

Day 21 Be Others Focused

“I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them. The one who was dying blessed me; I made the widow’s heart sing. I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger. I broke the fangs of the wicked and snatched the victims from their teeth” (Job 29:12-17)

Have you ever applied for a job and asked for a reference letter from someone? You hope your referee will say all the good things about you. There’s one man in the Bible who received an extraordinary reference from God—God spoke of Job as the finest man on earth.

In Job 29:12-17, Job spoke of all the things he does before all the disasters struck his life. We could see the focus of Job’s life and prosperity was the poor, the fatherless, the widow, the blind, the needy and the victims. No wonder God spoke so highly of him.

There was another familiar story in the New Testament—the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. Jesus spoke of a Jewish man who was travelling from Jerusalem down to Jericho when he was attacked by bandits. He was stripped, beaten up and left to die beside the road. A priest and a Levite both came down the road, saw the man and passed by on the other side. These two religious persons, one a teacher of the law and the other a worship leader, deliberately avoided the man who needed help. Perhaps they were on the way to a very important religious meeting. Or could it be they were too busy being focused on themselves? There are always places to go, people to see, and things to do. To focus on “others” is counter natural.

The Samaritan who came along, saw the man and felt “compassion” for him. And that compassion stirred him into action.

Today, will God consider you a finest person because your life is characterised by service to others? Kindness must first start from the heart – a heart full of compassion and an orientation towards ‘others’.

Prayer

Father, forgive me for being so focused on the things I want to do, places I want to go and people I want to hang out with that I have not stopped to respond to those needs around me. Help me to live with an orientation towards blessing others.



Day 22 Love Must be Demonstrated

“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” (1 Jn 3:17-18)

Here the Scriptures tell us that love must be shown or demonstrated. How do we demonstrate love to others?

Gary Chapman proposes that there are five basic love languages. Each person has a primary love language that we must learn to speak if we want that person to feel love. If you are not sure what is the predominant love language of the person that you are trying to reach, use a combination of love languages and see how he/she responds to each of those.

Words of affirmation: Send an encouraging word through sms or whatapp, call or send an email to a colleague to tell him/her what a wonderful job he/she is doing, praise someone in public.

Gifts: Give a gift. The gift does not have to be expensive or elaborate. It is the thought that counts. It could be giving some flowers, buying a coffee, ordering a home delivery meal for him/her, or giving a gift associated with the person’s hobby or interest, etc.

Quality time: Maybe spending some time to listen to the person over a cup of coffee or going for an extended walk, etc.

Physical touch: While some people may appreciate a hug, this might not be the most appropriate way to demonstrate love while we are practicing social distancing.

Acts of Service: Mow your neighbours’ lawn, cook a meal for them, offer to babysit for a couple so they can go out on a date, do the laundry for your housemate, do the grocery run for a friend who is not feeling well, etc.

Prayer

Lord, help me to love not just in words or speech, but in actions and in truth. Help me to learn the love languages of those I want to bless and help me to move beyond the comfort of my own love language to bless them.

Day 23 The Power of Kindness

“...God’s kindness leads you toward repentance...” (Rom 2:4)

Our culture seems to like paradoxes. Think of the name of the 1960 rock group, “Iron Butterfly”. The songwriter was raised by an aunt who wasn’t keen on him becoming a musician. To drive home her point, she gave her 14-year-old nephew a ceramic plaque made in the shape of the guitar with an inscription underneath: “You will never make any money playing that guitar”. John Lennon held onto that plaque as a reminder of the irony of his career. When he passed away, he had earned more money than any musician writer of this century. But Rock music doesn’t have the corner on paradoxes.

The best oxymorons are found in the Bible e.g. “love your enemies”, “the first shall be the last”, “if someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles”.

Powerful kindness sounds like oxymoron too. Kindness is often associated with tenderness and niceness. Yet God’s inspired kindness goes beyond being nice, it is a spiritual weapon that can unlock a person’s heart and change the atmosphere and climate of a community. Here, it says God’s kindness can lead people to repentance. No other quality has been mentioned as being capable of changing the trajectory of someone’s life.

Prayer

Father, I thank you that your kindness has led me to repentance. Fill me with your supernatural kindness that I can be a channel to bring someone closer to you this week.



Day 24 Just Start Doing Something

“Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin” (Zech 4:10)

In another translation, it says, “Do not despise the days of small things”. You may think what you are doing is small. When a little boy brought his five loaves and two fish, Andrew the disciple scoffed and we can imagine him condescendingly patting the boy’s head and said to Jesus, “But what good is that with this huge crowd?” Yet that small lunch was the seed for a miracle that blessed 5000 people.

