

QUALITY
OF
LIFE
BIBLE
STUDY



Caring[©]

COMPILED BY
S.MCRAE

CARING - LEADERS GUIDE **"Quality of Life Series"**

LEADER: "The Difference"

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2/difference.htm>

Can you....

- Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
- Name the last five Heisman trophy winners
- Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest.
- Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer prize.
- Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
- Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

- List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
- Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
- Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
- Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
- Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.
- Name half a dozen heroes whose stories have inspired you.

Easier?

The lesson? The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care.

READER: QUOTE #1

Source ~ <http://www.buscaglia.com/>

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

Leo Buscaglia 1924-1998 Author, Lecturer

READER: "First Check Up" By Max Lucado From: "The Applause of Heaven"

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon6/first_check_up.htm

I went to our family doctor not long ago. I went for my first check-up since the one required for high school football seventeen years ago.

Since I was way overdue, I ordered the works. One nurse put me on a table and stuck little cold suction cups to my chest. Another nurse wrapped a heavy band around my arm and squeezed a black bulb until my arm tingled. Then they pricked my finger (which always hurts) and told me to fill up a cup (which is always awkward). Then, with all the preliminaries done, they put me in a room and told me to take off my shirt and wait on the doctor.

There is something about being poked, pushed, measured, and drained that makes you feel like a head of lettuce in the produce department. I sat on a tiny stool and stared at the wall.

May I tell you something you know, but may have forgotten? Somebody in your world feels like I felt in that office. The daily push and shove of the world has a way of leaving us worked over and worn out. Someone in your gallery of people is sitting on a cold aluminum stool of insecurity, clutching the backside of a hospital gown for fear of exposing what little pride he or she has left. And that person desperately needs a word of peace.

Someone needs you to do for them what Dr. Jim did for me. Jim is a small-town doctor in a big city. He still remembers names and keeps pictures of babies he delivered on his office bulletin board. And though you

know he's busy, he makes you feel you are his only patient.

After a bit of small talk and a few questions about my medical history, he put down my file and said, "Let me take off my doctor hat for a minute and talk to you as a friend."

The chat lasted maybe five minutes. He asked me about my family. He asked me about my work load. He asked me about my stress. He told me he thought I was doing a good job at the church and that he loved to read my books.

Nothing profound, nothing probing. He went no deeper than I allowed. But I had the feeling he would have gone to the bottom of the pit with me had I needed him to.

After those few minutes, Dr. Jim went about his task of tapping my knee with his rubber hammer, staring down my throat, looking in my ear, and listening to my chest. When he was all done, as I was buttoning up my shirt, he took his doctor hat off again and reminded me not to carry the world on my shoulders. "And be sure to love your wife and hug those kids, because when it all boils down to it, you're not much without them."

"Thanks, Jim," I said. And he walked out as quickly as he'd come in a seed sower in a physician's smock.

READER: "What Is Prettier Than Freckles?"

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2d/what_is_prettier_than_freckles.htm

A grandmother and a little girl whose face was sprinkled with bright red freckles spent the day at the zoo. The children were waiting in line to get their cheeks painted by a local artist who was decorating them with tiger paws. "You've got so many freckles, there's no place to paint!" a boy in the line cried.

Embarrassed, the little girl dropped her head. Her grandmother knelt down next to her. "I love your freckles," she said. "Not me," the girl replied. "Well, when I was a little girl I always wanted freckles" she said, tracing her finger across the child's cheek. "Freckles are beautiful!"

The girl looked up. "Really?" "Of course," said the grandmother. "Why, just name me one thing that's prettier than freckles." The little girl peered into the old woman's smiling face. "Wrinkles," she answered softly.

LEADER: We can care for one another by our wordsanother way we can care is by our deeds.

READER: "World's Most Glamorous Hotel"

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2d/waldorf-astoria_hotel.htm

One stormy night many years ago, an elderly man and his wife entered the lobby of a small hotel in Philadelphia. Trying to get out of the rain, the couple approached the front desk hoping to get some shelter for the night.

"Could you possibly give us a room here?" the husband asked. The clerk, a friendly man with a winning smile, looked at the couple and explained that there were three conventions in town.

"All of our rooms are taken," the clerk said. "But I can't send a nice couple like you out into the rain at one o'clock in the morning. Would you perhaps be willing to sleep in my room? It's not exactly a suite, but it will be good enough to make you folks comfortable for the night."

When the couple declined, the young man pressed on. "Don't worry about me, I'll make out just fine," the clerk told them. So the couple agreed.

As he paid his bill the next morning, the elderly man said to the clerk, "You are the kind of manager who should be the boss of the best hotel in the United States. Maybe someday I'll build one for you."

The clerk looked at them and smiled. The three of them had a good laugh. As they drove away, the elderly couple agreed that the helpful clerk was indeed exceptional, as finding people who are both friendly and helpful isn't easy.

Two years passed. The clerk had almost forgotten the incident when he received a letter from the old man. It recalled that stormy night and enclosed a round-trip ticket to New York, asking the young man to pay them a visit.

The old man met him in New York, and led him to the corner of Fifth Avenue and 34th Street. He then

pointed to a great new building there, a pale reddish stone, with turrets and watchtowers thrusting up to the sky.

"That," said the older man, "is the hotel I have just built for you to manage."

"You must be joking," the young man said.

"I can assure you I am not," said the older man, a sly smile playing around his mouth.

The older man's name was William Waldorf-Aster, and that magnificent structure was the original Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The young clerk who became its first manager was George C. Boldt. This young clerk never foresaw the turn of events that would lead him to become the manager of one of the world's most glamorous hotels.

