

ENCOURAGER Vol.2



“He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us.” 2 Cor. 1:4 (The Message)

PRIDE & PREJUDICE

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NEW THOUGHT:

Perhaps you received this insightful email I was given the other day. “Let’s put the seniors in jail, and the criminals in a nursing home. This way the seniors would have access to showers, hobbies, and walks, they’d receive unlimited free prescriptions, dental and medical treatment, wheel chairs etc. and they’d receive money instead of paying it out. They would have constant video monitoring, so they could be helped instantly, if they fell, or needed assistance. Bedding would be washed twice a week, and all clothing would be ironed and returned to them. A guard would check on them every 20 minutes, and bring their meals and snacks to their cell. They would have family visits in a suite built for that purpose. They would have access to a library, weight room, spiritual counseling, pool and education. Simple clothing, shoes, slippers, P.J.’s and legal aid would be free on request. Private, secure rooms for all, with an exercise outdoor yard, with gardens. Each senior could have a P.C. a T.V. radio, and daily phone calls. There would be a board of directors to hear complaints, and the guards would have a code of conduct, that would be strictly adhered to. The “criminals” would get cold food, be left all alone, and unsupervised, lights off at 8pm, and showers once a week, live in a tiny room, pay \$3,000.00 per month and have no hope of ever getting out.” Author Unknown.

Justice for all!

In John 4:9 we see Jesus looking past cultural stereotypes and prejudices as he approaches a Samaritan woman directly. First he crosses the race barrier and then transcends the gender inequality.



Jesus becomes our quintessential teacher instructing us on how to engage a multifaceted culture. He also confronted the bias that existed in that day against children. In Mark 9:37 we find Jesus teaching the crowd to welcome little children and even personally identifying himself with them.



Later in Mark 10:13 and 14 we find people bringing their children to Jesus for his touch. The children were not afraid of him, so he must have lowered himself to their short heights; giving each of them eye contact and special attention.

In biblical times we see older adults being respected and valued for their wisdom and life experience. In today’s American culture when an adult begins to lose their functional abilities and mental faculties; they are more often than not, rejected by family and friends, left to live out the remainder of their lives in nursing homes.



What types of pride or fear keep us from associating with someone we perceive as dissimilar to us, or at a different point in life?

“Jesus becomes our quintessential teacher instructing us on how to engage a multifaceted culture.”



DOING The Next Right Thing

is the next right thing you should



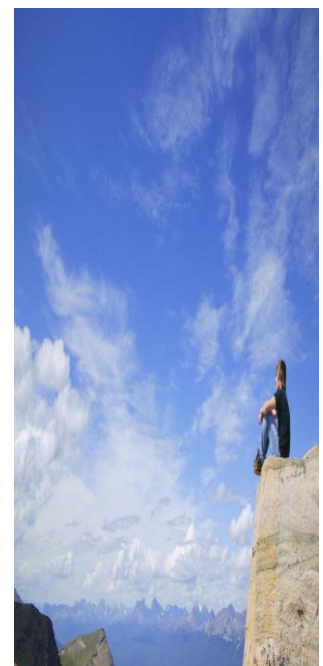
This is a phrase I always hear Christian Radio Host and Author, Stephen Arterburn say. "Just Do the Next Right Thing." We can be in the midst of life's greatest fears, depressions, or crisis and still be fully capable of choosing to do the next right thing. Your next question will of course be, "What is the next right thing I should be doing?" Steve says that's easy. It's usually the hardest thing!

How encouraging is that? Isn't it true that we often grumble about the thing we know we should be doing anyway? So pick it up, clear that desk, or take it out. Put it in the trash or clean it up. Maybe you need to zip your lip and not say another word. If you're a Writer like me, God may be telling you to keep your butt in the chair and write. Whatever you sense

you should be doing, just do it! Perhaps that means even taking the grocery cart back to the receptacle area when you've finished using it, (thank you Joyce Meyer!) We need not get distracted in searching for God's mysterious hidden will, when our wonderful Holy Spirit and the Word of God, will guide our next steps. So do yourself a favor and "Do the Next Right Thing!"

IT SEES

and callings be made sure.



"Your faith level will never rise above the words that you speak."

Dr. Roy Hawthorn

Do you have a sense of personal ministry vision? To define and refine your vision, helps to clarify where you are at with the Lord. If you're like me, by this point in life you can name your own strengths and weaknesses. Likewise, most of us have a fair grasp of the magnitude and power of God. The question is how does anyone combine these to formulate a vision for ministering to our world?

