



Spread the Love

Building Lives

In the earliest years of my childhood, God's gracious and merciful hand placed my physical and spiritual teaching and training in the hands of some precious men and women of God. They were my Christian pre-school teachers, Sunday school teachers, my summer-vacation Bible school leaders, and especially my mother. They taught me about Jesus - instilling in my young life a love for the Word of God - and they inspired me to follow Him by both their teachings and examples of their lives. They built into my tender heart a strong foundation of understanding: of trusting God, loving God, and giving the entirety of my life to Him and to His service.

Thankfulness

If you are in a place of giving, serving, and building foundations in the lives of young people (especially your own children), don't be discouraged. The Lord needs foundation-builders who will take the time and energy to build lasting foundations of time-tested and proven materials: the word of God and Biblical principles. Time only can tell the good that you are doing now.

Take time and much energy to express gratitude and thankfulness. It is surely the language and theme of heaven to give thanks.

After 26 years I was able to thank those who had helped build my early childhood foundation in education and in the knowledge of God. At the age of 31 I had the opportunity to share with three of these elderly servants of God what the Lord has done in my life as a result of their service to Him (and to me) and to thank them. It was such a joy to turn and give back into some of the lives who have so touched and influenced my own through their sacrifice and labors of love. One of these elderly servants, who was in his 90's at the time, is now with the Lord. It is a special thing to reach out to and thank elderly servants and saints of the Lord's at a time in their lives when discouragement and weariness so easily sets in.

It Takes Time

Take time and much energy to express gratitude and thankfulness. It is surely the language and theme of heaven to give thanks. Spend time giving thanks to the Lord for all He has done for you, for all He has given you, for all He is. Then, turn your energies into thanking those who have blessed your life in both the past and present. Chances are that they really need to hear that their lives have blessed others and to know God has used them to influence others to the glory of God. Giving thanks has its own reward. A "thanks-giver" receives a happy heart. The happy heart comes, first, from realizing how much God loves and provides for you; and, second, it comes from spreading the joy of that realization by blessing others.

Kindness and Love

We have often found great blessing in looking for opportunities to think of and surprise people whom we have met that would never expect us to be God's vessels of kindness to their lives. For instance, once we baked a bunch of homemade goodies and packaged them in little baskets for the ushers in the church we attended at the time. They were so blessed and surprised, and they felt so loved by God! Or, another time when we packaged up a huge box with gifts and home comforts to ship to an evangelist family we had only met a few times and timed its arrival at their home for the day they would be getting home after a three-month journey of working and serving the Lord. What an exciting surprise and a special "Welcome home!" it was to them. Another time we simply wrote a thank you note to a man who had taken us on a short tour, thanking him for his thoughtful and kind manner and for the wonderful tour. He responded by writing and telling us that, of all the years he had given tours, nobody had sent ever him a "thank you." How it ministered to him as he continued in his labors!



Looking for Opportunities

Love isn't
love until
you give
it away!

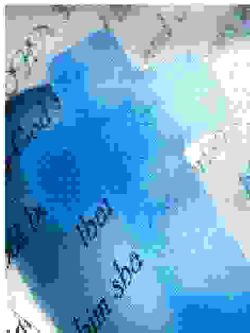
We can ask God for ideas and opportunities to begin to look beyond ourselves and our own tiny little circles of life and to share thankfulness and the love and kindness we have received from our beloved Saviour. You know, we are the ones that ultimately receive the most blessing as we spread the heart of Jesus... our love given and cast upon the waters of ministry to others will return. It may come back immediately in the form of a special "thank you" note, or it may return after many days.

Love Begets Love

Love begets love. Did you ever think of that? It is actually an idea, I think, that comes from the pages of Scripture. "We love him, because he first loved us." -1John 4:19. In another place, we receive the charge, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit ... love one another with a pure heart fervently." -1Peter 1:22. Obedience to God and His word comes first (very important!), and then loving others follows.

The Perfect Love

The most perfect example love is always Jesus Christ. He surprised us by kindness and love, remember, when we were still even enemies to God because of our sin. The Bible says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." -Romans 5:8. It is important to spread the gift of love, kindness and caring amongst those whom God has given us to love and cherish; but after that is done, let us not sit back and be satisfied! Love isn't love until you give it away.



- Holly Hageman; Copyright January, 2004

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