READER: "The Rose" #1 By Jim Rohn, America's Foremost Business Philosopher

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon7/rose.htm>

Lifestyle is style over amount. And style is an art - the art of living. You can't buy style with money. You can't buy good taste with money. You can only buy more with money. Lifestyle is culture - the appreciation of good music, dance, art, sculpture, literature, plays and the art of living well. It's a taste for the fine, the unique, the beautiful.

Lifestyle also means rewarding excellence wherever you find it by not taking the small things of life for granted. With Valentine's Day approaching I wanted to illustrate this with a personal anecdote.

Many years ago my lady friend and I were on a trip to Carmel, California for some shopping and exploring. On the way we stopped at a service station. As soon as we parked our car in front of the pumps, a young man, about eighteen or nineteen, came bouncing out to the car and with a big smile said, "Can I help you?"

"Yes," I answered. "A full tank of gas, please." I wasn't prepared for what followed. In this day and age of self-service and deteriorating customer treatment, this young man checked every tire, washed every window - even the sunroof - singing and whistling the whole time. We couldn't believe both the quality of service and his upbeat attitude about his work.

When he brought the bill I said to the young man, "Hey, you really have taken good care of us. I appreciate it."

He replied, "I really enjoy working. It's fun for me and I get to meet nice people like you."

This kid was really something!

I said, "We're on our way to Carmel and we want to get some milkshakes. Can you tell us where we can find the nearest Baskin-Robbins?"

"Baskin-Robbins is just a few blocks away," he said as he gave us exact directions. Then he added, "Don't park out front - park around to the side so your car won't get sideswiped."

What a kid!

As we got to the ice cream store we ordered milkshakes, except that instead of two, we ordered three. Then we drove back to the station. Our young friend dashed out to greet us. "Hey, I see you got your milkshakes."

"Yes, and this one is for you!"

His mouth fell open. "For me?"

"Sure. With all the fantastic service you gave us, I couldn't leave you out of the milkshake deal."

"Wow!" was his astonished reply.

As we drove off I could see him in my rear-view mirror just standing there, grinning from ear to ear.

Now, what did this little act of generosity cost me? Only about two dollars - you see, it's not the money, it's the style.

READER: “The Rose” #2 By Jim Rohn, America’s Foremost Business Philosopher

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon7/rose.htm>

Well, I must have been feeling especially creative that day, so on our arrival in Carmel I drove directly to a flower shop. As we walked inside I said to the florist, “I need a long-stemmed rose for my lady to carry while we go shopping in Carmel.”

The florist, a rather unromantic type, replied, “We sell them by the dozen.”

“I don’t need a dozen,” I said, “just one.”

“Well,” he replied haughtily, “if you only want one it will cost you two dollars.”

“Wonderful,” I exclaimed. “There’s nothing worse than a cheap rose.”

Selecting the rose with some deliberation, I handed it to my friend. She was so impressed! And the cost? Two dollars. Just two dollars. A bit later she looked up and said, “Jim, I must be the only woman in Carmel today carrying a rose.” And I believe she probably was.

Can you imagine the opportunity to create magic with those around you, and all for the cost of a few dollars, some imagination and care.

Remember, it is not the amount that matters but the thought and care that often has the greatest impact upon those you love.

LEADER: We can show we care by the smallest of unexpected gestures or by action that seems larger than life to those receiving the blessing.

READER: “For Goodness’ Sake”

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2/for_goodness'_sake.htm

A doctor said to his patient: “You have a slight heart condition, but I wouldn’t worry about it.”

“Really, Doc?” the patient replied. “Well, if you had a slight heart condition I wouldn’t worry about it either.”

Many people believe that most of the world is more or less out for themselves and that most people care little about the plight of others. I choose to believe that most people are basically concerned about others, even if they don’t always know how to express it. That is perhaps why a certain story, clipped years ago and filed away, has remained one of my favorites to this day.

A trucker relates that he was traveling through rural North Carolina on I-95 when a brown sedan merged onto the highway. It weaved back and forth between lanes, causing the driver of the truck to shift into a lower gear. At first he thought the driver was drunk, but when he came closer, the trucker saw an old man shaking uncontrollably behind the wheel. He noticed a Citizen’s Band aerial whipping to and fro as the car jerked between lanes, so he called on the radio: “You in the brown Chevy, if you can hear me, pull over. Pull off the road!”

Amazingly, he did! The trucker pulled up behind the car and climbed from his cab. The elderly man staggered from his auto and fell into the trucker’s hands. He poured out a story of months of fear and pain that accompanied the illness of his only daughter. Now he was returning from the hospital where it was decided that she would cease any further treatment. In the hospital he remained “strong” and stoic for his daughter, but out on the road he fell apart.

The two men talked for the good part of an hour. The father eventually decided to share his pain with his daughter and said he felt good enough to drive home. The men embraced and the trucker followed him for 50 miles. As they drove along, the two talked together on the radio.

The older man finally acknowledged that his exit was ahead and thanked his new friend again for the help. The trucker asked if he could make it home all right and, suddenly, a third voice broke in on the conversation: “Breaker 19, don’t worry, good buddy. Go your way. I’ll see him home!”

Glancing in his rearview mirror, he saw a livestock truck move into the exit lane behind the brown sedan.

There are good people the world over. Some may be strangers to you, some as close as your own family. It helps to know that the world is full of people who will gladly give that caring touch, a needed warm embrace

or a patient and listening ear. They are like angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly.

Look around, for they are everywhere. And quite likely, you will even spot one in the mirror!

READER: “State Bar Exam”

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2c/state_bar_exams.htm

A friend sent me the following report: “In California, more than 600 lawyer hopefuls were taking the state bar exams in the Pasadena Convention Centre when a 50-year-old man taking the test suffered a heart attack.

