



August 3, 2014

Be Generous

*Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven,
he gave thanks and broke the loaves.
Then he gave them to the disciples,
and the disciples gave them to the people. Matthew 14:13–21*

Thought For The Week

Not everyone's Monday is actually on Monday. But regardless of what day your workweek starts, it's highly likely that it's not a smooth transition from your day off to your day on.

This low point of our week, when we grab the last 45 seconds in bed before we really have to tumble out of it, is a time when we can punish ourselves with demoralizing, discouraging thoughts — ones that we have a lot of help coming up with because our society focuses on the wrong things.

As Christians, we don't have to fall for misconceptions. Let's look at three encouraging, truthful thoughts that will get us out of bed, and through the week:

The Value of You – You matter.

Out in the world, you may feel that you are nothing more *than* matter — a collection of atoms that, through chance and evolution, jumbled together to become a dehumanized unit — a unit that works in a cubicle, a unit that purchases phone plans, a unit that banks somewhere, a unit with a specific amount of money that corporations, financial magnates, and governments want to get their hands on.

To these people, you **don't** matter. You're simply a number that, added to a bunch of other numbers, generates revenue for somebody else.

When God deals with numbers, however, He computes differently than we do:

We Count, in God's Reckoning

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father,” Jesus says in Matthew 10: 29. If He were saying this today, He might rephrase it: “Is not a chicken in a large, commercial slaughterhouse considered worthless except as a boneless chicken breast? God gave that chicken life, and He values it, though man does not. Believe me, you're worth a lot more than a chicken.”

Continuing with Jesus: *“Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”* (Today's translation: “Human beings obsess about Facebook and Twitter Likes. I don't.”) People assign numbers to other people — how many hits, how many transactions, how many faces in the pews.

Jesus not only knows us, and calls us, by name-He lays down His life for us, John 10: 14-15.

When we think that we don't matter out in the world, but we do matter to God, why do we spend so much time trying to impress the world?

Yes, You Make a Difference - Your work—and your life—make a difference.

Too many of the jobs we perform these days, to pay bills that keep increasing with wages that don't, seem pointless: we stamp things, we file papers, we put people on hold while we transfer them to an associate, we stand still when someone chews us out. At the end of the workday, few of us feel that we have created something, made a child smile, or comforted a wounded heart. It's easy to get discouraged and cynical when we want to make a significant difference in somebody else's life, but we're frustrated by the mindlessness of our daily tasks.



Jesus was the one who encouraged the children to come to Him. He who values children for their true precious worth, also values you. Stop listening to the words of other people. Child of Eden, original oil painting by Steve Henderson; licensed open edition print at Great Big Canvas and Framed Canvas Art.

But no honest work is dishonorable work, and where we are, right now, is where we do something for God every day, whether or not it is connected with our day, or night, job:

“We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2: 10)

Want to make a child smile? You don’t have to be a celebrity working for the United Nations; just be you, and the next time you interact with a child, get down on his or her level, truly listen to what they’re saying, and answer as if you considered them a real human being.

Use this technique with any human being, child or not, and moment by moment, day by day, you will make more of a positive difference, and will be doing good works, far beyond the scope of most billionaire philanthropists.

Never Alone - You’re not on your own.

In the country in which I was born, the United States, people are praised for being aggressive, purpose-driven, forceful leadership types, and even those who should know better — Christians — seek out and reward confident, assertive, commanding luminaries who don’t list humility, meekness, and trust among their attributes.

God isn’t particularly interested in your good impression of yourself, although to other people, and mankind in general, the outer shell that you project is far more important than the frail, imperfect person that you are inside.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding,” Psalm 3: 5 tells us. “In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Do you know the future? He does:

“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” (Jeremiah 33: 3)

Free yourself from the bondage of having to pretend that you’ve got it together, and rest in the arms of God.

You matter. You make a difference. And you’re not alone.
Tell yourself these three things in those last 45 seconds, before you tumble out of bed.

“God Bless You All, Everyone!”

Prayer for Peace

God of all that is, all that ever was, and all that shall come to be,
we give thanks for this time to remember your goodness,

your loving care, your guidance, and your vision for creation to be at peace.

Forgive us when we forget and are guilty of actions
and thoughts that do not promote peace.

This day, O God, we remember the people of Dominica
who struggle daily for peace and acceptance and justice.

We remember the concerns of this gathered people
as we bring before you our personal cares and hopes.

Go now in the full knowledge of the gift of the Son of God
and become the peacemakers you are called to be.

Stewardship Thought For The Week

As Christians, we are encouraged to share what we have with others, to respect our neighbors as ourselves and to assist those less fortunate. We typically respond to this request when asked and proceed to go about our daily lives until the next request is heard. What most individuals do not realize is that by sharing of ourselves and helping those around us, we are, in essence, practicing Christian stewardship.

In fact, "stewardship" reaches far beyond financial contributions and encourages Christians to live their lives as disciples of Jesus. Equipped with this knowledge, we have the power to change how we understand and live out our lives, beginning a life-long process of sharing our gifts of time, talent and treasure out of gratitude, not out of obligation. Living our baptismal promise becomes the motivational force behind our actions.