Remember Jack Berne, the 10-year-old boy who watched the news on TV in 2018 and saw how the drought was affecting children just like him in rural communities. He came up with the idea to dress up as a farmer and bring five dollars to school to raise awareness and money for farmers. The project “A fiver for a farmer” was eventually picked up by the media. The project ended up raising \$1.5 million (original goal was \$20K) and in February this year, he won the Young Australian Award for outstanding community service. Not every good deed will end up winning an award, but a small idea and deed of kindness can snowball into something significant.

The verse we read today says, “but the Lord rejoices to see the work begin”. Begin. Just begin. Turn your intention into action. Turn your promise into practice.

Prayer

Father, thank you that you can take the little that I have and make it a miracle. It is comforting to know that if I do my best, you will do the rest. In your greatness, you have equipped me to love. Let me love my neighbours with pure love that runs from your heart through mine. Help me to start, to go beyond good intentions, and to put in action the ideas you have put in my mind.

Day 25 Spirit Empowered Acts of Kindness

*“If we are being called to account today for **an act of kindness** shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed” (Acts 4:9-10)*

Just after the day of Pentecost, Peter and John, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, performed what was later described as “an act of kindness”.

They were on their way to a prayer meeting, when they met a man crippled from birth begging them for money. They didn’t have any money, but Peter said, “what I have I give to you, in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk”. Immediately the man was healed.

That act of kindness led to remarkable chain of events. The people “were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him...all the people were astonished and came running to them” (Acts 3:10-11). Peter went on to share about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He made known to them that the act of kindness was accomplished by the name of Jesus.

Do you know you too can bring healing to the sick, freedom to the oppressed, wholeness to the broken in the Name of Jesus! Perhaps your colleague is not feeling well, on top of giving a card, perhaps you can offer to pray for him/her. A spirit empowered act of kindness has great power to change someone’s life and a community.

Prayer

Lord, like the Apostle Paul, I pray that the eye of my heart may be enlightened, that I may know the incomparably great power for us who believe. I pray that the Holy Spirit can use me to bring healing to the sick, freedom to the oppressed and in doing so, express your kindness to those under the power of the enemy.



Day 26 Your Good Work will be Remembered by Jesus

"For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me." (Matt 25:35-36)

There are many reasons to help people in need.

"Benevolence is good for the world."

"To deliver someone from poverty is to unleash that person's potential as a researcher, educator, or doctor."

"As we reduce poverty and disease, we reduce war and atrocities. Healthy, happy people don't hurt each other."

Compassion has a dozen advocates.

But for the Christians, none is higher than this: when we love those in need, we are loving Jesus.

The parable of the sheep and the goat was part of Jesus' final sermon. Jesus described the final day of judgment when all would come before His presence, and then he would "separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats". It is sobering to know that the sheep who would inherit the kingdom will be those who fed Jesus while He was hungry, brought him water while He was thirsty, lodging while He was lonely, clothing while he was naked, and comfort while He was sick or imprisoned. The righteous will react and asked, "Really, When? When did we feed, clothe or comfort you?"

Jesus would recount, one by one, all the acts of kindness they did. Every little deed. In fact, they all seem small. Giving water (or coffee or a soft drink), offering food, etc. These acts of kindness may be simple, yet Jesus remembers each one of them and declares that we serve Him by serving those in need. The Message Bible says, "Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me".

Some of those who are in need are in your neighbourhood, your college, your workplace; others may be in countries far away. None of us can help everyone, but all of us can help someone. You cannot do everything, but you can do something. Remember, even a small act of just giving someone a glass of water matters to Jesus.

Prayer

Lord, help me to see you in each person that I serve. Remind me that I am not just doing it for that person but doing it unto you.



Day 27 Your Good Work will be Remembered by Others

“There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor.” (Acts 9:36)

There was a believer in the city of Joppa named Dorcas (in Greek and Tabitha in Aramaic). She was described as someone who was always doing kinds things for others. In this story, Dorcas died an untimely death. Her death devastated the town. When they heard that the disciple Peter was in a town close by, they went to fetch him. When Peter arrived, he was confronted by many widows who were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas made for them. Then Peter prayed for her and resurrected her from the dead. There are several things we can learn from Dorcas.

First, she was a believer. Our good works can never be the basis or the cause of our salvation, but they should be the results of our salvation.

Secondly, she was “always” doing kind things for others. It is easy to do kind things occasionally, but it is a totally different ballgame to live a consistent lifestyle of kindness. We must not stop being kind or doing kind things for others at the end of this 40 days campaign, but that we would live a consistent lifestyle of love.

Thirdly, she used her talents and gifts to serve others. She had “a needle”, yet she did not belittle the little she had. What talents have God blessed you with that you can use to serve others?

Finally, kindness takes effort. Those garments did not sew themselves. It took her time, and that time could have been spent doing something else. Kindness is something of a sacrifice.