“Only two of the 600 test takers, John Leslie and Eunice Morgan, stopped to help the man. They administered CPR until paramedics arrived, then resumed taking the exam. “Citing policy, the test supervisor refused to allow the two additional time to make up for the 40 minutes they spent helping the victim. Jerome Braun, the state bar’s senior executive for admissions, backed the decision stating, ‘If these two want to be lawyers, they should learn a lesson about priorities.’” (Los Angeles Times, June 1, 1998)

Hard to believe isn’t it? It reminds us of Jesus’ parable on “The Good Samaritan.” A fellow Jew had been robbed and beaten and left by the side of the road in great pain and distress. When a priest came by and saw him, he passed by on the other side of the street. Another religious leader did exactly the same thing. But a man the Jews despised, a Samaritan, “took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him”.

READER: “The Right Question” By Joseph B Walker

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2c/right_question.htm

There were a thousand reasons not to stop.

I was running late for a Very Important... Well, whatever it was that I was running late for that day. The freeway was busy -- I might have caused an accident or something. Surely the Highway Patrol would be along soon, and it's their job to help stranded motorists, isn't it? And I had on my navy blue suit, with a light blue shirt and a silk tie. Not exactly car-fixing clothes, you know?

Let's see -- that makes 1,004 reasons not to stop. And here's 1,005: I am the world's worst auto mechanic. Public enemy No. 1 on the AAA's Ten Most Wanted list. Mr. WhatsaWrench.

The first time I tried to change my car's oil myself I did fine -- until I forgot to put the new oil in. The boys down at the garage had a big laugh over that one. The next time, I remembered to put in the new oil -- only I put it in the transmission. That triggered a letter from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Chryslers. They suggested I get a horse.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not feeling sorry for myself. God has given me other talents to use for the benefit of mankind. But I'm not sure how much it would have helped that lady who was stranded by the side of the freeway if I would have pulled over and belched on cue.

So I didn't pull over. I drove on by, just like hundreds of other drivers on the freeway that day. And I felt guilty about it. So I turned off at the next exit and made my way back to see if I could at least give her a lift or something. But by the time I got back to her, an Hispanic gentleman had pulled in behind her, and was tinkering away at her car's engine like he knew what he was doing.

“Is there anything I can do to help?” I asked.

“No, thank you,” the lady replied. “This nice man says he can fix it.”

At that moment, a voice from under the hood shouted: “OK, try it now!”

The woman reached for the key and turned it. The engine started beautifully.

“It was your serpentine belt,” the man explained, wiping his hands on his pants. “It slipped off. It's pretty worn. You want to take that to a mechanic, get a new one put on.”

The woman tried to give the freeway Samaritan some money, but he declined and waved as she drove off. It wasn't until we started walking toward our cars that I noticed he had five more reasons not to stop than I did; his family was sitting in the station wagon, waiting patiently.

"Do you stop and help people like this often?" I asked.

He shrugged. "Somebody has to," he said. "What's she going to do if nobody helps?" And for him, that was reason enough.

In his final sermon, given the night before his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. took as his text the Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan. In the story, a man is attacked by thieves and left by the roadside. Several travelers happen upon him, but they pass by.

Eventually, someone does stop to help, although it is the one person who might have had a reason not to. He is a Samaritan and the victim is a Jew. Those folks didn't get along any better back then than they do now. According to Dr. King, those who passed by the injured man were asking themselves the wrong question: "If I help this man, what will happen to me?"

The Good Samaritan stopped to help because he asked the right question: "If I don't help this man, what will happen to him?"

Dr. King spent a lifetime asking the right question. If we truly want to honour him, then we need to ask ourselves that question, too. No matter how many reasons we may think we have not to.

READER: Luke 10:30-37

"In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead." "A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side." "So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side." "But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him." "He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him." "The next day he took out two silver coins[a] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' " "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" "The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

READER: "Thinking of More Than Yourself" By Peter Kennedy

"The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him." Genesis 40:23

As morning broke on December 14, 1862, the battlefield at Fredericksburg, Virginia revealed a ghastly landscape. More than 8,000 Union soldiers lay dead or dying before a stone wall where the Confederate Army had entrenched itself. The cries of the dying for help and water were chilling.

Nineteen-year-old Sergeant Richard Kirkland of the Second South Carolina Brigade, had seen and heard enough. Kirkland went to Confederate General Joseph Kershaw. "General," he said, "I can't stand this!" He startled his commanding officer. "All night and all day I hear those poor Federal people calling for water," he said, "and I can't stand it any longer. I ask permission to go and give them water."

Kershaw shook his head sympathetically. "Sergeant," he replied, "you'd get a bullet through your head the moment you stepped over the stone wall onto the plain."

"Yes, sir," answered Kirkland, "I know that, but if you let me, I'm willing to try it."

The General responded, "The sentiment which prompts you is so noble that I will not refuse your request. God protect you. You may go."

Quickly the South Carolinian hurdled the wall and immediately exposed himself to the fire of every Yankee sharpshooter in that sector. Kirkland walked calmly toward the Union lines until he reached the nearest wounded soldier. Kneeling, he took off his canteen and gently lifted the enemy soldier's head to give him a long, deep drink of refreshing cold water. Then he placed a knapsack under the head of his enemy and moved on to the next.

Racing against the lengthening shadows of a short, somber December afternoon, he returned again and again to the lines where comrades handed him full canteens. Troops on both sides who had watched this unselfish act paid young Kirkland the supreme tribute -- not a standing ovation, but respectful awed silence.

It is easy to be selfish, but it takes walking by faith in Christ to be selfless. Today in prayer, look to the Lord for your needs and then look to help others to bring glory to Christ.

