

Receiving a Gift That I Could Not Keep to Myself

In February of 2005, I was given the incredible gift of being able to attend Pilgrimage in North Carolina: NCPP #62. I will be forever grateful to George and Gayle Davidson for sharing that gift through encouragement and sponsorship. What a transforming experience! As a pastor, I feel one of the greatest gifts that I can give a parishioner is the gift of attending Pilgrimage. What I have witnessed over and over is that no matter where people are at on their spiritual journey, God seems to meet them right there, giving them a fresh anointing of His grace to address their unique needs, that then enables them to take the next step in their faith journey.

Whenever, we have been given such a gift, we cannot but want others to experience that gift as well! Because of the gift given to me, I have sought to do everything possible to enable others to experience Pilgrimage. To do so this has involved:

1. Praying diligently who God would have me to approach, plus for their hearts to be open.
2. Sharing the story of my experience and further connect them to the stories of others, either through the website or through those who they may know personally.
3. Following up, asking them what God is saying. (Sometimes I am a bit more assertive, and let them know that I believe God is calling them to go). I encourage them to take a step of faith, letting them know they will not be disappointed.
4. If they are hesitant, I often ask, "What do you feel is holding you back from going?" I seek to work diligently at addressing any barrier, that might be in the way of them going. I have discovered that often people need that "extra" nudge, before they commit to going.

We know that with each guest that we might sponsor, this can create not only a transformation in this person's life, but also produce a positive "ripple" effect in marriages, families, churches, and communities, which is why for me, I seek to do whatever possible to remove any barriers individuals might have in attending. (Let me know if you are finding any barriers and I will seek to work with you to remove those). Please read the article below showing how the faithfulness of one volunteer Sunday School teacher eventually lead to billions hearing the gospel.

Since my own Pilgrimage, (even though I was out of the loop for a few years), I have been so grateful and amazingly blessed to have been able to give the gift of Pilgrimage by sponsoring over 40 individuals. I may never know the ripple effect of being persistent in sharing this incredible gift. (I know at least several of those I sponsored have sponsored 7-14 guests, and some of those close to the same number. Who knows how many "generations" of pilgrims have attended since). I have come to understand at a much greater depth that it is truly "*More blessed to give than to receive.*" We can give through serving, which is an absolute joy, but without guests, our primary purpose for being at Pilgrimage is not there. We are not there simply to have a "*Pilgrimage Family Reunion,*" but to offer to others the gift we have received.

If we truly were blessed by our weekend, how can we not want to share that with others? Isn't it worth the extra effort to prayerfully pursue inviting others to receive this gift?

Blessings in Christ,
Roger Grandia
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Plus, do not miss reading the amazing story below.

What Effect Can Touching Just One Life Make?

As of 2008, Billy Graham's estimated lifetime audience, including radio and television broadcasts, topped 2.2 billion. That means that approximately 2.2 billion people have heard the gospel from Billy Graham's mouth. That's hard to wrap your mind around.

Billy Graham has shared the gospel with more people than anyone else in history, but do you know who shared the gospel with him? It actually is a series of events that has been traced over the years and starts out with one volunteer Sunday school teacher.

"You can count the apples on the tree, but who can count the apples in a seed?" goes the old aphorism.

So it is with the influence of a single person.

Take Edward Kimball, for an example. Never heard of him? You're not unique in that sense. Most people have never heard of him.

Kimball was a Sunday school teacher who not only prayed for the often rowdy boys in his class but also sought to win each one to the

Lord. If Kimball ever felt like giving up, he never talked about it. If you have ever taught the Bible to young boys, you know that the experience can often be like herding cats.

One young man, in particular, didn't seem to understand what the gospel was about so Kimball went to the shoe store where he was stocking shelves and confronted him in the stock room with the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That young man was Dwight L. Moody. In the stockroom on that Saturday, he received Jesus Christ as his Savior. In his lifetime, Moody touched two continents for God, with untold thousands coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

But the story doesn't end there. Actually that's where it begins. Under Moody, another man's heart was touched for God, Wilbur Chapman. Chapman became the evangelist who preached to thousands. One day, a professional ball player had a day off and attended one of Chapman's meetings, and thus, Billy Sunday was converted.

Sunday quit baseball and became part of Chapman's team. Then, Chapman accepted the pastorate of a large church and Billy Sunday began his own evangelistic crusades.

Another young man was converted whose name was Mordecai Ham. He was a scholarly, dignified gentleman who wasn't above renting a hearse and parading it through the streets advertising his meetings.

When Ham came to Charlotte, North Carolina, a sandy-haired, lanky young man, then in high school, vowed that he wouldn't go hear him preach, but Billy Frank, as he was called by his family, did eventually go. Ham announced that he knew for a fact that a house of ill repute was located across the street from the local high school and that male students were skipping lunch to visit the house across the street. When students decided to go to interrupt the meetings of Mordecai Ham, Billy Frank decided to go see what would happen.

That night Billy Frank went and was intrigued by what he heard. Returning another night, he responded to the invitation and was converted. Billy Frank eventually became known as Billy Graham, the evangelist who preached to more people than any other person who ever lived, including the Apostle Paul.

The purpose of Pilgrimage is not to convert anyone, but the one person you sponsor might lead, by God's grace, to hundreds, thousands, and even millions experiencing a fresh anointing of God's grace, with marriages, families, churches, and communities, transformed. Is it not worth the extra effort to sponsor someone you care for?