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Pay It Forward Day!

APRIL 25TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

Pay It Forward Day!

Written by

Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Writer

Dexter, Missouri – Perhaps you remember seeing the movie, "Pay It Forward". It is definitely a must see movie if you haven't!

Inspired by the novel, "Pay It Forward" authored by Catherine Ryan Hyde, and the movie starring Kevin Spacey, Helen Hunt and Haley Joe Osment, Mr. Blake Beattie founded the Pay It Forward Day in Australia in 2007. In 2012, fifty-two countries participated with individuals working on proclamations in 36 states and 41 cities across the United States. They expect those numbers to increase in 2013.

Today, Thursday April 25th is International Pay It Forward Day! This brilliant initiative embodies the power of giving.

It involves people doing random acts of kindness for others without expecting anything in return. Instead, recipients are instructed to "pay the kindness forward" to others in need, essentially creating a positive ripple effect of giving.

"I am overwhelmed by the support. Of course we should be paying it forward each and every day, but many of us get so caught up in the rush of every day life that we lose sight of what is most important," commented Beattie. "The Pay it Forward Day is a great reminder of the positive energy when we give to others."

"This day's concept is to help others. And instead of expecting something in return, you ask the recipients to pass the kindness on to more folks, "to pay it forward," continued Beattie.

How can you get involved? Of course, you don't need to wait until Pay It Forward Day to make a difference in someone's life! Everyday should be proclaimed Pay It Forward Day.

Here is a list of just a few ways you can participate today and make a difference in someone's life.

1. While at your favorite coffee shop on the way to work, pay for someone's cup of coffee or after work while getting your favorite soda, pay for theirs.
2. Buy treats and leave them out for your co-workers. Sometimes that surprise is all someone needs to turn a frown upside down.
3. Make a donation to your favorite charity. Or donate your time.
4. Help your neighbor out with yard work or deliver their mail to their door.
5. Sit down with your kids and write out Get Well cards to be distributed at a local hospital.
6. Sign up to be an organ donor and get on the match list.
7. Long line at the drive-thru, pick up the tab of the person behind you. That will surely make their day.

Perhaps you can get your local town or state government to proclaim a Pay It Forward Day in order to increase awareness of international Pay It Forward Day. Businesses can get involved by enabling employees to help support a "charity of choice" by offering services, encourage staff to participate internally, or have a departmental challenge whereby each department competes with each other to make a big positive contribution to the community. Schools can have fundraisers and choose a charity to give to or volunteer their time. Churches can offer a Pay It Forward

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Day of celebration by volunteering at a local mission or food pantry. The possibilities are endless!

If every person paid it forward not one child in this world would go hungry or be without shelter. Wouldn't that be truly amazing?

"If you can't feed a hundred people, then just feed one." a quote by Mother Teresa.

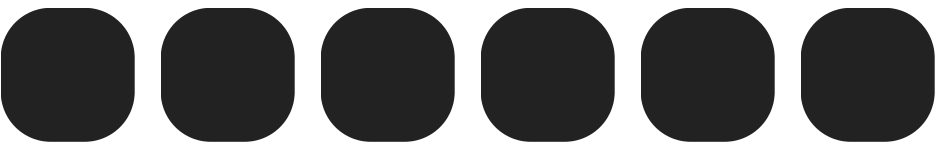
If you would like to know more about Pay It Forward Day, there are several websites and foundations set up in the U.S. and abroad. The website www.payitforwardday.com is a wonderful place to get information and to contact people who have set up foundations.

The Pay It Forward Foundation is a registered 501©3 nonprofit corporation in the United States and was founded by the Pay It Forward author, Mrs. Catherine Ryan Hyde. This website www.payitforwardfoundation.org has wonderful information and valuable tools to help you get started.

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Daily Devotions: In Step With God

APRIL 23RD 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: In Step With God

*Submitted by
Beth Farrah, SMT Writer*

Ephesians 4:1-7 NKJV

- (1) I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,
- (2) with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,
- (3) endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- (4) *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;
- (5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
- (6) one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.
- (7) But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

People are saved when they trust Jesus Christ as Savior and choose to follow Him. Right then, most Christians realize that they will dwell with Him forever in heaven. But many don't understand what they can expect for the remainder of their lives on earth.

One benefit that's available immediately is a growing relationship with the Lord. The Father's oneness with Jesus (John 10:30) illustrates the intimacy God wants to have with His children. He had this type of closeness in mind at creation—a relationship with man is an avenue for Him to express His love and for us to worship and understand our Maker.

Another advantage is that Christ-followers are promised clear guidance through God's Holy Spirit. Decision making is a part of everyday life. It is impossible for a mere human to know every variable and nuance before choosing which path to take. But the Lord knows all things—past, present, and future. With godly wisdom available, it's hard to understand why anyone would prefer to trust his own hunches.

Provision is yet another blessing guaranteed for believers. There will be hard times, but God gives Christians everything necessary for following Him (Phil. 4:19). And His grace

will always prove more than sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9).

How abundantly God gives to His children! One word of caution, though: these gifts are effective only when believers walk obediently with Him. Sin can stifle them.

The heavenly Father desires that all of His sons and daughters have these blessings; if you're living in obedience before Him, they are available to you. Is anything getting in the way of your total submission to Him?