"You can easily judge the character of others by how they treat those who can do nothing for them or to them." - Malcolm Forbes

God's Word: "*People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy*" - 2 Timothy 3:2

READER: "Two Brothers"

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2d/two_brothers.htm

Wouldn't it be a wonderful world if all brothers and sisters were like this? What an awesome, loving environment it would be!

Two brothers worked together on the family farm. One was married and had a large family. The other was single. At the day's end, the brothers shared everything equally, produce and profit.

Then one day the single brother said to himself, "It's not right that we should share equally the produce and the profit. I'm alone and my needs are simple." So each night he took a sack of grain from his bin and crept across the field between their houses, dumping it into his brother's bin. Meanwhile, the married brother said to himself, "It's not right that we should share the produce and the profit equally. After all, I'm married and I have my wife and my children to look after me in years to come. My brother has no one, and no one to take care of his future." So each night, he took a sack of grain and dumped it into his single brother's bin.

Both men were puzzled for years because their supply of grain never dwindled. Then one dark night the two brothers bumped into each other. Slowly it dawned on them what was happening. They dropped their sacks and embraced one another.

READER: John 13:34-35

Someone Who Cares: "*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*"

LEADER: We can care for one another in word and deed....another way we can care is through prayer.

There was a cartoon in a Christian magazine of a pastor walking toward one of his parishioners. In the text bubble above the pastor's head read, "Uh-oh, there's Bob. I said I would pray for him this week. 'Dear God, please be with Bob.'"

The next frame, the Pastor shakes Bob's hand, and says, "How are you, Bob? I prayed for you this week."

Can anyone identify with this cartoon?

FROM: "Prayer: Caring For Others"

Source ~ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=68770>

READER: John 17:5-26

Jesus Prays for Himself

"After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you." "For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him." "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word." "Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you." "For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me." "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours." "All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me

through them.” “I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.” “While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.” “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.” “I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.” “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.” “They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.” “Sanctify[b] them by the truth; your word is truth.” “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.” “For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.”

Jesus Prays for All Believers

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,” “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:” “I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.” “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.” “I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

LEADER: In verse 9 Jesus says: “I pray for them”

Wow...what an example our Lord has set for us...to pray for one another...what a wonderful way to show we truly care.

In John 17, known as the real Lord's Prayer or the high priestly prayer of Jesus, we can make three observations:

- Why we pray for others
- Who we pray for and
- What we pray for when we pray for others.

READER: “Prayer: Caring For Others” #1

Source ~ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=68770>

Jesus prayed this prayer after his last meal with his disciples. Through this prayer, we see Jesus' great concern for others, even as he was aware of his imminent death. Caring for others through prayer is compassionate, resourceful and enduring. From Jesus' example of praying for others, we can discover why, who and what to pray for when praying for others. Let's look together.

First, the reason for why we pray is the glory of God. Vs. 1-5; 24-26

Many people note that Jesus began this prayer by praying for Himself. On the surface, that appears to be true. But when we look deeper, we realize He is praying that God the Father would be glorified, that God the Father would get the credit for what Jesus accomplishes on the cross. And at the close of Jesus' prayer, He prays that others might see and agree that God the Father is the One Who deserves the credit for sending Jesus to us. In short, Jesus' prays for others because he wants to introduce God's love and goodness to others.

Why do we pray for others? We pray for others maybe out of compassion for them. We pray for others in order to change them. We pray for others because others ask us to pray. We pray for others because we are helpless, but God is not. We pray for others, because we also can benefit from God answering our prayer for others.

These are some of the common reasons for praying for others. But the best reason for praying for others is that God the Father might be glorified. We pray for others so that we might introduce to them the God Who is powerful, good and loving.

When we pray for others in order to declare God's power, goodness and love, three wonderful things happen. First, we pray with pure motive. No longer is our prayer to alleviate our helplessness or to control others for our own benefits. Our prayer for others is about introducing others to God and His power, goodness and love.

Second, we offer others the best. When I ask Connie how I can pray for her when she discovered her cancer had returned, she told me, "Pray that my life would glorify God." In other words, pray that my life would declare God's power, goodness and love. God made us to glorify Him, and when our lives glorify God, we are living life to its best.

Third, we persevere in prayer. We often don't pray for others because we lack love for others; we lack discipline in prayer; or we lack motivation to pray. I've found that we persevere in prayer when we obey God, not when we hear a motivational message on prayer. God commands that we declare His greatness and goodness through our lives. And praying for others introduces to others God's greatness and goodness.

READER: I Samuel 12:23

"As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you."

READER: Proverbs 3:27

"Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act."

READER: "Counting On You" By Bob Perks

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon7/counting_on_you.htm

I wish I could say that I'm always prepared for emergencies. But I'm not. I do have a cell phone, but they have their limits, too. I was dressed for a meeting the other day and certainly not expecting to change a tire in a business suit. But, life is filled with the unexpected.

I pulled into a local convenience store parking lot and began to change the tire. It was snowing and bitterly cold that day, but I did what I had to do. A young man coming out of the store stopped to offer his assistance. "Is there anything I can do to help you?" the man asked. "Why yes, I was counting on you to do just that," I replied.

"Well, I'm sure someone would have stopped to help," the man assured me. "No, it had to be you," I said. "Sir, I don't even know you," he said. "Why would you expect me to stop?" "Because you had to." "I really didn't have to stop at all. In fact, I don't normally travel this way. So this was all by chance that I saw you here."

"By chance? It's never by chance. It's on purpose." "Whatever! Let me change this tire for you." He went about his business and carefully, quickly changed the flat tire. "There you go. It's finished. Now, make sure you get that tire repaired or replaced right away. You don't want to have this happen again without a spare tire," he said.

