

DRAWN-IN: RE-INTEGRATE - 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-19

SAD, seasonal affective disorder. It's the winter blues. Days get shorter, temperatures drop lower, people tend to crave comfort foods and have a deep desire to curl up in their bed. This time of year is a good time to practice self-care. It's why this past Wednesday that's exactly what our youth did. They shared ways they take care of themselves, the things that help them. What we learned was nothing shocking. We all need to take care of ourselves and none of us can go through life alone. These are 6th through 12th graders, and they've already learned they have to listen to their bodies and take care of themselves and they're already aware of various ways to do that.

Amid our conversation with the high school group I confessed that when I realize I need self-care, when I realize I HAVE to take care of myself, I become my own worst critic and hibernate from all others. When a friend is down, I am encouraging. I find the positive or say, ok, you failed. Now what did you learn to avoid that next time? I remind them that's one thing, and they are so much more than that one thing. And that's when I asked the question, what if we began to treat ourselves the way we treated others? What if when we mess up, we tell ourselves, well, there's next time. The sun will set tonight and tomorrow it will rise again with brand new possibilities. What if I surrounded myself with supportive friends? What if we took that kind of care of ourselves?

Reality is, yes, in an ideal world, that would be beneficial and healthy for a lot of us. We should be kind to ourselves and we should surround ourselves with kind loving people. We were created for community. We weren't ever created to go through life alone. How boring would that be? I'm an introvert and the idea of never having anyone would be awful.

We all remember Tom Hanks in *Cast Away*. Being all alone, he created someone else to be in community with him. And yes, while it was just a volleyball, many of us teared up when he lost Wilson. We understood the importance and value of having that friendship.

When I read our text for the day, I couldn't help but think of a factory assembly line. Ok, honestly that old scene from *I love Lucy* came to mind with Lucy and Ethel trying to wrap the chocolates, only the chocolates were coming too fast for them and they were stuffing chocolates in their mouths, their hats, their shirts, their pockets. They knew if they failed at their part of the assembly line it would mess everything else up. That was their job, their part.

This made me start to wonder about other jobs. And in the process I actually googled, "jobs that don't require other people" and a remarkable thing popped to the top of my screen. In its own box was the sentence, "It would be impossible to not depend on anyone and have a job at the same time." In every area of life, we encounter others. As parents, we teach our children how to play with others, how to share, how to say please and thank

you, how to take care of one another. We have 18 years to make sure they're able to be good contributing citizens of society. And part of that is learning how to work with others and alongside others.

I had to interview missionaries this week for one of my classes. One of the questions I asked was what the hardest part of their ministry has been. One of the missionaries responded by saying the hardest part for her has been fully being community with the people. To not just give to them, but to learn to also receive from them. Not small things on her term, but big things, like watching and caring for her kids. It was something she had to learn.

Travis and my trainer is here with us today, Dani. (You can thank her for these <flex bicep>.) Dani knows all about the human body. She comes up with random "fun facts" for us all the time of random parts of our body and what that part can do. She knows how when one part is used, how it can affected and influenced other parts of the body. The parts of our body talk with one another and work together to accomplish the things we want to do.

I don't watch a ton of tv, but from the few shows I watch, I can say hands down my favorite commercials lately have been from Audible. Here's a 30-second example...

Listen for a change... Throughout this drawn in creative series we've been dreaming, hovering, risking, and listening. We listen to bring about change. And this week is when that change occurs. This week is when we re-integrate all of those pieces, all the parts. This week is when we put it all into action. And communication is key, so we have to keep listening as we work together.

I remember when I was in high school and read this passage for the first time, I asked myself, what part am I? Am I an ear? Am I a hand? Am I the liver? I took the passage way too literally. Now I realize Paul wanted us to work together. In whatever ministries we do. In whatever life throws at us. If we work together, if we're unified, if we're one, we can do it. For when all the pieces integrate together, they form the whole, they're complete. It's like the saying, I'm not my best self until you are your best self. Life is a communal action.

We are made in God's image and God created the world in community. God with the Holy Spirit, also known as Lady Wisdom, and with the Son, the three created the world. The three made us. They made us to be in community like they are in community, but they also made us to be in community with them. To work alongside and love alongside. And together is a wonderful place to be.