Vision becomes more than just a mere assessment of our lifetime's potential. Vision is the power behind our ministry pursuits. It is

the strength and vigor we will draw upon when we encounter unforeseen challenges and fatigue sets in. Will we fall prey to mediocrity or discouragement that can so easily defeat us?

Seeing future opportunities with God's eyes require that we envision what we have not seen. We must first acknowledging our shortcomings and embrace His might and sufficiency. As our Music Pastor Matt Perkins puts it, "We must let Him put his Super on top of our Natural." Only then can our SUPERNATURAL minister.

Bridging the Gap

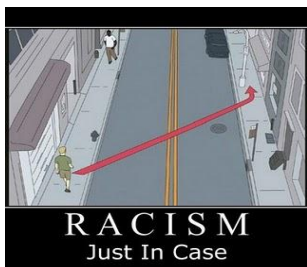
Open yourself up to people of other cultures. Your conditions may be different but we all have a need for Christ.

I attend church with a number of people from various Hispanic and other island cultures. These folks are warm and genuine. They have taught me some key phrases and I've attempted to brush up on my Spanish.

Our next door neighbors are first and second generation Cubans. I've purchased a Spanish Bible but need to put more time into leaning their language, if I'm going to minister to them effectively.



Perhaps many of us need to unlearn things we learned as children? As a child, I was taught to avoid strangers; but now living as a Christian adult I've found this tendency to be inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus. The New



Testament rebukes us for not showing hospitality to others. Did you know that the Greek word for hospitality actually means "brotherly love of STRANGERS?" We shouldn't and don't have to let fear keep us from reaching out to others.

Snapshots at jasonlove.com



I have an inclination to first see how I differ from another person, but I'm convinced God wants me to focus instead on what I might have in common. I've found that a person's background is only part of who they are. If I'm focusing on a common interest, sport or hobby, it becomes much easier to develop meaningful relationships.

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"Hi, dear — how was your hate-group therapy?"

Our Pastor has a huge heart for world missions. Faith Assembly supports a large number of world missionaries. Because we live in the world-wide tourist destination spot of Orlando; a number of missionaries visit and speak at our church, while vacationing or attending conventions. This exposure to a variety of races has increased my cultural awareness and created a thirst to learn more about other ethnicities.



Going on a short term mission trip or sponsoring a child from an improvised country can also create a sense of compassion and cultural sensitivity.



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*Love does not consist in gazing at each other,
but in looking outward together
in the same direction.*

Inspired by Steve Esquibel

GENERATION GAP?

In 1 Timothy 5: 1, 2: Paul wanted the church to see generational members as family. He instructed older people to train younger people in day to day as well as spiritual subjects. Older men and women were to treat younger church family like sons or daughters. I'm sorry to say in today's "all about me" America, too often younger people become offended at the thought of anyone telling them what to do, so older people become silent or indignant.



Barbara Deane in her Discipleship Journal article, "Breaking the Age Barrier, highlights some excellent suggestions. Most meaningful relationships begin when one person seeks to meet the need of another. Ms. Deane points to an example of a retired landlord asking their tenant couple, if they could help babysit their young children. From this weekly arrangement, a close relationship developed. A younger man looking for a fishing buddy might find in an older gentleman someone who knows all the good holes but also is a good listener. If all of your kids have moved away perhaps some of their old friends have not. Why not invite one of them for a meal, especially if the grown kid is estranged from her parents or worse yet their mother has died?

My wife is a teacher, and now that our son is nearly grown; I find she continues to reach out to former students keeping up with their concerns and family lives. Reconnecting with a distant relative in other location can challenge an older aunt or uncle to keep up with current events. Conversely, the mature one can sometimes be a stimulating person for the young person to be around.

Before having children, my wife and I lead worship services at a nursing home with another couple. We began attending the mature couple's home bible study group and even when they later moved out of town my wife and I continued with our nursing home ministry. As an infant and young toddler, our only son loved being the center of their attention and gained several adopted grandparents, through our continued visits and ministry.

Words To Live By

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered;
Forgive them anyway.
 If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;
Be kind anyway.
 If you are successful you may win false friends and true enemies;
Succeed anyway.
 If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;
Be honest and frank anyway.
 What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;
Build anyway.
 If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;
Be happy anyway.
 The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;
Do good anyway.
 Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you've got anyway.
 You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God;
It was never between you and them anyway.