

Be the Change

The journey of serving those in need is, in essence, the journey of following Christ. And God has created each person uniquely for the journey, giving each one spiritual gifts, skills, and passions with which to serve him, to be the change we want to see in the world. This week we'll explore our individual gifts and be reminded that it is God's grace that sustains us along the way.



1 Corinthians 13:1-12 (NIV) If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, 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. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Reflections

God begins to make us into someone who can "be the change" by first changing us. Last week we considered how God first breaks our hearts for the needs of the poor and forgotten, then He prompts us to love them through our actions.

It begins when we take a risk to serve and let God open our eyes to others. After serving at the soup kitchen for the first time, one member's heart was touched with this insight:

The thing that got me the most was how QUIET it was! I had the idea that with so many men in such a little house that the dinner hour would be noisy with conversations. Boy, was I wrong! That was the hard part--not hearing anyone talking to their neighbor. I had the mistaken notion that it would be like a family sitting down to eat--"How was your day?" "What did you do today?" "Where did you go?" "Did you see so-and-so?" "How did work go?" "Did you have a good class?"--that sort of thing. Just plain old

normal stuff that makes up the family dinner table conversations in all of our homes. It made me realize how lucky I am to have had a husband and family to share dinner conversations with over the years. Something so routine, so common that you take it for granted.

For whom and for what purpose is God changing you? Over recent weeks, a buzz of changed hearts has been stirring at St. John. Numerous people are reaching out to the poor for the first time. Others have sensed a direction in which to serve. Here's what's going on among our faith community:

- *New volunteers for Elizabeth House soup kitchen*

- *Someone exploring the idea of a "Free Sale" to be held at the church in coming months*
- *Giving generous bags of toiletries to local homeless people*
- *Exploring a grant to dig a well for a town in South Africa*
- *Finding creative ways to confidentially provide support to members who have fallen on harder times*
- *Advocacy for medical needs of homebound senior citizens in Howard County*
- *Mentoring and financially supporting to a potential volunteer for Good Samaritan Orphanage.*

What has God placed on your mind for action? Be the change He has in store for others.

—Karen Heist

My Prayer

Dear Lord, I praise you that you want to give me a life with purpose and filled with joy and peace. I want to find my peace in serving you. I want to know your joy through serving others. I give myself to you to be the person you created me to be and to do the things you prepared me to do. Please help me to be your faithful servant. Amen

Readings

Sunday, March 29

1 Corinthians 13:1-12

Pray that God would fill you with his love, that it would be your banner and your motivator in serving others.

Monday, March 30

Ephesians 4:11-13

Reflect on the past several weeks and consider the ways God has used those weeks to change your heart.

Tuesday, March 31

Luke 6:38

We find our purpose when we're doing what we were created to do: to serve others. Have you ever found your purpose in serving others? How?

Wednesday, April 1

1 Peter 4:8-11, Psalm 139:13-14

Pray that God will guide you in selflessly, eagerly, and liberally serving others. Pray also that he will make his purpose known to you.

Thursday, April 2

Psalm 37:3-6

How can you start loving and serving others? Ask God for the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Friday, April 3

Galatians 6:9

Looking back, can you see what is different now from where you began? Are you a changed person from who you were when you started on this journey?

Saturday, April 4

Ephesians 4:12-13

Do you want to know Christ? Are you ready and willing to love and serve others?

**Don't have a Bible?
Access these scriptures
at biblegateway.com.**

*"Be the change that you want to see
see in the world."* - Mohandas Gandhi

Resource:

"Hope Lives: A Journey of Restoration"

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Digging In

- Start by praying. Ask God to reveal ways that he has gifted you to serve.
- Take stock of the gift(s) you feel God has given you—time, talents, finances, spiritual gifts.
- Take time to reflect and pray about how you might use these gifts to serve:
 - Church
 - Community
 - Globally
- Take a risk and serve. Listen to God's leading as you take a first step.