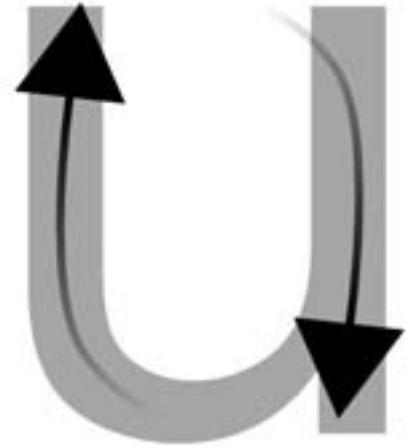


IT COMES BACK TO

yo



Do all the good you can.
By all the means you can.
In all the ways you can.
In all the places you can.
At all the times you can.
As long as you ever can.

—*John Wesley (English theologian and evangelist, 1703–1791)*

One word frees us of all
the weight and pain of life:
That word is *love*.

—*Sophocles (ancient Greek dramatist, 496?–406? B.C.)*

Do something for some-
body every day for which
you do not get paid.

—*Albert Schweitzer (German-born theologian, philosopher, musicologist, medical missionary, and Nobel laureate, 1875–1965)*

He was driving home one evening, on a two-lane country road. Work in this small mid-western U.S. community was almost as slow as his beat-up Pontiac. But he never quit looking. Ever since the factory closed, he'd been unemployed, and with winter raging on, the chill had finally hit home.

It was a lonely road. Not very many people had a reason to be on it, unless they were leaving. Most of his friends had already left. They had families to feed and dreams to fulfill. But he stayed on. After all, this was where he buried his mother and father. He was born here and knew the country. He could go down this road blind, and tell you what was on either side. With his headlights not working, that came in handy.

It was starting to get dark and light snow flurries were coming down. *I'd better get a move on*, he thought. He almost didn't see the old lady stranded on the side of the road. Even in the dim light he could see she needed help, so he pulled up in front of her Mercedes and got out. His Pontiac was still sputtering when he approached her.

Even with the smile on his face, she was worried. No one had stopped to help for the last hour or so. Was he going to hurt her? He didn't look safe—he looked poor and hungry.

He could see that she was frightened, standing out there in the cold. He knew how she felt. It was that chill that only fear can put in you.

"I'm here to help you, ma'am," he said. "Why don't you wait in the car where it's warm. By the way, my name is Bryan."

All she had was a flat tire, but for an old lady that was bad enough. Bryan crawled under the car looking for a place to put the jack, skinning his knuckles a time or two. Soon he was able to change the tire. But he had to get dirty and his hands hurt.

As he was tightening the lug nuts, she rolled down her window and began to talk to him. She told him that she was from St. Louis and was just passing through. She couldn't thank him enough for coming to her aid. Bryan just smiled as he closed her trunk.

She asked him how much she owed him. Any amount would have been all right with her. She had already imagined all the awful things that could have happened had he not stopped. Bryan never thought twice about the money. This was not a job to him. This was helping someone in need, and God knows there were plenty who had given him a hand in the past. He had lived his whole life that way, and it never occurred to him to act any other way.

He told her that if she really wanted to pay him back, the next time she saw someone who needed help, she could give that person the assistance that they needed. “And,” Bryan added, “think of me.”

He waited until she started her car and drove off. It had been a cold and depressing day, but he felt good as he headed for home, disappearing into the twilight.

A few miles down the road the lady saw a small cafe. She went in to grab a bite to eat and take the chill off before she made the last leg of her trip home. It was a dingy-looking restaurant. Outside were two old gas pumps. The whole scene was unfamiliar to her. The cash register was like the telephone of an out-of-work actor—it didn’t ring much.

Her waitress came over and, seeing the older lady’s wet hair, brought a clean towel for her to wipe her wet hair with. The young woman had a sweet smile, one that even being on her feet the whole day couldn’t erase. The lady noticed that the waitress was in the last month or two of pregnancy, but even the strain of that didn’t stop the waitress from being cheerful. The older lady wondered how someone who had so little could be so giving and kind to a stranger. Then she remembered Bryan.

After the lady finished her meal, she paid with a hundred dollar bill. The waitress went to get her change, and the lady slipped out the door without saying a word. She was gone from the parking lot by the time the waitress came back to the table. She wondered where the lady could have gone, then she noticed something written on a napkin. Tears came to her eyes as she read what the lady had written.

“You don’t owe me a thing, I’ve been there too. Someone once helped me out, the way I’m helping you. If you really want to pay me back, here’s what you do. Don’t let the chain of love end with you.”

There were more tables to clear, sugar bowls to fill, and people to serve, but the waitress made it through another day.

That night when she got home from work and climbed into bed, she was thinking about the money and what the lady had written. How could that stranger have known how much she and her husband needed that money? With the baby due next month, it was going to be hard. She knew how worried her husband was, and as he lay sleeping next to her, she gave him a soft kiss and whispered soft and low, “Everything’s gonna be all right. I love you, Bryan.”

—*Author unknown*

Whatever a man sows, that
will he also reap.

(The Bible, Galatians 6:7 NKJ)

Give and it will be given
to you, good measure,
pressed down, shaken
together, and running
over.

(The Bible, Luke 6:38 NKJ)

You Never Lose by Giving

By David Brandt Berg

You know, the Lord’s finances work the other way around from the world’s! The world says, “When I’ve got my million, then I’ll start giving.”

But the Lord says, “Start giving *now* from what you’ve got, and *then* I’ll give you whatever you need in order to give more. In fact, I’ll give you even *more!*”

He wants to see if you will give sacrificially and faithfully of what you’ve got now. He wants to find out how you use the nickels before He gives you the dollars, how you use the pence before He gives you the pounds.

When He told me this, I began to give double tips to the waitresses, the bus drivers, the poor little newspaper girls on the street, and others. I started really handing it out, and I felt great! And believe it or not, soon we were receiving more money for our living expenses. We were beginning to reap the benefits of giving. So you see, I started doubling *my* giving to others, and the Lord started doubling *His* giving to *me*.

Let go and let God give through you, and you’ll soon find He’ll give more to you through others! “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8). You never lose by giving! How much have you given lately?