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Daily Devotions: Acquiring Great Faith

APRIL 19TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: Acquiring Great Faith

Hebrews 11:17-19 NKJV

(17) By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

(18) of whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED,"

(19) concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

I've had people tell me, "I wish that I had great faith." While most of us would like God to just drop that kind of confidence in to our laps, it's not the way He operates. Faith increases as a result of our obedience in little things. We all marvel at Abraham's willingness to offer up Isaac at the Lord's command. But have you ever stopped to consider all of his smaller steps of submission that prepared the way for this enormous test?

Throughout his lifetime, Abraham obeyed God. At the Lord's command, he left his country (Gen 12:1-4), was circumcised (17:10, 26), conceived Isaac in his old age (21:1-3), and sent his son Ishmael away (21:9-14). By the time he was asked to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, he already knew that his God would always be faithful to His promises. His previous experiences had taught Him to trust the Lord.

In the same way, each small step of obedience solidifies our confidence in God. Then, when He challenges us with a more difficult assignment, a firm foundation of assurance enables us to trust and obey Him. Great acts of faith flow from our past interactions with the Lord. By neglecting His simple commands, we miss priceless opportunities to witness His faithfulness.

Having trouble trusting God for something big?

Maybe it's because you've ignored those "small" and "insignificant" promptings of the Holy Spirit. The Lord considers each of His commands important and promises to reward every act of obedience, regardless of size. Great faith begins with little steps.

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Daily Devotions: Fear Less

APRIL 18TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: Fear Less

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe. —Proverbs 29:25 (NKJV)

When you scan through the scriptures, you see example after example of people falling prey to the fear of man. And once they fall, it always leads to devastating consequences.

Abraham is known as the forefather of the faith. But keep in mind he compromised his convictions by lying about his wife being his sister because he was afraid of man...and he did this twice! Elijah was perhaps the most powerful prophet in Israel's illustrious history. But he ran and hid in a cave for fear of Ahab and Jezebel. Saul was a king who was head and shoulders over every other Israelite. But he was paralyzed with fear at the sight of Goliath's stature.

The list goes on and on, and each example ends in the same sad state. The fear of man is never a good thing, which is why God goes so far as to warn us against it. He actually

describes the fear of man as bringing a snare.

Think of what a snare is and what it does. It lies there and seems so innocent. But once a victim steps onto it, it completely grips and immobilizes them. It prevents them from being free or from going where they want or need to go. That's exactly what happens when we fear man.

God doesn't want that for us. He wants us to be free from the paralyzing effect of fearing man. So He warns us and says, "Focus on me instead." By setting our sights on the Lord and trusting in Him, we sidestep the pitfall of fearing man. It's then and there, when we're preoccupied with the greatness of God, that we recognize we're accountable to someone infinitely greater than any man or woman. We rest secure, knowing nothing can happen to us that He doesn't allow.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

Every time you read some of God's word you should take this approach:

THINK ABOUT IT...

What does this passage reveal to me about God?

What does this passage reveal to me about myself?

Based on this, what changes do I need to make?

What is my prayer for today?

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Daily Devotions: What Lurks Behind Your Anger?

APRIL 11TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: What Lurks Behind Your Anger?

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.
—Psalm 4:4

From time-to-time, we all get angry. Some of us are really good at hiding expressions of anger. Others aren't so good at it. Whether we admit it to ourselves or not, anger lurks.

There are no easy answers to anger, but there is an easy question to ask.

The default question most people ask is "What?" What triggered my anger? But, that's not a good question. It's too easy! It's too general! It's not all that helpful.

What triggered my anger? Music, a dirty room, traffic, rudeness, not flushing the toilet, deleted a recorded TV show, etc. Who cares?

Instead of asking "What?" I would encourage you to ask "Why?"

The why question forces you to peel back a layer from the surface and look inside your heart. Instead of asking what triggered my anger (that's too easy)... ask, why did that trigger my anger?

When you ask what, you'll continue to blame the triggers and that won't help you stop the pain.

When you ask why, chances are you'll discover one of two primary emotions hiding beneath the surface. You might imagine these two emotions hiding in the corner of your soul...one in the fetal position, and one in the attack position.

All curled up in the fetal position will be fear. Every time I try to learn from my anger, I meet fear. I encounter fearful Jim. Fearful Jim who expressed his anger because he was afraid he wouldn't be a good dad or husband, afraid of failure or rejection, afraid that he can't control others to compliance, and so on.

The second emotion is hurt. Hurt hides right next to fear, but like a wounded animal, hurt is very dangerous because all it knows how to do is attack others. If I hurt you with my anger, I don't have to focus on the hurt I feel or reopen the hurtful wounds I've never dealt with.

If we don't learn where anger is coming from, it keeps coming back out, over and over. Perhaps this is why in today's Scripture, we're told to "search our hearts."

If you want to slay the dragon of anger, search your heart. Ask the right question. Learn from your emotions. Change your behavior. Improve your relationships. Easy? No. Doable? Yes.

GOING DEEPER:

1. When you experience anger, are you more likely to ask "Why?" or "What?"
2. When you are angry, how can you benefit from asking "What?" rather than "Why?"

Ephesians 4:30-31 NKJV

(30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

(31) Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

James 1:19-20 NKJV

(19) So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;
(20) for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

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