"My friend, I need to give you this," I said as I held my hand out toward him. "No, please, I don't want any money. I can't take a thing from you. It only took a few minutes." "I insist!" I said firmly. "No, really I can't." "Okay, no money. But this isn't money. This is why I said I was "Counting on you!" I then wrapped his hand around a small piece of paper, held it tightly for a moment and thanked him.

The man returned to his car and I watched him in my rear view mirror. As I expected, his curiosity got the best of him and he eagerly opened the note:

"Counting on you" by Bob Perks

There are strangers you'll see in your travels today,
People in need along the way
It might be a smile or kind word will do.
I hope you know they're counting on you.

In the hurry and rush of the world this day
Life may be a challenge with no time for play
But you are caring and compassionate, too
You'll still find the time, they're counting on you.

Not everyone does it, so many ask "why?"
"If I needed help, no one would try!"
But God made you special you know that it's true
You have to do it, He's counting on you!"

The young man sat quietly in his car for a moment. He had answered the voice inside that would not permit him to look the other way. He found time when he thought there wasn't any time.

READER: Colossians 3:17

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

LEADER: In word and deed and prayer...

Who's "counting on you" today?

COMMENTS IF TIME:

**ALLOW 10 MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING FOR
PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES:**

COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THE FOLLOWING PAGES TO YOUR READERS:

READERS

QUOTE #1

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.
Leo Buscaglia 1924-1998 Author, Lecturer

“First Check Up”

I went to our family doctor not long ago. I went for my first check-up since the one required for high school football seventeen years ago.

Since I was way overdue, I ordered the works. One nurse put me on a table and stuck little cold suction cups to my chest. Another nurse wrapped a heavy band around my arm and squeezed a black bulb until my arm tingled. Then they pricked my finger (which always hurts) and told me to fill up a cup (which is always awkward). Then, with all the preliminaries done, they put me in a room and told me to take off my shirt and wait on the doctor.

There is something about being poked, pushed, measured, and drained that makes you feel like a head of lettuce in the produce department. I sat on a tiny stool and stared at the wall.

May I tell you something you know, but may have forgotten? Somebody in your world feels like I felt in that office. The daily push and shove of the world has a way of leaving us worked over and worn out. Someone in your gallery of people is sitting on a cold aluminum stool of insecurity, clutching the backside of a hospital gown for fear of exposing what little pride he or she has left. And that person desperately needs a word of peace.

Someone needs you to do for them what Dr. Jim did for me. Jim is a small-town doctor in a big city. He still remembers names and keeps pictures of babies he delivered on his office bulletin board. And though you know he's busy, he makes you feel you are his only patient.

After a bit of small talk and a few questions about my medical history, he put down my file and said, “Let me take off my doctor hat for a minute and talk to you as a friend.”

The chat lasted maybe five minutes. He asked me about my family. He asked me about my work load. He asked me about my stress. He told me he thought I was doing a good job at the church and that he loved to read my books.

Nothing profound, nothing probing. He went no deeper than I allowed. But I had the feeling he would have gone to the bottom of the pit with me had I needed him to.

After those few minutes, Dr. Jim went about his task of tapping my knee with his rubber hammer, staring down my throat, looking in my ear, and listening to my chest. When he was all done, as I was buttoning up my shirt, he took his doctor hat off again and reminded me not to carry the world on my shoulders. “And be sure to love your wife and hug those kids, because when it all boils down to it, you’re not much without them.”

“Thanks, Jim,” I said. And he walked out as quickly as he’d come in a seed sower in a physician’s smock.

“What Is Prettier Than Freckles?”

A grandmother and a little girl whose face was sprinkled with bright red freckles spent the day at the zoo. The children were waiting in line to get their cheeks painted by a local artist who was decorating them with tiger paws. “You’ve got so many freckles, there’s no place to paint!” a boy in the line cried.

Embarrassed, the little girl dropped her head. Her grandmother knelt down next to her. “I love your freckles,” she said. “Not me,” the girl replied. “Well, when I was a little girl I always wanted freckles” she said, tracing her finger across the child’s cheek. “Freckles are beautiful!”

The girl looked up. “Really?” “Of course,” said the grandmother. “Why, just name me one thing that’s prettier than freckles.” The little girl peered into the old woman’s smiling face. “Wrinkles,” she answered softly.

“World’s Most Glamorous Hotel”

One stormy night many years ago, an elderly man and his wife entered the lobby of a small hotel in Philadelphia. Trying to get out of the rain, the couple approached the front desk hoping to get some shelter for the night.

“Could you possibly give us a room here?” the husband asked. The clerk, a friendly man with a winning smile, looked at the couple and explained that there were three conventions in town.

“All of our rooms are taken,” the clerk said. “But I can’t send a nice couple like you out into the rain at one o’clock in the morning. Would you perhaps be willing to sleep in my room? It’s not exactly a suite, but it will be good enough to make you folks comfortable for the night.”

When the couple declined, the young man pressed on. “Don’t worry about me, I’ll make out just fine,” the clerk told them. So the couple agreed.

As he paid his bill the next morning, the elderly man said to the clerk, “You are the kind of manager who should be the boss of the best hotel in the United States. Maybe someday I’ll build one for you.”

The clerk looked at them and smiled. The three of them had a good laugh. As they drove away, the elderly couple agreed that the helpful clerk was indeed exceptional, as finding people who are both friendly and helpful isn’t easy.

Two years passed. The clerk had almost forgotten the incident when he received a letter from the old man. It recalled that stormy night and enclosed a round-trip ticket to New York, asking the young man to pay them a visit.

The old man met him in New York, and led him to the corner of Fifth Avenue and 34th Street. He then pointed to a great new building there, a pale reddish stone, with turrets and watchtowers thrusting up to the sky.

