

Essentials for a Life of Blessing Others

Blessed to be a blessing. Cultivating generosity. There are few things in life that lead to more satisfaction, more fulfillment, more joy than making a difference in someone else's life. Helping people truly helps you.

If you're empty and dry, you need to get filled up. You need to take in soul-nourishment every day. But once you've received, you must give. If you don't, your life will become stagnant and stinky. If you want the water of God's fullness and blessing to keep flowing to you, you must allow it to flow *through* you to others.

Over the last few months, I have experienced this more than ever. In response to some of my writing I've been hearing from more and more people who are struggling with fear and anxiety, marriage problems, compulsive addictions and more. Working with my team to find innovative ways to help even more people like you has drawn substance from deep in my soul. It's made me stronger, more productive and helped prevent me from stalling in grief after my husband's death. Real fulfillment and joy bubble up from my heart as I see people blessed and changed by what God has given me to share. And this is just the beginning.

You can experience the same. There's a reason you're on this planet. God has something for you to do. And that always involves being a blessing to others. "Freely you have received, freely give." (Matt. 10:8b).

Here are some keys to helping people, to letting God's blessings flow *through* you to others.

Get Over Yourself

People-pleasing is a deadly disease. It's one I had to get over and still have to watch out for. It's something Paul had to resolutely refuse (Gal. 1:10). All of us humans are infected, but it's critical to move beyond this trap. Until you do, you'll be of very little use to God or anyone.

The antidote is to realize that it's not about you. As a parent, if you saw your toddler in the process of being abducted, you wouldn't worry if others thought you a crazy person for creating a scene, yelling, screaming, shoving and so on. When you truly are focused on helping someone else, you lose concern over what people will think, say or do. You really don't think about yourself very much at all.

It's a Gift

Getting over yourself doesn't mean you become offensive. When your goal is helping someone, you make the help you offer as appealing as possible. You can't force someone to accept a gift. The skills you develop, strategies you employ, packaging you offer, timing and everything else about what you offer is framed to help the one who needs your help accept it.

Some people will reject the help you offer. So be it; some rejected Jesus' offer of life and still do. It's no different with you. Your focus is on continually making the gift God has given you to offer as appealing as possible. Some will gratefully accept it; those are the people to whom God is sending you. And their response will feed your soul.

Whose Pain Do You Feel?

How do you know whom you are to help? Perhaps the best way to begin understanding that is to ask whose pain you feel. Whose struggle can you identify with? Whose wounds do you notice? That is often directly related to your own experiences in life and what God has done for you personally.

The hurting people God sends you to are unlikely to respond to

someone standing on a pedestal, shouting directions at them from on high. Would you respond to that? Most people need someone to get close, to listen, to understand, to show them the next step. You can come alongside, take their hand, and say, "Follow me as I follow Christ. I found the way out of a similar problem, and I can help you find the next step to take."

Give, and You Will Receive

We've made Luke 6:38, where Jesus explains the principle of giving and receiving, all about money. It's really not. Whatever you hoard will grow stale and rotten. Whatever you generously pass on will grow and come back to you. That goes for time, attention, material things, knowledge, courage, support, love, healing, comfort, wisdom and everything else good that comes from God.

It was as the disciples passed the blessed bread and fish to the people that the broken pieces were multiplied enough to feed all who were hungry. (Matt. 14:19-20). Right now, as you read this, you don't have enough to help those who need it. But you have something! Give that. Make whatever you *do* have fully available for God's purposes. And as you do, He will multiply it.

You have a gift. God has put something in you that the world needs. It's not about you; it's about those who desperately need what God has given you to pass on.

Start with what you have. Give it generously. Keep one hand open to receive from God; you'll soon have nothing left if you don't. And with the other hand, pass on to those who are hungry the bread God has entrusted to you.

Your turn: How are you passing on to others what God has given you? Do you need to get over yourself? Can you make the gift more appealing? Leave a comment below. {eoa}

Dr. Carol Peters-Tanksley is both a board-certified OB-GYN physician and an ordained doctor of ministry. As an author and speaker, she loves helping people discover the Fully Alive kind of life that Jesus came to bring us. Visit her website at .

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