Love and Family

Michele Bonnevie Vaughn
St. John Fisher College

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay’s first paragraph.

"Mark 12:31 “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

The first definition the Dictionary offers for neighbor is: “A person who lives near another”

But, how do you define near? How near is near? Or is near simply a feeling?

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Mark 12:31
“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

The first definition the Dictionary offers for neighbor is:
“A person who lives near another”

But, how do you define near? How near is near? Or is near simply a feeling?

The relationship between Bill and me can use multiple variations of the word near.

Near can be a floor above, as it was at Murphy Hall where we first met on our freshman year at St. John Fisher. Bill was a resident on Murphy ground while I lived “nearby”, one floor above. This is where our love, unbeknownst to us, began to grow. We became friends and stayed in touch periodically throughout our years at Fisher. Whether or not we would, in the future, be “near” each other, it did not matter. “Near” is just a word with a very subjective definition.

Upon graduation from Fisher, Bill moved to Allentown, PA to pursue his career with Wegmans. Meanwhile, I stayed “nearby” to pursue my passion for dentistry and attended the University Of Buffalo School Of Dental Medicine. Throughout dental school Bill and I would check in with one another from time to time with no knowledge of what our relationship would become.

1 Corinthians 13:4
“Love is patient, love is kind.”

Patience is what brought Bill's and my relationship to full fruition. Bill had recently relocated to Harrisburg, PA with new opportunities with Wegmans. I was busy finishing dental school, taking licensing exams and choosing a residency. While we may not have realized how much this patience would pay off, it is what brought us closer together even if we weren’t “near.” Our relationship moved to the next level with Bill asking for my hand in marriage while visiting him in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. After residency, I moved to Pennsylvania to start my career and life with Bill.

Mark 10:6-9
"But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”
After a year of planning and many ups and downs, we were honored to have Fr. Costanzo to officiate at our wedding on September 7, 2013 in my hometown of Grand Island, NY. Our relationship continued to grow and change in this first year of marriage. Living away from family was very hard for me but I would not trade that time. Bill and I learned to rely on each other and grow further together as a couple. We knew we wanted a family but were leaving the timing up to God.

**Genesis 1:28**

“And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

It was a surprise to us both when I told Bill that I was pregnant just four short months after our wedding. With the announcement of Baby Vaughn on the way, Bill and I faced some new life changes. I wanted to be back with family to raise our child. Bill was reluctant at first but then agreed that it would be the best thing for our growing family. A month after moving back we welcomed our first child, Amelia Grace, on September 13\(^\text{th}\), 2014. Bill was promoted shortly after arriving in Buffalo and is excelling in his career. His has nicknamed our daughter his little “love bug” and she is wrapped around his finger! I work as an associate with a dentist whom I met while traveling to Guatemala for my dental mission work. I am very blessed to have such a wonderful family and have this opportunity to watch Amelia grow and learn. We are in the process of buying our first house in Grand Island that we can call home as we continue to raise our family and be a part of the Fisher community. If someone had told me in 2003 that Bill and I would be married with a family eleven years later, I wouldn’t have believed him or her, but I am very happy that life brought us back together.