

A Simple 'God Bless You!'

Three years ago, before the summer break, our Bible study leader gave the class a challenge: "Do something weird for Jesus this summer, something you've never done before." As I drove home, I accepted the challenge, but I wondered what "weird" thing I could do.

I recalled a minister I knew once who made a regular practice of standing at our sanctuary door and blessing everyone when he shook their hands. I remembered how this filled me with warm feelings, and I started to wonder if I could make others feel that way. Could I be a witness for God in the marketplace? I thought.

One day, after I finished shopping for groceries, when a young man was putting my bags in the back seat of my car, I said to him, "The Lord bless you."

He was surprised. Then he flashed a big smile and said, "You too."

The next time I tried my experiment was at a cosmetics counter. I said, "God bless you" to a young girl as she gave me my purchase. She fell silent, and with a questioning look in her eyes she said, "Why, thank you."

Later, a person I knew slightly was leaving my home after a short visit. I hugged her and said, "The Lord bless you." With tears in her eyes, she turned to me and said, "Thank you for saying that to me."

I've noticed that the people I've spoken to don't always respond with a smile; sometimes they just stare. But I believe I always give them something to think about.

Often I play a guessing game with myself before I bless someone; I try to imagine their reaction. I've seen sad faces

flash big smiles. I've also seen people who looked unfriendly change their countenances when I've spoken a blessing to them.

When I open my mouth to bless others, I feel God's love so strongly. I believe they can feel it too.