nudges, *The Science of Greed*, Paul K. Piff, TED Talk

- *So, what do we do? This cascade of self-perpetuating, pernicious, negative effects could seem like something that's spun out of control, and there's nothing we can do about it, certainly nothing we as individuals could do. But in fact, we've been finding in our own laboratory research that small psychological interventions, small changes to people's values, small nudges in certain directions can restore levels of egalitarianism and empathy. For instance, reminding people of the benefits of cooperation, or the advantages of community cause wealthier individuals to be just as egalitarian as poor people.*

Small suggestions can change someone from being self-absorbed to more neighborly, or better being our brother's keeper. There is hope and we all play a part in it!

The emotional pathway Cain followed would leave *your* family "keeperless."

CAUTION
DON'T TRY THIS
AT HOME !



He knew what the right choice was.

ARROGANCE

Proverbs 16:16: (NASB) *How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.*

ANGER

He blew up at the result of his poor choice.

Proverbs 16:17: (NASB) *The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life.*

He did not correct his path when given the opportunity.

PRIDE

Proverbs 16:18: (NASB) *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.*

IRRESPONSIBILITY

He blamed his innocent brother.

Proverbs 16:19: (NASB) *It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.*

He killed his innocent brother! This all led to a great revealing and consequences.

RAGE



Give attention to God's word in order to diffuse rage:

Proverbs 16:20: (NASB) *He who gives attention to the word will find good, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.*

The rest of God's conversation with Cain - this still applies today:

Genesis 4:11-12: (NASB) *¹¹Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹²When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.*

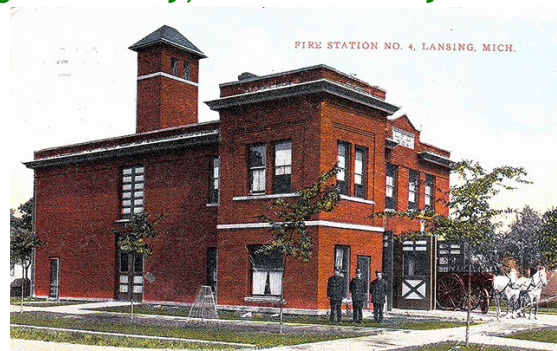
Cain was devoured by his own series of rash thoughts and decisions!
Consequences were all that he had left.

How do we apply being our brother's keeper in the broader relationships of our lives?

Let's start with the big picture, with broad strokes regarding the brotherhood, neighbors and others.

Introduction, *Firefighters in Lansing, Michigan and Tony*, CBS News Sunday Morning

- (Reporter) *Fire Station 1 in Lansing, Michigan is not a restaurant, but it does have a regular customer.*
- (Firefighter) *Here you go, Tony.*
- (Tony) *Thank you!*
- (Firefighter) *Do you want some Kool-Aid?*
- (Tony) *I've got my pop.*
- (Reporter) *Tony Tumminello has a mental disability, but definitely not an eating one. He never misses a meal here. And why should he? The firemen all pitch in to pay for his food and even provide transportation to and from. And that's just a small sampling of the service they provide him. Tony has his own place, but he pretty much just sleeps there. He also has his own job at a local flower market, but he pretty much just works there. Otherwise, he's at the station, and has been about six hours a day, nearly 365 days a year for almost 60 years now.*



Being our brother's keeper should be an identifying trait of any true Christian:

1 John 3:10-11: (NASB) *¹⁰By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. ¹¹For this is the message, which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another...*

To practice righteousness is not merely doing nice things. This "righteousness" means doing godly things. (See CQ Rewind Bonus Material for more on righteousness.)

Matthew 5:20: (KJV) *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness (godly behavior) shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

The Pharisees were all about an external show and not an internal "know."
They did outward acts to make themselves look good. Our righteousness, our godly behavior, has to be far above that.



Godly good brings us to selfless love.

1 John 3:12-16: (NASB) ¹²...not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. ¹³Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

The comparison is made between godly good and Cain. That is important, because when faced with the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" godly good is part of the answer. If you are trying to live in a godly good way, the answer is yes.

Being your brother's *nemesis* is to follow Satan in the arrogance of self-service. That is what Cain was doing.

Being your brother's keeper means practicing godly good *no matter the environment!*



Joseph was a good example of this. No matter where he went - even prison - he thrived in his environment, and moreover made it so his environment thrived. He was genuinely concerned about the people around him. That is being your brother's keeper!

¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶We know love by this that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

The Christian way is to be your brother's keeper *to the extreme* as expressed through *selfless* love - caring for others before you care for yourself. This should be a trait of ours.

This single characteristic is the fulcrum on which we are able to balance our sinful and fallen lives with godly good and selfless living.

