

“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for each other,” says our Lord in John, chapter 13. We love others in imitation of the love God has for us. As much as I may plan to show love, the only way I can truly love my neighbor is through no merit of my own, but by the grace of God. I hope to show the love of Christ to my professors, classmates, roommate, and others around me during the upcoming collegiate chapter of my life through my words and actions, and through prayer. To speak in love is to boast only in Christ, and use gracious words that are sweet like honeycomb. To act in love is to wash the feet of my neighbors and live *in* the world, not *of* it. Yet each relationship can only grow in love by the work of the Spirit. What better way to show love than to call upon Him in prayer for my neighbor? These words, actions, and prayers will look different for each relationship, yet all flow through the love of Christ to those I encounter.

Next fall, I will attend Purdue University with a major in Food Science. Studying a STEM field at a public institution will likely introduce me to many professors who have replaced God with science. However, I can still show love for my professors by speaking with respect, even to those with whom I disagree or are turned away from Christ. I plan to listen in order to understand my professors while standing firm in the Gospel. I will always be ready to answer with kind words and confess the truth. Communicating love will also mean simply holding up my end of the student-teacher bargain - attending class and completing work to my highest ability, showing that my professors are valuable and worthy of my time. Praying for my professors, too, is an action of love. I will ask God to bless them with joy in their research, stamina for the long days, and a heart of service towards their pupils so that they may find contentment in their work.

Getting to know future classmates will allow me to show love to them as well. The easiest way to do this is to simply be a friend. To be a friend who lives in the world but not of it is to uplift, empathize, and strengthen my neighbors. Listening to their struggles of homesickness. Speaking words of encouragement. Sending them a smile! I know that showing love towards my neighbor does not need to be extravagant, and these simple actions and words can speak volumes. It is likely that many of my classmates will not be Christian, and may not have encountered the Gospel before. Letting my light shine before others by living with kindness, a different way than that of the world, will let my classmates know that my love comes from somewhere else. This opens the door for conversations about who Love really is. Even

when I am not interacting with them, I will show them love by praying for their well-being. The mental stress of completing rigorous STEM classes combined with internship deadlines, fear of future unknowns, and other factors will be challenges for both my classmates and myself. I can care for these neighbors by praying for the peace that surpasses all understanding to guard their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus as they work through this complicated time of life.

Showing love to my roommate will, too, display itself through everything I say and do. I will be assigned a random roommate based on a few questions on the Purdue housing contract. This girl, whomever she may be, will see how I live when the whole world is not watching. Do I really live up to the standard I set for myself when everyone can see me? Do I respect my roommate enough to keep my belongings neat? Do I speak to her with grace even when I am extremely tired? Caring for my neighbor with the same love behind the scenes as in front of them shows my roommate that she is worthy of respect simply because she is a child of God. I can continue to show love to my roommate by praying for her to adjust well to life on campus, including finding peace in moving away from home and forming new friendships. Whether my roommate is wonderful or if we have opposite personalities, remaining prayerful for her own success regardless of how close our relationship is calls on love that can only come from God.

Building relationships with those God will place in my next chapter of life is such an amazing opportunity to share the Love that first loved us. I can witness through different words and actions to a professor, classmate, roommate, or any stranger I run into on campus, while praying for the needs they may have. While the relationships with the people around me may be new, my relationship with God is not. I would fail at showing love through my own efforts, but through the Holy Spirit's guiding God will use me to do His work. And since that is the case, how could I not show the same love to others that has been poured out on me?