Faith & Worship

The long way home after someone says they are fine

By DOUGLAS B. VANDERGRAPH

In a small county, 'I'm fine' can end a conversation before it has really begun. People say it from habit, to avoid troubling a friend, or because they cannot find the words for what is happening. We smile, nod, and continue with our day. Later, the person who answered may make a long drive home with more worry than anyone realized.

We have good reasons to respect privacy. No neighbor should have to reveal a medical problem, a financial struggle, or a painful family story to earn kindness. Yet privacy should not become an excuse for neglect. We can offer companionship without demanding an explanation first. Jesus met people who carried more than the crowd could see. In the account of the healing of Bartimaeus, Jesus did not decide what the blind man needed without listening. He stopped and asked a question. That pause honored the man as a person with a voice, not merely as a problem to be solved.

In Hickman County, we can practice a similar restraint. Instead of pressing someone to tell us everything, we might ask whether they would welcome a call later in the week. We can offer to bring something by on a particular day. We can keep an invitation open and accept the answer we receive. Often, the greatest kindness is to remain steady without becoming intrusive.

This is especially important for people who have always been the helpers. They may be the last to admit that their own strength is running low. We need not embarrass them by making their difficulty public. We can simply behave as though friendship includes taking a turn at carrying the weight.

There are roads we cannot shorten and troubles we cannot remove. But nobody should have to wonder whether saying 'I'm fine' has permanently closed the door to care. A good neighbor knows how to knock gently again.

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We don't know how much time we have left

By DANNY CARR

"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.' " James 4:13-15

We make plans, we schedule to do things, and I know we have to make appointments, and plan to go here or there. But the scripture today tells us to be mindful of the fact, we do not know what tomorrow holds, or if we have tomorrow. The scripture says, "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow." Truth is, we do not know what tomorrow holds. There are many people who had plans for tomorrow that are no longer with us. We do not know if we have another year, another 10 years or another 10 minutes. Please understand I am not trying to bring you down, but that's just the truth.

The scripture continues, "What is life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, if it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." Our life here is so short, it is like a vapor when thought of in relation to eternity. We don't know what tomorrow holds, but we can know about our eternity. If one accepts Jesus Christ as their Savior, and makes Him Lord of our life, we can with confidence know that we have the gift of salvation, and eternal life.

But while we are here, we need to make the most of our lives by serving God with all we are. Serve Him by sharing His love with those we meet. Make our lives a living witness of the greatness of God.

The scripture makes it clear, we don't know how much time we have, and we need to understand that if it's His will, we will see tomorrow. God is in control!

Love them like Jesus....

May God bless you with a great day....

The US Constitution does not give us rights

By VAN YANDELL

The Constitution of the United States of America does not give us rights. Instead, it regards certain privileges/rights as being "unalienable" and common to mankind.

The Constitution prohibits the government from taking away those rights. It was written for the citizen's protection from an oppressive government.

The framers must have known that over a period of time, power hungry individuals would try to block those fundamental rights and saw it necessary to write a document that would keep that from ever happening.

Article one of the Bill of Rights states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Article one explicitly states "Congress shall make no law." This is to keep the lawmakers from establishing a religious state or prohibiting the establishment of a religion.

Article one also gives American citizens the freedom of speech. The freedom to lie, confuse or mislead concerning the truth was apparently not foreseen by those framers.

Many in America have come to a point of mistrust of any information to which we may be exposed. Sad to say, trust in our world is on the chopping block and in many locations, the axe has fallen.

A very precious right is the right to peaceful assembly. I was working a church construction and maintenance project in Cuba in 2011. One night I met with the deacons/elders of the church.

Being in a tropical climate there were openings in the outer walls but no glass in those windows. A watchman was placed outside to be sure no government official would stand and listen to our meeting. A typical church meeting as it was, the government would not have seen it as such. The communist government there (as in many communist countries) is constantly fearful of a rebellion/coup. Consequently group meetings are strongly discouraged and in many cases strictly prohibited.

Whereas there are several countries that have determined to be a religious state, prohibiting the presence of other religions, that is not to happen in the U.S.

If you have been in a church, local government meeting or even a motorcycle club group meeting, you may be assured; in many countries you would be breaking the law. A few countries require a permit to assemble the then those assemblies are monitored.

The second amendment is the right to bear arms. "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

One estimate is that one-third of Americans own guns with a total number of around 107 million. Those are estimated to possess up to one-trillion rounds of ammunition. If legitimate gun owners were the problem, we would know it!

Freedoms are not to be taken lightly. Many lately have been observed sitting during the National Anthem. This practice is disgraceful for anyone enjoying the freedoms that thousands of service men and women have died to protect those rights.

Being "Ungrateful" and "entitled" may be an accepted practice by some but the mothers of deceased soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen would be devastated in seeing anyone disrespecting their sons and daughters that had died to secure those rights.

Religions numbering around 4000 exist in our world. All have one thing in common. That is the opinion, "I'm right and everyone else is wrong." That being the case, where is the evidence of reality. Christianity offers through the Holy Bible, extensive evidence. In the minds of many, enough evidence leads to proof. As a policeman friend once told me, "Follow the evidence and it will lead you to the truth."

Through prophesy and the science in the Bible, the God of the Bible verifies His existence. Containing information no human could have known when the scrolls were penned, the Bible proves itself from within itself.

Information such as dietary (Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14), modern science and nutrition has proven its correctness.

Whereas most religions are seeking a better life or an eternal life, the establishment of those religions is simply fulfilling a human need. It certainly appears people are not prepared to accept the finality of death and have created a God for comfort and peace.

That peace has been interrupted by such horrific disagreements and hostilities, religions have led to many wars and deaths.

All in all, the question we ask is, "which religion has the highest credibility?" Realizing some religions have questionable beliefs and actions, Christianity appears to be the most sustainable.

Offering believers a faith based belief in a Savior, Christianity has grown from a few believers nearly 2000 years ago to a number equaling over one-fourth of the world's population.

The United States Constitution does not give us rights; it protects those natural rights to which all mankind is entitled by our Creator. We should be thankful for those that determined and penned those rights and wrote them in such a way, if obeyed, protect us from tyranny.

The Bible teaches there is only one eternal salvation. That is by a faith based belief (Ephesians 2: 8) that Christ Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27: 35) for the remission of sin (Romans 4: 25) and resurrected (Matthew 28: 6). *Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist and commissioned missionary. His email is vmy3451@gmail.com*











