

The Faith Script

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*Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.
1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)*

[Prayer Wall](#)

Over Christmas break, a family from Pennsylvania who were on vacation came to see the school to discuss the application process for their daughter. I ran into them as they were getting off the elevator to meet with our admissions director. We engaged briefly in some small talk about the weather and how they heard about PBA. Since I was on my way to another appointment, I asked if there was one question that they wanted to ask the Dean while they had the chance. The father immediately asked, "What advice would you give to a young person who wants to pursue a career in pharmacy?"

The answer I gave them should be equally applicable to all of you, whether you are just starting your career or like me, have been at it for many years. My advice can be summed up in just one word...Love...

Some of you might think I mean love your profession, which is not a bad thing, but it's not really about loving your career. It's about loving people—those whom you have been called upon to serve in a variety of ways.

Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment and he responded: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. There are no commandments greater than these.'" Mark 12:30-31 (NIV)

Pharmacist encounters with patients often involve a whole host of concerns from the patient that relate to their physical, mental or spiritual being. The baggage people carry around often makes them difficult to deal with, let alone show them the love of Christ. The patient might have been treated poorly by someone else in the healthcare system or they might have just received some devastating news, or they might be trying to cope with personal problems at home or work. And, unbeknownst to you, they carry all of it with them to the encounter with you, the pharmacist, who is often their last stop in an otherwise frustrating healthcare experience, as you bear the brunt of their pent up anger or impatience.

I generally try to see the face of Jesus in every patient or person as I try to help them, especially those who are difficult to handle. Sometimes I pray silently for patience and discernment. To illustrate the message, I'd like to share with you a moving experience that touched my heart during a mission trip a few years ago. I've been the co-leader of a Gregory School of Pharmacy medical mission trip to Costa Rica for the last 7 years. Many of the patients we have served there have left a lasting impression on me, but the most memorable was a young man named Tony. As I was trying to assess his chief complaint and determine the treatment he needed, I sensed a disconnect in his story. So I silently prayed to the Lord for guidance, which He instantly provided, so I felt led to dig a little deeper and try to get Tony to

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share what was bothering him. I made the translator, one of my students, a little frustrated by having him ask the same questions a little differently to get across to Tony the importance of giving us correct information.

Tony started to weep and pour out his heart as if a dam had just burst. To briefly summarize, he admitted to being homosexual, that his family and church had disowned him and that he found out that he had slept with someone who was HIV positive and he was concerned he had contracted the virus. After Tony was done speaking and it was translated to me, I asked if I could give him a hug. Tony's face lit up and he shook his head yes. I don't think I've ever been hugged that hard or for that long. There's much more to the story, but the point I want to get across was that Tony didn't really come to the clinic that day for treatment, but for unconditional love and acceptance that he had not received elsewhere.

Often times there may not be anything that we can do medically for a patient, but we can always provide unconditional love. As Christians, we try to remember that Jesus instructed us in the Gospels to love everyone, as he stated, it is equivalent to showing love directly to God. In the book of Matthew chapter 25 verse 40, Jesus states: 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (NIV) He didn't say to only love those who love you back.

Chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians, often referred to as the "love chapter," describes how we are to love others. Starting with verse 4 (NIV): "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. The chapter ends with: And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Christ's love includes aspects of not only love, but kindness, mercy, and faithfulness, the exact characteristics everyone would like to see in their pharmacist. God's love is sacrificial. The entire gospel comes to a focus in John 3:16. God's love is not static or self-centered; it reaches out and draws others in. By showing Christ's love to others, we earn the right to be heard and then we can share the gospel with others. We must be willing to give up our own comfort and security so that others might join us in receiving God's love, which is His gift of eternal life.

I pray that all of us will be intentional in our actions by leading the way and making a difference in the lives of all of God's people around us and display the love of Christ to everyone. That is the only way to truly love your job.

Dean Mary J. Ferrill, PharmD
Palm Beach Atlantic University
Lloyd L. Gregory School of Pharmacy
West Palm Beach, FL

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