“That,” said the older man, “is the hotel I have just built for you to manage.”

“You must be joking,” the young man said.

“I can assure you I am not,” said the older man, a sly smile playing around his mouth.

The older man’s name was William Waldorf-Aster, and that magnificent structure was the original Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The young clerk who became its first manager was George C. Boldt. This young clerk never foresaw the turn of events that would lead him to become the manager of one of the world’s most glamorous hotels.

"The Rose" #1

Lifestyle is style over amount. And style is an art - the art of living. You can't buy style with money. You can't buy good taste with money. You can only buy more with money. Lifestyle is culture - the appreciation of good music, dance, art, sculpture, literature, plays and the art of living well. It's a taste for the fine, the unique, the beautiful.

Lifestyle also means rewarding excellence wherever you find it by not taking the small things of life for granted. With Valentine's Day approaching I wanted to illustrate this with a personal anecdote.

Many years ago my lady friend and I were on a trip to Carmel, California for some shopping and exploring. On the way we stopped at a service station. As soon as we parked our car in front of the pumps, a young man, about eighteen or nineteen, came bouncing out to the car and with a big smile said, "Can I help you?"

"Yes," I answered. "A full tank of gas, please." I wasn't prepared for what followed. In this day and age of self-service and deteriorating customer treatment, this young man checked every tire, washed every window - even the sunroof - singing and whistling the whole time. We couldn't believe both the quality of service and his upbeat attitude about his work.

When he brought the bill I said to the young man, "Hey, you really have taken good care of us. I appreciate it."

He replied, "I really enjoy working. It's fun for me and I get to meet nice people like you."

This kid was really something!

I said, "We're on our way to Carmel and we want to get some milkshakes. Can you tell us where we can find the nearest Baskin-Robbins?"

"Baskin-Robbins is just a few blocks away," he said as he gave us exact directions. Then he added, "Don't park out front - park around to the side so your car won't get sideswiped."

What a kid!

As we got to the ice cream store we ordered milkshakes, except that instead of two, we ordered three. Then we drove back to the station. Our young friend dashed out to greet us. "Hey, I see you got your milkshakes."

"Yes, and this one is for you!"

His mouth fell open. "For me?"

"Sure. With all the fantastic service you gave us, I couldn't leave you out of the milkshake deal."

"Wow!" was his astonished reply.

As we drove off I could see him in my rear-view mirror just standing there, grinning from ear to ear.

Now, what did this little act of generosity cost me? Only about two dollars - you see, it's not the money, it's the style.

READER: "The Rose" #2 By Jim Rohn, America's Foremost Business Philosopher

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon7/rose.htm>

Well, I must have been feeling especially creative that day, so on our arrival in Carmel I drove directly to a flower shop. As we walked inside I said to the florist, "I need a long-stemmed rose for my lady to carry while we go shopping in Carmel."

The florist, a rather unromantic type, replied, "We sell them by the dozen."

"I don't need a dozen," I said, "just one."

"Well," he replied haughtily, "if you only want one it will cost you two dollars."

"Wonderful," I exclaimed. "There's nothing worse than a cheap rose."

Selecting the rose with some deliberation, I handed it to my friend. She was so impressed! And the cost? Two dollars. Just two dollars. A bit later she looked up and said, "Jim, I must be the only woman in Carmel today carrying a rose." And I believe she probably was.

Can you imagine the opportunity to create magic with those around you, and all for the cost of a few dollars, some imagination and care.

Remember, it is not the amount that matters but the thought and care that often has the greatest impact upon those you love.

“For Goodness’ Sake”

A doctor said to his patient: “You have a slight heart condition, but I wouldn’t worry about it.”

“Really, Doc?” the patient replied. “Well, if you had a slight heart condition I wouldn’t worry about it either.”

Many people believe that most of the world is more or less out for themselves and that most people care little about the plight of others. I choose to believe that most people are basically concerned about others, even if they don’t always know how to express it. That is perhaps why a certain story, clipped years ago and filed away, has remained one of my favorites to this day.

A trucker relates that he was traveling through rural North Carolina on I-95 when a brown sedan merged onto the highway. It weaved back and forth between lanes, causing the driver of the truck to shift into a lower gear. At first he thought the driver was drunk, but when he came closer, the trucker saw an old man shaking uncontrollably behind the wheel. He noticed a Citizen’s Band aerial whipping to and fro as the car jerked between lanes, so he called on the radio: “You in the brown Chevy, if you can hear me, pull over. Pull off the road!”

Amazingly, he did! The trucker pulled up behind the car and climbed from his cab. The elderly man staggered from his auto and fell into the trucker’s hands. He poured out a story of months of fear and pain that accompanied the illness of his only daughter. Now he was returning from the hospital where it was decided that she would cease any further treatment. In the hospital he remained “strong” and stoic for his daughter, but out on the road he fell apart.

The two men talked for the good part of an hour. The father eventually decided to share his pain with his daughter and said he felt good enough to drive home. The men embraced and the trucker followed him for 50 miles. As they drove along, the two talked together on the radio.

The older man finally acknowledged that his exit was ahead and thanked his new friend again for the help. The trucker asked if he could make it home all right and, suddenly, a third voice broke in on the conversation: “Breaker 19, don’t worry, good buddy. Go your way. I’ll see him home!”

Glancing in his rearview mirror, he saw a livestock truck move into the exit lane behind the brown sedan.

There are good people the world over. Some may be strangers to you, some as close as your own family. It helps to know that the world is full of people who will gladly give that caring touch, a needed warm embrace or a patient and listening ear. They are like angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly.

Look around, for they are everywhere. And quite likely, you will even spot one in the mirror!

