

Philippians 4:13



Words to Find:
 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Make Others a Priority

Bill Brinkworth

Paul emphasizes in Romans 15:1-7 how important it is to make others a priority in our lives. In a day when selfishness rules and reigns in the behavior of many, it is refreshing to be reminded that there is a better, more godly way of living. That way is to try to meet others' needs.

There was a time when a person did something that there would be a concern about how it would affect another. "If I play my music loudly, it will disturb others"; "If I don't take care of

my lawn, the neighbors will not like it"; or even "If I park my shopping cart in the middle of the aisle, no one will be able to get past". Those thoughts are no longer on the forefront of most people's minds.

Somewhere the concern for others and their needs has been lost. Personally, I think it was forgotten when our nation publicly expelled the teachings of the Bible from society, and shortly before the public schools crammed "your self-esteem is more important than considering other's needs" down students'

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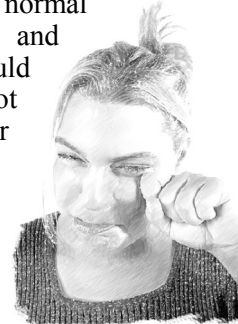


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It May "Come Back Around" To You

Bill Brinkworth

Sofia was having one of those really bad days. Her countenance showed clearly that she was not her normal happy self, and Lynn could certainly not let her suffer alone. As she approached her friend, she asked Sofia, "Are you alright?"



At first Sofia nodded she was okay, but the nod quickly turned to a "no" headshake. It was not long until she blurted out her burden.

Lynn just listened, and nodded at the proper time. It was not long until Sofia got her troubles off her mind, after unloading them to her friend. She felt better. Someone cared enough to listen, and she knew she could face her troubles and her day. Off she went to get back into life.

In just a few short days, Lynn noticed the same troubled countenance on her neighbor, Mr. Marvin. She certainly knew what it was like to have to carry a burden all alone, so she kindly asked her neighbor if "all was okay."

As he raised his head to answer his neighbor's question, his tear-reddened face made it very clear to Lynn that something was seriously wrong in Mr. Marvin's life.

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Self

Cowper

Beware of too sublime a sense
 Of your own worth and
 consequence.
 The man who dreams himself so
 great,
 And his importance of such
 weight,
 That all around in all that's done
 Must move and act
 for him alone
 Will learn in
 schooling of
 tribulation,
 The folly of his
 expectation.



It May “Come ” ...

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It was not long until he shared the tragedy he was facing. Lynn felt so bad for him. Quietly she listened, and patted him on the back to comfort him. His sobs, as he told what he was dealing with, finally subsided, as he too felt relieved after sharing his burden. The problem was still there, but it certainly felt better sharing it with someone who cared, and soon he was off to face his day.

Several days later, while sipping his cooling coffee on his lunch break, Mr. Marvin quickly noticed that Martha had lost her smile that she seemed always to have. She was sitting across from him at the table, but she would not look up. “Is everything okay?” he asked, knowing that something was definitely wrong.

Finally, she looked up, and shook her head from side to side. “No. No, it isn’t,” and she proceeded to pour out what had robbed her of her smile.

Mr. Marvin just listened. Sympathy for what she was going through was apparent on his face. He cared. “Is there anything I can do to help you?”

“No,” she shook her head. She thought for a moment, “You just did”, and eventually after her break was finished, she too felt relieved after sharing what

bothered her and was able to continue.

At the end of the day, Martha got into Lynn’s car, whom she had carpooled with for years. Instantly, Martha could tell someone something was wrong from Lynn’s visage. “Had a bad day?” Martha asked.

“Oh, yeah. I had a really, bad day. You won’t believe what ...” and she proceeded to tell what transpired that day. As she drove and talked, she felt better. Hearing Martha’s opinion helped Lynn realize that maybe she had taken what was said to her the wrong way. By the time she dropped Martha off at her house, Lynn had a completely different view of what had happened to her that day. It helped to talk it out with someone who cared.

Although the above is a fictitious story, we would be surprised how our encouraging others can eventually come back around to our benefit. An unselfish attitude towards others can encourage them, and our showing compassion will make a positive impact in the lives of others.

Imagine if Lynn, the first encourager in the story, had selfishly kept to herself; if she “didn’t want to get involved.” The whole chain of exhorting and encouraging others would have been broken, and there may not have been a person to sup-

port Lynn in her time of need. Sadly, in our increasingly selfish world, when compassion is needed, there is little to be found.

Encourage and uplift another today. When others are “up” and encouraged, there may be someone around you to uplift you when you need it the most.

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” I Peter 3:8-9

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throats. However, we got here, selfishness does not work.


Too many fear that if they do not concentrate on meeting their own needs, they will never be satisfied and happy. Meeting others’ needs works in a way that is not logical to a self-centered mindset. Somehow, usually by God’s unseen hand, when a person puts the needs of others as a priority, their own needs are met by others when they need the help. When my wife and I were first married, we came to an agreement. The agreement was that I would not worry about my needs, and would concentrate on meeting hers. Likewise, she trusted me to meet her needs, and would concentrate on meeting my

needs. This arrangement has worked well. With God’s help, all our needs have been met!

Meeting the needs of others is the key to feeling important, needed, and complete. Selfishness usually does not meet personal needs. It just makes a person feel emptier, anxious, and looking for someone or something to satisfy the emptiness they have. Many never find anything to fulfill their needs. Self-centeredness rarely brings real joy. Helping and trying to meet the needs of others does, however.

I have often asked the senior citizens I preach to in the nursing homes, when it was that they felt the best about themselves, most needed, and complete. Usually the consensus was when they were concentrating on meeting the needs of their children or spouse.

Christ lived to meet our needs (Rom. 15:3). The Word of God was preserved to help others (Rom. 15:4). Prophets, disciples, and early Christians gave of themselves, so we may have what is important. It is time that we also got our minds off ourselves and on the needs of others.



*“Real joy is experienced:
Jesus Others You.”*

“ And of some have compassion, making a difference.” Jude 1:22