

Good Work

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

It is reassuring to know that God has not completed his work with us. We can still learn and grow more like God in our relationships with our creator and with those around us. We are not a finished work instead we are a work in progress. I am grateful for God’s grace when envy, doubt, bitterness or disbelief creep in. God started a good work in me. It is reassuring to know that I have not been set aside as a finished product to be discarded due to my flaws and blemishes. No, the scriptures assure us, “That he who began a good work in us will not finish with us until the day of Christ Jesus.” What a relief. I can rejoice because he who made me loves me still in spite of my shortcomings. He has not given up on me so I will not give up on myself. I will go back into the daily grind with assurances that I am whole but not yet finished.

Prayer:

Dear Creator, Thank you for not discarding me and for continuously shaping me to become a better reflection of who you are. Thank you for not giving up on me. Amen

Why Have a Say Something Nice Sunday?

The simple answer is that words are powerful. Words have the power to build or destroy. Words have the power to heal or wound. With our words we have the power to build up a Christian community or to destroy it.

Nowhere are words more powerful than within the church. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Words take on a life unto themselves. Once they are given life they are on their way for good or evil.

This special day is an opportunity to build the community of faith, strengthen relationships and heal old wounds. Our national discourse has become so strident and even in religious circles the rhetoric is often far from Christ-like. In Philippians 1:27 we read, “Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.”

This is a day to say thank you to those who make our lives better just by being a part of them. This is a day to recognize those who contribute to our lives in specific ways. This is a day to apologize for words spoken in frustration, anger or disappointment.

One day is one day, but perhaps we can stretch it to two days and then just maybe if we encourage one another and ask for God’s help, we might change the world!

June Is Effective Communications Month

In coordination with Say Something Nice Sunday, First Baptist member Mitch Carnell has written devotions for each week during the month of June. Although Effective Communications Month is a secular observation, these devotions will help apply a Christian worldview to ways we can communicate with Christ-like character.

What can we do today?

While we can’t be together, let us each call three people each week to check up on her or him and leave each one with an encouraging word

*Weekly Devotions
by Mitch Carnell*

Say Something Nice

June 2020



Faith Strengthens Faith

“What I mean is that we can mutually encourage each other while I am with you. We can be encouraged by the faithfulness we find in each other, both your faithfulness and mine.” Romans 1:12 (CEB)

When my faith is weak or I feel far from God, I lean into the faith of friends to reassure me and to pull me through the dark hours. I know that they will do the same when their faith is weak. We rely on each other in times of stress or trouble. I often tell God that I need help. I am overwhelmed.

I find my strength is the strength of others. I am convinced that God brings people into our lives when we most need them. I am blessed by having a group of friends who have been through great trials but who have emerged with their faith secure. Even the Apostle Paul acknowledged how dependent his faith relies on the faith of others. God never intended for us to go it alone. We are the body of Christ. The disciple’s prayer begins, “Our Father.” It is important that we gather together in Christian fellowship. Scripture tells us. “For when two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am also.” (Matthew 18: 20-22) We need each other both in times of trouble and times of joy. What a wonderful thought, “The body of Christ.”

Prayer:

Dear God, teach me how to live in fellowship with other Christians so that our faith is made stronger. Teach me to be alert to the needs of others even when they are reluctant to share their spiritual or personal struggles. Amen.

Listening for God

“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.” Romans 10:17 (NIV)

I asked a minister friend, “How do you talk to God?” His answer was more profound than I anticipated. “The more important question is how do I listen for God to speak to me?”

The scriptures tell us to, “Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10) We live very busy lives and most of us live in very noisy environments. Finding time to sit quietly and listen may prove very challenging. Everyone must find what works best for her or his circumstances. My time is most often early in the morning. I read a devotional or a few verses of scripture and then meditate a few minutes about what I have read. At other times it’s just after I turn out the lights. Quieting my mind and preparing to listen is the hard part. It takes practice. God does not always wait to fit into my schedule. Sometimes I hear his voice when I am overcome by the splendor of his creation or when I am listening to beautiful music. We train ourselves to recognize and to be receptive to God’s voice whenever and wherever God chooses to influence our thoughts.

Prayer:

Dear God, Quiet my mind and teach me to listen for your voice in whatever circumstances I find myself. Speak to me so that I may follow your plans for my life. Amen.

The Road to Emmaus 2-4-20

“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; they were kept from recognizing him”. Luke 24: 15-16 (NIV)

I met Jesus today disguised as a Transportation Safety Agent in the Grand Rapids, Michigan Airport. There was construction in progress between the American Airlines counter and the Delta counter; consequently, I missed the TSA check-in that was between them. I pulled my luggage to the main concourse check-in area. I must have looked as confused as I felt.

Suddenly there was a TSA agent beside me. “I think you missed the check your baggage portal,” he said. “I will walk with you and show you.” Not only did he walk me to the area and see to it that my bag was processed, but then we walked back and he checked me into my flight.

I know that he was only doing his job, but he went far beyond what his job description required. He showed kindness to a stranger, someone he will never see again. One never knows when he or she will find himself or herself on the road to Emmaus. It might wind through a busy airport terminal.

Prayer:

Dear Life Pilot, Thank you for those you put in our path to help us navigate safely through our daily trials. Help us to always be grateful for their kindnesses to us. Amen.