“State Bar Exam”

A friend sent me the following report: “In California, more than 600 lawyer hopefuls were taking the state bar exams in the Pasadena Convention Centre when a 50-year-old man taking the test suffered a heart attack.

“Only two of the 600 test takers, John Leslie and Eunice Morgan, stopped to help the man. They administered CPR until paramedics arrived, then resumed taking the exam. “Citing policy, the test supervisor refused to allow the two additional time to make up for the 40 minutes they spent helping the victim. Jerome Braun, the state bar’s senior executive for admissions, backed the decision stating, ‘If these two want to be lawyers, they should learn a lesson about priorities.’” (Los Angeles Times, June 1, 1998)

Hard to believe isn’t it? It reminds us of Jesus’ parable on “The Good Samaritan.” A fellow Jew had been robbed and beaten and left by the side of the road in great pain and distress. When a priest came by and saw him, he passed by on the other side of the street. Another religious leader did exactly the same thing. But a man the Jews despised, a Samaritan, “took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him”.

"The Right Question"

There were a thousand reasons not to stop.

I was running late for a Very Important... Well, whatever it was that I was running late for that day. The freeway was busy -- I might have caused an accident or something. Surely the Highway Patrol would be along soon, and it's their job to help stranded motorists, isn't it? And I had on my navy blue suit, with a light blue shirt and a silk tie. Not exactly car-fixing clothes, you know?

Let's see -- that makes 1,004 reasons not to stop. And here's 1,005: I am the world's worst auto mechanic. Public enemy No. 1 on the AAA's Ten Most Wanted list. Mr. WhatsaWrench.

The first time I tried to change my car's oil myself I did fine -- until I forgot to put the new oil in. The boys down at the garage had a big laugh over that one. The next time, I remembered to put in the new oil -- only I put it in the transmission. That triggered a letter from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Chryslers. They suggested I get a horse.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not feeling sorry for myself. God has given me other talents to use for the benefit of mankind. But I'm not sure how much it would have helped that lady who was stranded by the side of the freeway if I would have pulled over and belched on cue.

So I didn't pull over. I drove on by, just like hundreds of other drivers on the freeway that day. And I felt guilty about it. So I turned off at the next exit and made my way back to see if I could at least give her a lift or something. But by the time I got back to her, an Hispanic gentleman had pulled in behind her, and was tinkering away at her car's engine like he knew what he was doing.

"Is there anything I can do to help?" I asked.

"No, thank you," the lady replied. "This nice man says he can fix it."

At that moment, a voice from under the hood shouted: "OK, try it now!"

The woman reached for the key and turned it. The engine started beautifully.

"It was your serpentine belt," the man explained, wiping his hands on his pants. "It slipped off. It's pretty worn. You want to take that to a mechanic, get a new one put on."

The woman tried to give the freeway Samaritan some money, but he declined and waved as she drove off. It wasn't until we started walking toward our cars that I noticed he had five more reasons not to stop than I did; his family was sitting in the station wagon, waiting patiently.

"Do you stop and help people like this often?" I asked.

He shrugged. "Somebody has to," he said. "What's she going to do if nobody helps?" And for him, that was reason enough.

In his final sermon, given the night before his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. took as his text the Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan. In the story, a man is attacked by thieves and left by the roadside. Several travelers happen upon him, but they pass by.

Eventually, someone does stop to help, although it is the one person who might have had a reason not to. He is a Samaritan and the victim is a Jew. Those folks didn't get along any better back then than they do now. According to Dr. King, those who passed by the injured man were asking themselves the wrong question: "If I help this man, what will happen to me?"

The Good Samaritan stopped to help because he asked the right question: "If I don't help this man, what will happen to him?"

Dr. King spent a lifetime asking the right question. If we truly want to honour him, then we need to ask ourselves that question, too. No matter how many reasons we may think we have not to.

“Thinking of More Than Yourself”

“The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.” Genesis 40:23

As morning broke on December 14, 1862, the battlefield at Fredericksburg, Virginia revealed a ghastly landscape. More than 8,000 Union soldiers lay dead or dying before a stone wall where the Confederate Army had entrenched itself. The cries of the dying for help and water were chilling.

Nineteen-year-old Sergeant Richard Kirkland of the Second South Carolina Brigade, had seen and heard enough. Kirkland went to Confederate General Joseph Kershaw. “General,” he said, “I can’t stand this!” He startled his commanding officer. “All night and all day I hear those poor Federal people calling for water,” he said, “and I can’t stand it any longer. I ask permission to go and give them water.”

Kershaw shook his head sympathetically. “Sergeant,” he replied, “you’d get a bullet through your head the moment you stepped over the stone wall onto the plain.”

“Yes, sir,” answered Kirkland, “I know that, but if you let me, I’m willing to try it.”

The General responded, “The sentiment which prompts you is so noble that I will not refuse your request. God protect you. You may go.”

Quickly the South Carolinian hurdled the wall and immediately exposed himself to the fire of every Yankee sharpshooter in that sector. Kirkland walked calmly toward the Union lines until he reached the nearest wounded soldier. Kneeling, he took off his canteen and gently lifted the enemy soldier’s head to give him a long, deep drink of refreshing cold water. Then he placed a knapsack under the head of his enemy and moved on to the next.

Racing against the lengthening shadows of a short, somber December afternoon, he returned again and again to the lines where comrades handed him full canteens. Troops on both sides who had watched this unselfish act paid young Kirkland the supreme tribute -- not a standing ovation, but respectful awed silence.

It is easy to be selfish, but it takes walking by faith in Christ to be selfless. Today in prayer, look to the Lord for your needs and then look to help others to bring glory to Christ.