 **46 seconds to change, *The Science of Greed*, Paul K. Piff, TED Talk**

- *In one study, we had people watch a brief video just 46 seconds long, about childhood poverty that served as a reminder of the needs of others in the world around them. And after watching that, we looked at how willing people were to offer up their own time to a stranger presented to them in the lab who was in distress. After watching this video, an hour later, rich people became just as generous of their own time to help out this other person, a stranger, as someone who's poor, suggesting that these differences are not innate or categorical, but are so malleable to slight changes in people's values, and little nudges of compassion and bumps of empathy.*

Your actions CAN make an effect on others. WE can be that "46-second video" for others.



Being our brother's keeper applies to those who are taught as well as those who teach:

Galatians 6:6-10: (NASB) *⁶The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.*

How often do we absorb what we are taught and then just move on without reciprocating to the person who built us up?

⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, (doesn't this sound like Cain?) but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Being our brother's keeper is an outgrowth of the very basics of our physical and mental behavior. Literally, what we say, do and think will either contribute to or detract from keeping/protecting one another! There is no middle ground!

⁹Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. ¹⁰So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

We live in a cynical world and the values of true Christianity are often looked down upon or even mocked. We may not be able to witness with words of Scripture, but we can witness with the actions Scripture has taught us. Sometimes the effect seems minimal. But *do not grow weary*. We are to continue to do good to others - it is what we are made of. How do we do good? We watch, listen and then respond to the needs of our brotherhood.

Cain raised the question of being our brother's keeper out of anger. We are required to be our brother's keeper, our brother's protector! Two broad and foundational points:

- Being our brother's keeper should be an identifying trait of any true Christian.
- Being our brother's keeper applies to those who are taught as well as those who teach.



Not noticing, Compassion, Daniel Goleman, TED Talk

- *Some time ago when I was working for The New York Times, it was in the '80's, I did an article on what was then a new problem in New York - it was homeless people on the streets. And I spent a couple of weeks going around with a social work agency that ministered to the homeless. And I realized seeing the homeless through their eyes that almost all of them were psychiatric patients that had nowhere to go. They had a diagnosis. What it did was to shake me out of the urban trance where, when we're passing someone who's homeless in the periphery of our vision, it stays on the periphery. We don't notice and therefore we don't act.*

We get into a self-absorbed trance of not noticing things outside of "ME ME ME!"



Being our brother's keeper means keeping judgment of others at a minimum and in perspective



Matthew 7:1-5: (NIV) ¹*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

Is my judgment of my brother or neighbor protective of him or trying to expose his weakness? What is your motivation?

³*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye, when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?*

Wanting to judge is where the problem begins and reveals whether we are keeping or killing our brother.

⁵*You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

By inappropriately judging, we are actually killing our own relationship with God and others.



A caller from Connecticut suggests globalization is not an accident, but rather by God's design. He intends to nurture the human family. James 2:16: *If one of you says to them, Go in peace; keep warm and well fed, but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 1 Corinthians 10:31: Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Whatever we do is meaningful as long as God accepts our offering.*

Sound brother's keeper/neighbor's keeper judgment advice:

Romans 14:10-13: (NASB) ¹⁰*But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written, as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God. ¹²So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. ¹³Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this - not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.*

Keep them moving forward! God judges us on how we treat others.



13-year old kid, *Firefighters in Lansing, Michigan and Tony*, CBS News Sunday Morning

- (Reporter) It was 1953 when, at the age of 13, Tony went up to some firemen in his neighborhood.
- (Reporter to Tony) Did they invite you to come back to the station?
- (Tony) Yep.
- (Reporter) And you did?
- (Tony) Yep.





- (Reporter) *And you never left?*
- (Tony) *Nope.*
- (Reporter) *Over the years, things have changed, however. What started as one act of kindness for a kid has clearly evolved into something much more.*
- (Firefighter) *It's really special. I really can't put it into words.*
- (Reporter) *A lot of the guys either couldn't put it into words or used the same word.*
- (Multiple firefighters talking) *He's like family.... He's just family.... Would definitely use the word family.*

Being our brother's keeper
means keeping our
judgment of ourselves
always in gear



Without proper and attentive self-judgment, we are at risk!

1 Corinthians 11:27-31: (NASB) ²⁷Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. ³⁰For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. ³¹But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.

This is a warning against not taking our Christianity seriously. It is not a social organization where we join to get things and to feel good. It is a way of life that changes your focus, activities and thoughts.

Galatians 6:4-5: (NASB) ⁴But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. ⁵For each one will bear his own load.

Should we still protect our brother when we are in serious disagreement?

Being our brother's keeper
means literally being
on call to humbly
protect and help them



Galatians 6:1-5: (NASB) ¹Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ²Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

To bear other's burdens is to help them carry their own load and can only be done if you care about them.



