

What Good Can Good Do?

It's not every day that stories about a homeless man and a Dairy Queen manager go viral. Yet within days of each other, both Glen James and Joey Prusak were making national news for, well, making good news.

In Boston, James has become a local hero for a single act of integrity that saved one man more than \$42,000. On Sept. 14, the homeless James discovered a backpack containing \$2,400 in cash, almost \$40,000 in traveler's checks and a passport at South Bay Mall in Dorchester, Mass. Without taking a penny, he turned the bag in to Boston police, who returned it to its owner.

But the story doesn't end there. Days later, a total stranger who read about James' actions in the media launched an online fundraising campaign for him. By the time of this printing, almost \$150,000 had been raised to, as the page stated, "help this man change his life."

In Minneapolis, 19-year-old Dairy Queen manager Joey Prusak was making waves for a similar Good Samaritan deed. After a \$20 bill dropped out of the pocket of a visually impaired customer, Prusak saw a woman pick up the money and slip it into her purse. When the woman later tried to order, Prusak insisted she return the \$20 or he wouldn't serve her. When she refused and left the restaurant, Prusak went the extra mile by giving the visually impaired man \$20 out of his own wallet. Another customer witnessed the entire exchange, emailed Dairy Queen's corporate headquarters and, a few Facebook posts later, the story went viral.

As with James, this one also has a happy ending. Since Prusak's act of integrity, that Dairy Queen's traffic has doubled. Prusak has personally received job offers, large tips, numerous \$20 bills in his mailbox and even a personal

call from Dairy Queen shareholder Warren Buffett. Despite needing money to attend business school, Prusak says he'll give the donations to charity.

Both James and Prusak were recognized for their admirable actions, even though their motive wasn't to grab the limelight or show anyone how wonderful they were.

"I was just doing what I thought was right," Prusak says. "Ninety-nine out of 100 people would've done the same thing as me."

Though that last part is debatable, the truth is that these men exemplify the opportunity each Christian is given every day. We constantly face decisions throughout the day—big or small, major or minor—that require us to act. The real question, then, is what type of action we'll take: Is it to promote ourselves or to promote God? To choose pride or to choose humility? To build our kingdom or to build God's kingdom?

As "little Christs," we are to reflect the image of Jesus. That reflection exists whether 10,000 people are present to see it or zero. Because integrity, by loose definition, is doing the right thing when no one else is watching.

Notice, however, that integrity still requires action—as does love, kindness, humility and every other trait that Jesus possesses and we are to reflect. James 2:14-26 spells it out with this bold declaration: "Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (v. 17). I love Eugene Peterson's grasp of this concept in *The Message*: "Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove" (v. 18).

This issue of *Charisma* is full of examples of how to reflect Christ by putting our faith into action. From a list of practical gifts that can transform entire communities to a story of profound forgiveness to a couple who began feeding neighborhood children from their dining room table and now

feed millions every year, the articles in this issue are sure to inspire you. But I challenge you—no, I beg you: Please, *please* don't let this be just another batch of heart-warming stories that leaves you feeling inspired yet doesn't result in any action. Get out there and do something!

Today it's trendy to talk about social justice—and for good reason. The church has for too long been content to sit on its hands while taking in teaching after teaching. But it's proven that the majority of believers—yes, even the younger generation that's known for needing a “cause”—is still guilty of talking more about doing acts of compassion than actually getting out there and living an active faith.

Don't let this be a trend. Let it become a lifestyle that beautifully reflects Jesus' example of walking in true faith *and* works.

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