“You can easily judge the character of others by how they treat those who can do nothing for them or to them.” - Malcolm Forbes

God’s Word: *“People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy”* - 2 Timothy 3:2

“Two Brothers”

Wouldn’t it be a wonderful world if all brothers and sisters were like this? What an awesome, loving environment it would be!

Two brothers worked together on the family farm. One was married and had a large family. The other was single. At the day’s end, the brothers shared everything equally, produce and profit.

Then one day the single brother said to himself, “It’s not right that we should share equally the produce and the profit. I’m alone and my needs are simple.” So each night he took a sack of grain from his bin and crept across the field between their houses, dumping it into his brother’s bin. Meanwhile, the married brother said to himself, “It’s not right that we should share the produce and the profit equally. After all, I’m married and I have my wife and my children to look after me in years to come. My brother has no one, and no one to take care of his future.” So each night, he took a sack of grain and dumped it into his single brother’s bin.

Both men were puzzled for years because their supply of grain never dwindled. Then one dark night the two brothers bumped into each other. Slowly it dawned on them what was happening. They dropped their sacks and embraced one another.

John 13:34-35

John 17:5-26

Jesus Prays for Himself

"After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you." "For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him." "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word." "Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you." "For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me." "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours." "All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them." "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one." "While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled." "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them." "I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world." "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one." "They are not of the world, even as I am not of it." "Sanctify[b] them by the truth; your word is truth." "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." "For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified."

Jesus Prays for All Believers

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message," "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:" "I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world." "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me." "I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

“Prayer: Caring For Others” #1

Jesus prayed this prayer after his last meal with his disciples. Through this prayer, we see Jesus’ great concern for others, even as he was aware of his imminent death. Caring for others through prayer is compassionate, resourceful and enduring. From Jesus’ example of praying for others, we can discover why, who and what to pray for when praying for others. Let’s look together.

First, the reason for why we pray is the glory of God. Vs. 1-5; 24-26

Many people note that Jesus began this prayer by praying for Himself. On the surface, that appears to be true. But when we look deeper, we realize He is praying that God the Father would be glorified, that God the Father would get the credit for what Jesus accomplishes on the cross. And at the close of Jesus’ prayer, He prays that others might see and agree that God the Father is the One Who deserves the credit for sending Jesus to us. In short, Jesus’ prays for others because he wants to introduce God’s love and goodness to others.

Why do we pray for others? We pray for others maybe out of compassion for them. We pray for others in order to change them. We pray for others because others ask us to pray. We pray for others because we are helpless, but God is not. We pray for others, because we also can benefit from God answering our prayer for others.

These are some of the common reasons for praying for others. But the best reason for praying for others is that God the Father might be glorified. We pray for others so that we might introduce to them the God Who is powerful, good and loving.

When we pray for others in order to declare God’s power, goodness and love, three wonderful things happen. First, we pray with pure motive. No longer is our prayer to alleviate our helplessness or to control others for our own benefits. Our prayer for others is about introducing others to God and His power, goodness and love.

Second, we offer others the best. When I ask Connie how I can pray for her when she discovered her cancer had returned, she told me, “Pray that my life would glorify God.” In other words, pray that my life would declare God’s power, goodness and love. God made us to glorify Him, and when our lives glorify God, we are living life to its best.

Third, we persevere in prayer. We often don’t pray for others because we lack love for others; we lack discipline in prayer; or we lack motivation to pray. I’ve found that we persevere in prayer when we obey God, not when we hear a motivational message on prayer. God commands that we declare His greatness and goodness through our lives. And praying for others introduces to others God’s greatness and goodness.

I Samuel 12:23

Proverbs 3:27

“Counting On You”

I wish I could say that I’m always prepared for emergencies. But I’m not. I do have a cell phone, but they have their limits, too. I was dressed for a meeting the other day and certainly not expecting to change a tire in a business suit. But, life is filled with the unexpected.

I pulled into a local convenience store parking lot and began to change the tire. It was snowing and bitterly cold that day, but I did what I had to do. A young man coming out of the store stopped to offer his assistance. “Is there anything I can do to help you?” the man asked. “Why yes, I was counting on you to do just that,” I replied.

“Well, I’m sure someone would have stopped to help,” the man assured me. “No, it had to be you,” I said. “Sir, I don’t even know you,” he said. “Why would you expect me to stop?” “Because you had to.” “I really didn’t have to stop at all. In fact, I don’t normally travel this way. So this was all by chance that I saw you here.”

“By chance? It’s never by chance. It’s on purpose.” “Whatever! Let me change this tire for you.” He went about his business and carefully, quickly changed the flat tire. “There you go. It’s finished. Now, make sure you get that tire repaired or replaced right away. You don’t want to have this happen again without a spare tire,” he said.

“My friend, I need to give you this,” I said as I held my hand out toward him. “No, please, I don’t want any money. I can’t take a thing from you. It only took a few minutes.” “I insist!” I said firmly. “No, really I can’t.” “Okay, no money. But this isn’t money. This is why I said I was “Counting on you!” I then wrapped his hand around a small piece of paper, held it tightly for a moment and thanked him.

The man returned to his car and I watched him in my rear view mirror. As I expected, his curiosity got the best of him and he eagerly opened the note:

“Counting on you” by Bob Perks

There are strangers you’ll see in your travels today,
People in need along the way
It might be a smile or kind word will do.
I hope you know they’re counting on you.

In the hurry and rush of the world this day
Life may be a challenge with no time for play
But you are caring and compassionate, too
You’ll still find the time, they’re counting on you.

Not everyone does it, so many ask “why?”
“If I needed help, no one would try!”
But God made you special you know that it’s true
You have to do it, He’s counting on you!”

The young man sat quietly in his car for a moment. He had answered the voice inside that would not permit him to look the other way. He found time when he thought there wasn’t any time.

Colossians 3:17
