



american honey

FARMER'S DAUGHTER

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# Love Thy Neighbor



Easter Sunday is right around the corner, so it would only seem appropriate to discuss a parable from the Bible, in the way it relates to farming.



**30** “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ **31** The second is this: ‘**Love your neighbor as yourself.**’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

— Mark 12:30-31

## My Grandparent’s Neighbors

My Grandparent’s neighbors for nearly 50 years and counting are Mike and Nancy. This couple and their children became like family to my mom’s family over the course of their lives. Mike and Nancy live just down the road from my Grandparent’s farm. Their children are some of my mom’s best friends still today. They were always “there” for each other. When one family needed assistance or support, help on the farm, someone to check the chores when the others were gone, borrow equipment, help getting the crops in, or help sorting pigs or gathering the cows when a fence was down, the neighbors were there and likely the first to show up. When celebrations were due for weddings, graduations, and anniversaries, the neighbors were there. In times of joy, in times of sorrow, and in times of need, the neighbors were there. It didn’t matter what the reason was or what the need was, the neighbors could always, every time, at any moment and at all costs be counted on to be “there” for the other.

## Neighborhood Toilet – For Sh\*\*s & Giggles

They would often tease each other and play jokes on one another, which only solidified the bond. A fond memory is the neighborhood toilet that would pop up at various times in the other’s lawn overnight. Mike had replaced his and thought it a good idea to put it under Grandpa’s tree in the front lawn, which Grandpa quickly saw, first thing, when he sat down to eat his breakfast the next morning. That toilet popped up a few times, in various spots, throughout the years.

## An Act of Service

When I think of the relationship those two families have, which started only because of a similar location, I think of service. Service not just because a need was, well ... needed, but service in the kindness and care that they provided to each other. As I think of farmers as a large, incredible group, I consider the service and care they provide to us all. I enjoy food, tell me someone who doesn’t. I appreciate my clothes made of cotton instead of cacti. Most importantly, I value all the needs and wants the farmers make possible for me because of their business and because of their hard work and long hours that they so willingly endure.



## Growing Demand, Growing Population

The Farm Bureau Federation reports that one US farm feeds approximately 166 people per year. By 2050 that will have to increase by 70% due to the anticipated population in that year. That means our farmers will have to work harder and become even more efficient in the next 30 years to accommodate the increasing population. But to keep that in perspective, the US corn yield has increased more than 360% since 1950. [Check out my A'maize'ing Farmer blog on that topic!](#) But, more than ever, the service provided by farmers is



needed and that business need is growing. As Americans we have a bountiful, dependable, healthy and safe food supply. We are a very fortunate society thanks to the service the farmers and their businesses provide so readily.



## Stewards of the Land

Farmers are good stewards of the land as well. They take care of the valuable resources and they continue to strive to do better. Since 1982 there has been a 34% decline in erosion of cropland. So not only are they serving the people, they are wisely managing the means to continue to provide the service. Farmers, as a group, are neighbors taking care of neighbors even if the neighbors are across the country or the world.

## Blessed Neighbors

According to the US Department of Agriculture, there were 2 million family farms in the US in 2021. Maybe the statistic should read because of the 2 million family farms in the US, there were 332 million (US population) blessed neighbors in the United States in 2021. I just doubt there are enough toilet yard ornaments to contribute to the pot ☺. In a country where we are in need of heaven's help to start uniting us back together, I am inspired by the fact that farmers persistently continue the business of neighbor helping neighbor.



*Church on the same country road that my grandparents and their neighbors lived.*

Sincerely,

*an american honey*

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