

## There Are Some People . . .

Today's *St. Augustine Record* featured as the quote for the day these words by Carrie Underwood talking about negative feedback in the electronic media: "There's always going to be people who don't like you . . . but that's what the block button is for, right?"

No one likes everyone and no one is liked by everyone. That's a hard lesson for us to learn sometimes. We think that Jesus calls us to like everyone. I don't think that even Jesus liked everyone, but he did love everyone. Love has to do with what you do, not simply with what you feel. Love has to do with how you treat others—with kindness, gentleness, forbearance, honesty, etc. It means seeking the other's highest good regardless of how you may feel about him or her. So, you can love another even when you do not like him or her, even when you may not trust him or her. Sometimes that may mean butting out, just leaving them alone, but other times it may well mean getting involved, engaging with them.

By the same token, liking doesn't always mean loving. In fact, liking someone sometimes gets in the way of loving them. Because we like them and they like us we don't want to run the risk of making them unhappy or the risk of having them no longer like us, so we fail to speak up or turn a blind eye to behavior that can prove harmful. We fail in love.

What sometimes is the harder reality to swallow, though, is that not everyone likes *you*, and there is nothing you can do to make everyone like *you*. Indeed, you are not responsible for everyone liking you. I remember the surprise I felt when a man with whom I had worked for a number of years admitted: "You know, Dudley, when I first met you, I didn't like you at all, but when I got to know you a bit I found you aren't such a bad person after all." He never gave the first indication that he felt anything negative towards me. His outward behavior, his willingness to serve alongside me as a partner in ministry, not even our disagreements ever made me feel that he didn't care for me personally. He, I think, succeeded in love.

In everyday, flesh and blood life there is no "block button." We have to work alongside, serve alongside, live alongside not only people whose company we enjoy, even cherish, but people we may not like and who may not like us, but we can love one another and that covers a multitude of sins. That's what it is all about. So, don't worry over whether you like your neighbor or your neighbor likes you, love them and you may well find that they are rather likeable after all. That's the way I see it, anyway.

Grace and peace be with you.

*Dudley*