Dorcas left a legacy of kindness. What would you be remembered for? It is an interesting question. It can also be a scary question.

Prayer

Lord, help me to live a lifestyle of kindness, not just render an act of kindness here and there. Help me to leave a legacy of kindness wherever I am, whether be at work, in school or in my community.



Day 28 Follow the Prompting of the Spirit

*“As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, “Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia.”
(Acts 8:26-27)*

Philip heard the voice of the Lord and obeyed. His obedience led to the salvation of the treasurer of Ethiopia. God wants to communicate with us. When our acts of kindness are the results of obeying the prompting of the spirit, they can result in salvation and revival.

God wants to speak to us daily. Three separate times in John 10, Jesus tells that His children hear and know His voice. Do you know the voice of God? Have you taken the time to wait and listen to Him to such a degree that you can discern His voice from the other voices that are seeking to speak to you? Jesus has given you a promise that you can know His voice, and He expects you to take the time to learn to hear His direction.

The world is loud. We have become a society that cannot sit still and be quiet. The average smartphone user reaches for their phones more than 2,617 times per day, with that number exceeding 5,000 for the heaviest users. We are constantly bombarded by social media, phone messages, news, etc. Today, take some time to be quiet and still and listen to His voice.

Perhaps He may remind you to call someone or to take someone out for coffee. Do not put off those promptings. Let Him guide you. Your “random” acts of kindness could be God-orchestrated occasions to draw someone towards Him. In Hosea, God says, “I draw them with cords of kindness, and ties of love”.

Prayer

Father, I thank you that you promise me in your word that your children hear your voice. I desire to learn to hear your voice more than I ever have before. Today I ask that you speak to me as to who you would like me to reach out to or bless.

Day 29 Wisdom to Distinguish Loads and Burdens

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2)

“each one should carry their own load” (Gal 6:5)

“Should we put a boundary in showing kindness to people?”

In these two verses, we are told to carry each other’s burdens as well as carry our own load. Two different Greek words are used.

The Greek word for “burden” is *bare*, which means excessive burdens or burdens that are so heavy that they weigh us down. These burdens are like boulders. They can crush us. There are times when people go through times of crisis e.g. illness, relational breakdown, sudden or temporary financial distress; and the burdens are too great for the person involved to carry alone. We are called to step in or step up to help carry those burdens.

The Greek word for “load” is *phortion*. This was often used in relation to a soldier’s pack—the standard cargo borne by each person in the company. In modern day terms, these are like our backpack or purses that we must carry ourselves daily. There are things we are responsible for ourselves – our feelings, our attitudes or other things that we must do for ourselves.

When we render acts of kindness, we should not expect anything in return. However, if an individual or groups of people continue to rely on our kindness, it is wise to assess if we are helping them to carry their “burdens” to provide relief in a season when they lack the strength, knowledge or resources to do those things for themselves; or if we are carrying their load which they are capable of doing if given some encouragement.

For those who are highly capable, remember that your load could be someone’s burden. Just because you can lift a 100 kg weight does not mean someone else can do it. Let us pray for the wisdom that is kind, pure, and merciful.

Prayer

Father, help me to be sensitive to those around me who may be carrying overwhelming burdens that are crushing them mentally, emotionally or spiritually. Help me to reach out and lend my strength spiritually and practically. And give me the wisdom to know if I am carrying someone’s load and depriving them of the opportunity to grow and mature.



Day 30 Refuel your Love and Kindness Tank

“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up” (Gal 6:9)

Have you ever run out of fuel? The common reasons for people who run out of fuel in their cars include: not starting with a full tank, being too busy to stop and refuel, unaware of hidden leaks, being distracted and not watching the gauges, or overestimating how much further one could go even though the needle is pointing at E or the light has been on for a while.

We can see the same parallel in our spiritual walk. Doing good can be tiring. We can only go so far before we get depleted physically, emotionally and spiritually if we strive to live a life of love and kindness with our own strength.

We need to stop and refuel daily. Paul, in Ephesians, pray for the believers to be “rooted and grounded in love”. A tree will shrivel up and die if the root is not constantly drawing water and nutrients from the ground. Only then can we produce naturally the fruit of love and kindness.

We need to watch ourselves so that we are not running on empty. Here Paul says, there are times we need to push through the temptation to quit because of discouragement or tiredness. There is a difference between being tired physically and being tired spiritually. We don’t always need to rest from work, but we need to work from rest. Jesus said, “my yoke is easy and my burden is light”. One of the key indicators that you are striving in your own strength is when you become resentful towards the people you serve.

God promises that if we do not give up, we will reap a harvest.

Prayer

Lord, help me to abide in you, be rooted and grounded in your love so that I can bear forth the fruit of love and kindness. You promise that those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. Refresh me today so that I can continue to do good; for in due time, I will reap a harvest.