³For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing he deceives himself. ⁴But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. ⁵For each one will bear his own load.

Caring is paramount, but humility in our actions is crucial as God views our heart before our works.

Helping someone bear their burdens does not take away the consequences of a bad choice, but it helps them get through it and learn from it.



Simply noticing, *Compassion*, Daniel Goleman, TED Talk

- *One day soon after that, it was a Friday, at the end of the day, I was going down to the subway. It was rush hour. Thousands of people were streaming down the stairs. And all of a sudden as I was going down the stairs, I noticed there was a man slumped to the side, shirtless, not moving, and people were just stepping over him. Hundreds and hundreds of people. Because my urban trance had been somehow weakened, I found myself stopping to find out what was wrong. The moment I stopped, half a dozen other people immediately ran to him at the same time. We found out he was Hispanic, he didn't speak any English, he had no money, he had been wandering the streets for days, starving and he had fainted from hunger. Immediately someone went to get orange juice, someone brought him a hot dog, someone brought him a subway cup. This guy was back on his feet immediately. But all it took was that simple act of noticing.*

Sometimes it only takes one person to notice for others to notice, too.

This humility in bearing another's burdens will be tested when things get dicey between us. Sometimes we may not want to protect, as we might feel slighted or wronged by the one needing protection.

It is in this circumstance that the depth of being our brother's keeper needs to find expression.

1 Corinthians 6:1-7: (NASB) ¹Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? ²Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

Here we have a case of Christians bringing lawsuits against each other. We should be beyond pettiness. Do we believe in the wisdom of God working in the lives of our brotherhood - even those with whom we have issues? We need to handle our differences all while giving glory to God.

⁴So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? ⁵I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, ⁶but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?



Being our brother's keeper in this situation will meet with its greatest challenges - are we willing to accept the wrong and accept it without retaliation?

⁷Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

Or have we already lost this battle against our own wits and pride?

We do have to stand up for issues of godly principles and righteousness.

 **Brotherly teasing, *Firefighters in Lansing, Michigan and Tony, CBS News Sunday Morning***

- *(Reporter) And they treat him exactly as such. No coddling here. They play jokes on Tony, as brothers do, like take his cane.*
- *(Tony) Hey!*
- *(Reporter) And Tony will tease them right back.*
- *(Tony) My assistant here...*
- *(Reporter) ...like when he calls Battalion Chief Jim Marino his assistant.*
- *(Jim) Oh, I just got demoted again.*
- *(Tony) Oh, you better get it straight.*
- *(Jim) No, I'll never get it straight.*

This is costly for the firefighters. It costs them time, effort and money to take care of Tony, but they are willing. What a wonderful example!

Being our brother's keeper
means putting their best
interest before yours!



James 5:16: (KJV) *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

Confess your faults one to another - this implies vulnerability.

that ye may be healed - the context tells us this means spiritual healing, not physical.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much - in the context of praying for your spiritual brother or sister - not for ourselves. While this does not mean we should not pray for ourselves, it means we can have great results from praying as our brother's keeper. This selfless love should inspire us!



Philippians 2:3-4: (NASB) *³Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

Protect and defend! Like the military, we want to put the welfare of others ahead of ourselves.

What about situations where serving God and dealing with your fellow man contradict?

Being our brother's keeper means setting an example that honors God



Matthew 22:15-22: (NASB) *¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plotted together how they might trap him in what he said. ¹⁶And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that you are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for you are not partial to any.*

This is purely a setup - they feigned honor and respect and then pounced upon Jesus!

Notice how Jesus not only diffused the plot, but how he was willing to protect them in their ignorance...

¹⁷Tell us then, what do you think? Is it lawful to give a poll tax to Caesar, or not? ¹⁸But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, why are you testing me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for the poll tax. And they brought him a denarius.



(See Bonus Material for notes on the poll tax.)

First, Jesus exposed their attitude and hypocrisy. He was honest in his assessment of them as they were dishonest in their deviousness.

²⁰And he said to them, whose likeness and inscription is this? ²¹They said to him, Caesar's. Then he said to them, then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's.

Second, he answered them in a way that was unarguable. His answer was profound advice for them to follow if they were themselves wanting to be about the business of serving God.

²²And hearing this, they were amazed, and leaving him, they went away.

Matthew 6:33: (NASB) *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

Being our brother's keeper means setting the example of following God. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.



