

How Do You Treat People With Problems?

Often people with problems are made to feel sub-Christian. We view them as an inconvenience because they require more time than we want to give.

Talking with them about anything other than the weather might get us entangled in their struggles, so we pass a few pleasantries and quickly find our seats. We rush out after the sermon, more concerned with the football game on television than the person next to us in the pew whose life is shattered.

How can we say, "I love God" when our interaction with the needy is governed by such self-serving, don't-disrupt-my-routine snobbery?

Have we deceived ourselves about the love of God? "Dear friends," pleads John, "since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11, NIV).

So, how does one actually love another? Ask yourself: "Am I the sort of Christian with whom someone would feel comfortable sharing? Or am I intimidating?"

"Does my demeanor say, 'Yes, I want to help; Yes, I care?' Or do I communicate, 'Stay away; you're a disgrace?'"

Then ask God to make you a minister of His compassion and acceptance. Allow Him to use your life to heal the brokenhearted.

Sam Storms is an author, blogger and pastor of Bridgeway Church in Oklahoma City, OK.

Step Into Effective Ministry

Just as a great sculptor gives complete attention to detail, God shapes every aspect of our character. With precision, He moves in rhythm with us through every turn of events in our lives, molding us into useful vessels.

God will place men and women in our lives who have walked this way ahead of us. They understand the refining process and will be able to encourage us so that we get the most out of the lessons.

For all of us, life gains rather than loses meaning as we relinquish our supposed power as independent women. In dying to ourselves in the midst of adversity, the very power that raised Christ from the dead moves into our lives!

It is very valuable to be aware of where we are in the stages of personal and spiritual growth. If we are in a particularly difficult stage, it is encouraging to know that it will not last forever.

On the other hand, if we are in a rich place of deep service to others, seeing where God has taken us and where we are going increases our gratitude and prepares us for the next adventure.

As Christ's character grows within us, others will begin asking us to lead them! Our gifting and yieldedness to the Holy Spirit will qualify us. With His life and power within, effective ministry is finally possible.

Joyce Strong *is an author and international speaker. Visit*

her website for more information about her ministry.

Finding Faith ... and Not to Mention Work

With unemployment at record highs, churches and Christian organizations are stepping in to help job seekers both practically and spiritually.

Ministries such as Florida-based Christian HELP and Career Solutions in Dallas began helping the unemployed find work long before the recession hit in 2008. But since the unemployment rate shot up from 6.6 percent in October 2008 to 10.1 percent the following year to 9.5 percent today, the groups say the “ministry needs and opportunities” are growing.

Honoring a Passionate Evangelist

When Steve Hill got up to preach at Brownsville Assembly of God on Father’s Day 1995, he had no idea his ministry was about to head in a new direction.

The service launched the Brownsville Revival, a 5-year renewal that drew 4 million attendees from around the world and saw thousands accept Christ.

“I personally saw the Holy Spirit use [Hill] almost single-

handedly to touch the world through his repentance message," says former Brownsville pastor John Kilpatrick. "He basically put his life on hold to be used by God to tirelessly preach, pray and call those hundreds of thousands of souls nightly."

Kilpatrick, former Brownsville worship leader Lindell Cooley and former ministry school dean Michael Brown will be among the leaders gathering Friday to honor Hill at Heartland Church, the congregation he leads in Dallas. Hill was diagnosed with a melanoma in 2001, and the cancer spread into his body. He now has two tumors outside his lungs.

"God burdened me to do this," says Cindy Jacobs, co-founder of Generals International and convener of the July 16 service. "Steve's never asked for anything. He doesn't want to bother anybody. He's just [focused on winning] souls and honoring God."

Jacobs hopes the money raised during the service will offset Hill's medical costs and allow him to take a break from preaching to focus on his health. But asking an evangelist to stop, even for a little while, is a tall order. Even as he undergoes treatment at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Hill has been operating a website to help prodigals find their way back to God. Jacobs estimates that thousand have returned to faith through . (Read "Website Calls Prodigals Back Home.")

To view the service via live webcast beginning at 7 p.m. Central, visit .


Life After Attempted Suicide

Kristen Anderson lay on railroad tracks hoping to end her life. Instead, she heard a song that changed everything.

On a bone-cold night in January 2000, Kristen Anderson made an impulsive decision: She walked to the railroad tracks not far from her Chicago home, lay facedown on the ground and let 33 freight cars roar over her body at 55 miles per hour.

The engineer frantically blew the whistle and brought the train to a halt on top of Kristen's body. The botched suicide attempt left the 17-year-old in piercing pain. As she lay there in her own blood, trying to decipher whether she was dreaming, Kristen managed to pull herself from under the train and crawl to some nearby rocks.

Embezzler Finds True Path to Riches

Before Kevin Cross turned 22 he'd received a bachelor's  degree in accounting, embezzled \$300,000 from the government, been blackmailed by the mob and convicted of a felony. But Cross says the excitement of his cinematic life story doesn't compare to the exhilarating life he now leads in Christ. He travels the country teaching that true riches can be found only through biblical financial stewardship.

Cross says he spent most of his early years chasing riches. "My god was pleasure, and it was so satisfying. The problem is, it wears off like a drug," says Cross, who is president of Cross Stewardship Ministries in Roswell, Ga.

Dreams Come True for Hidden Homeless

Pastor John Wiley didn't think it was fair that the working poor or "hidden homeless" in Kansas City, Mo., had to live in rent-by-the-week motels, paying \$800 to \$1,200 a month, so his church did something about it.


Three years ago, as Wiley watched nearly a dozen children get off a school bus and go into a motel, he thought, *No child should have to live in such a horrible place.* Soon after he drove by an old hospital and said to himself, "Somebody ought to buy that hospital and turn it into a place for homeless people and break the cycle of poverty."

Saved by Angels

Can you imagine a 10,000-pound axle from a logging truck falling on top of you and nearly cutting the midsection of your body in two? That's what happened to diesel mechanic Bruce Van Natta when the semitrailer he was repairing fell off a jack in November 2006.


Van Natta shouted to the driver "Turn it off!" and then pulled part of his body out from under the bumper of the vehicle. He was in agonizing pain, but what happened next is the reason the 40-year-old travels the world proclaiming Jesus.

Breaking Racism's Curse

In the '70s Richard Harris made history by becoming the  youngest Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon state leader in history. Now a pastor, professor and author, Harris decries his former life and confronts the issue of racism head-on.

Harris says his change of heart happened at age 20, after four years in the Klan. His superiors assigned him to a chaplain position and required him to study the Bible.

Jamaican orphanage raises children on coffee

In the mountains near Kingston, Jamaica, City of Refuge  Children's Home is cultivating two of the country's most precious resources: children and coffee.

Assemblies of God missionaries Steve and Kim Puffpaff decided to open a children's home after witnessing countless orphaned children living on the streets. In 2002, thanks to donations, the couple purchased property in Jamaica's Blue Mountains and transformed a former luxury hotel on the property into a children's home.