

Begging for a Good Opportunity

If you are like me, one of the passages you know the best about good deeds is **Galatians 6:10**: “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (ESV). We are supposed to do good deeds. However, the requirement is “as we have opportunity.” How many times have I thought to myself, “Well, I would do these good deeds and love my neighbor like the Good Samaritan if I had opportunities. But I just haven’t come across any stripped, beaten, and half dead people lately”? Of course, that statement is a bit extreme. But it is easy for me not to come across too many needs. For most of my working career, I’ve been in an office by myself. I left home, drove to the office, worked, drove back home. Day was done. There just weren’t very many opportunities for good deeds with that schedule.

Of course, I’m not sure how different it is for many of us with a different work schedule. After all, most of us work with people who are mostly like us—upper-middle class Americans. Most of the people we work with are working hard to prove their self-sufficiency. So there isn’t a whole lot of sharing regarding needs and opportunities to help.

The problem with this is if I think the requirement is do good to all when I have opportunities, then if I don’t see any glaring opportunities, I don’t do many good deeds. However, another passage has come to my attention that modifies this for me. In **II Corinthians 8:3-4**, when Paul was talking about the Macedonian response to the famine in Judah, he wrote: “For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints...” (ESV).

I’ve often looked at this passage to notice that the Macedonians sacrificed, giving beyond their means, and that they did so because they first gave themselves to God. But I have recently noticed another aspect of this passage. They were begging for the favor to participate in this good deed. I know some translations say they were begging for Paul to receive the favor they were offering. But in either case, they were begging to be part of this good deed. They were begging for an opportunity. They weren’t sitting back waiting for an opportunity to drop in their laps; they were begging for an opportunity.

How much begging do I do? Do I ever beg God for opportunities to do good to all men especially the household of faith, or do I just sit comfortably in my office claiming I would abound in good deeds if there were more opportunities?

Are you aware that in 2009, 3.3% of Brownsburg residents lived below the poverty level?¹ That is somewhere close to 700 people. Are you aware that estimates claim that 3000 people each year experience homelessness in Indianapolis, 25% of which are under the age of 18?² What about the need for spiritual good deeds. Are you aware that about 56% of our fellow Brownsburg residents do not claim connection to any religious congregation?³ Considering that the Barna Group pretty consistently reports that 25% of unchurched people claim they would attend with a friend if invited, this is a great opportunity for us. If half of our neighbors are unchurched and 25% of them would visit if we asked, that means 1 out of 8 of the people we know would visit with us if we simply invited them. What about opportunities like what Paul was dealing with in the context of **II Corinthians 8:3-4**? What about brothers and sisters worldwide who are in dire need of food and medical help? What about the lost people worldwide in dire need of the gospel?

The fact is there are plenty of opportunities for good deeds of all kinds. The question is not whether there are opportunities. The question is are we going to be people who are waiting for opportunities to fall into our laps or are we going to be people who are begging for the opportunities and seeking the opportunities?

Which one are you?

—Edwin L. Crozier

¹ <http://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Brownsburg-Indiana.html>

² http://www.indiana.edu/~spea/pubs/undergrad-honors/volume-4/greenberg_sarah.pdf

³ <http://www.city-data.com/city/Brownsburg-Indiana.html>