🔊) **Heroes, Firefighters in Lansing, Michigan and Tony, CBS News Sunday Morning**

- (Reporter) *Although the brotherly teasing continues, as Tony ages, the guys have started to play another role too, like the children of an aging parent. The firefighters do his laundry, clean his hearing aids; they even bathe Tony now.*
- (Reporter) *What if these guys weren't here? What would your life be like?*
- (Tony) *Oh. (sadly) I don't know.*
- (Reporter) *You don't like thinking about that?*
- (Tony) *No.*
- (Reporter) *Fortunately, he never will have to think about that.*
- (Firefighter) *Tony's got a place forever, yeah.*
- (Reporter) *All firefighters are heroes. But at Station 1, they are before they ever leave the building.*

This is a powerful lesson of contributing to the lives of those around us.

Being our brother's keeper
means knowing who
to protect them from



How can we know who is who and what is what? Check yourself first! We do not want our brother or sister to need protection from us! If we, with our interaction with others, have that self-absorbed, self-serving approach, others need protection from us.

Matthew 7:13-18: (NASB) ¹³Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Realizing that appearance is merely an introduction - what follows it?

¹⁵Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? ¹⁷So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

Pay close attention to the fruits of those who would deceive, for there are always signs of darkness and evil that cannot be fully hidden as their agenda eventually shows itself!

Watch out for charismatic Christian leaders who are all about riches and personal glory - their focus is obvious!



Greatness redefined, The Drum Major Instinct, Martin Luther King, Sermon from February 4, 1968

- So, Jesus gave us a new norm of greatness. If you want to be important, wonderful. If you want to be recognized, wonderful. If you want to be great, wonderful! But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. That's the new definition of greatness. And this morning, the thing that I like about it, by giving that definition of greatness, it means that everybody can be great, because everybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's Theory of Relativity to serve. You don't have to know the Second Theory of Thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love. And you can be that servant.*

You can be great! Greatness comes through service. Be your brother's keeper.

Colossians 2:6-8: (NASB) ⁶Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷having been firmly rooted and now being built up in him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Here are some other things we need to protect our brother against: *philosophy and empty deception, the tradition of men, elementary principles of the world.*

Protect and defend! That is what being our brother's keeper is all about. We need to learn to say, "I need to protect and defend YOU, my brother, because I care about you. You are more important to me than I am, and I have the privilege of helping you walk in Christ." Even if our neighbors are not Christians, we are to be kind and compassionate and inclusive with a sense of community. We must be good to even those who do not like us, showing them love and grace. If we do this in every aspect of our lives, we become walking epistles of Christ.

*So, should we be our brother's keeper?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



Righteousness is more than just doing nice things:

Righteousness: Strong's #1343 dikaioō (dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay); equity (of character or act); specially (Christian) justification

Righteousness: Lexicon: 1) in a broad sense: state of him who is as he ought to be, righteousness, the condition acceptable to God. 1a) the doctrine concerning the way in which man may attain a state approved of God. 1b) integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling, and acting. 2) in a narrower sense, justice or the virtue which gives each his due



A few examples:

Matthew 5:6: (KJV) *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after **righteousness <1343>**; for they shall be filled.*

Matthew 5:10: (KJV) *Blessed are they which are persecuted for **righteousness' sake <1343>**; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 5:20: (KJV) *For I say unto you, That except your **righteousness <1343>** shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 6:33: (KJV) *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his **righteousness <1343>**; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Matthew 21:32: (KJV) *For John came unto you in the way of **righteousness <1343>**, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.*

Luke 1:75: (KJV) *In holiness and **righteousness <1343>** before him, all the days of our life.*

John 16:8: (KJV) *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of **righteousness <1343>**, and of judgment:*

John 16:10: (KJV) ***Of righteousness <1343>**, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;*

A little background on the poll tax:

(Source: Biblical commentary by Alfred Poole) Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But how came this to be a case of conscience? What doubt could there be, whether men from their peace might not lawfully part from their own, especially such a little part of it? Some think that they spake with relation to that particular tribute which was demanded, which they think was that half shekel, Exodus 30:12,15, paid by the Jews every year, which was to go for the service of the tabernacle: they say that the Romans had ordered this payment to go to the emperor, and this bred the question, Whether they might lawfully pay that which was appointed as a testimony of their homage to God, and for the service of the temple, to a profane use.

A few other thoughts on ways to be our brother's keeper...

Knowing what truth is:

John 8:31-36: (NRSV) ³¹Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, *If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. ³³They answered him; we are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying you will be made free? ³⁴Jesus answered them, Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. ³⁶So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.*

2 Timothy 2:15-16: (NRSV) ¹⁵*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. ¹⁶Avoid profane chatter, for it will lead people into more and more impiety,*



Relaying sound doctrine to those with whom you speak:

1 Timothy 4:4-7: (NRSV) *⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵for it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer. ⁶If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed. ⁷Have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives' tales. Train yourself in godliness,*

2 Timothy 4:1-4: NRSV) *¹In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: ²proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. ³For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, ⁴and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths.*