

## **Day 6 Developing servant Hearts**

By Karen Whiting

God calls us to be other focused and that's a great theme for families. We also want to develop servant hearts in our children and as we focus on others that will be a natural result. Keep it simple and let God direct your choices.

### **Blessing Others**

Starting each day with prayer helps us look first to God and His plans for us. As I pray, I ask God to show me how I can bless someone that day. It's a simple step that changed my life. Sometimes it's as simple as considering someone who cuts me off in traffic as a call to pray for that person to bless him or her. How much more fun to bless the person than to get upset! Other times God brings a name to mind and I consider how to bless that individual.

For others, that has meant sharing lessons they learned. God impressed Sandra Felton, who writes books on organization, realized when she first started to recover from being a messy person, with the scripture 2 Kings 7:9. That verse comes from a time when four starving lepers discovered the enemy camp had been deserted and they found plenty of food. They realized they needed to share the news and let others be blessed too. That sparked Sandra to start a small group for messy people that led to books and helping millions of people. Being open to God's leading can change lives, including our own.

Start simple and close to home to brighten the lives of people around you.

### **Serving Loved Ones First**

We should first look to the needs of our loved ones, according to 1 Timothy 5:8 while also noticing needs of others (Philippians 2:4). However, part of the need for our family, is the need is to train them to serve others. As your spouse and children respond to your blessing them suggest that they join in your little blessing ministry. Pray together as a family for opportunities to serve in your neighborhood, church, and community. Notice when your children help someone and praise them for their generous hearts.

If we take time to really focus and serve family members, we will help them feel affirmed and loved. This does mean spoiling a child or giving in to whims, but to create a loving home and provide for nutritional needs, physical affection, spiritual nourishment, and physical needs. That helps children feel loved. Then they are more confident and willing to help others.

### **Looking Outward**

Putting others first also begins with the right attitude. Start noticing people and put aside your own worries. Look for the positive in others and encourage them. Look at people's facial expressions, body language, and listen to the words said. If they are happy let them know their smile lights up your day and you are happy for their joys. If they appear sad, ask how you can pray for the person. Be empathetic to their feelings.

Help your children do this too. Give your children compliments and listen when they speak. Show empathy. Discuss how compliments make them feel and what words give them encouragement. Chat about how they choose to speak words to help people smile and to encourage others.

## Words That Help Others

We seldom know how much our words matter. One year the Lord kept impressing on me that I should call a specific friends. This happened several times. The person said little as I chattered. I felt like I might be bothering her but obeyed when I felt God nudge me to call again. At the end of the year she thanked me for the calls. She said every time she felt really down, I called. She could hardly speak due to her, but by the time we hung up she always felt better. Simple words helped her.

A true compliment, words that show you notice someone worked hard, and words of empathy make a difference. Pausing to ask how someone is really doing and listening attentively shows concern, respect, and affirms you value the individual. Beyond words, add actions that help.

## Where to Volunteer

It's good to serve others by volunteering where service matches your skills, or where your whole family can help, such as making sandwiches for the homeless. Pray and check your calendars to be sure you can make a commitment without causing burnout. Choose a ministry that touches your heart as you'll be happier serving there.

Understand your family's seasonal cycles and when it works to serve and when you are needed at home, such as the beginning of the school year, or holidays with young children. If your children are grown or you are single, you might be the perfect volunteer to serve others during the busy holiday seasons or to fill backpacks for school children.

Blessing others is far better than random acts of kindness. God is not a God of chaos or randomness. He directs us to bless someone who needs it at that time. We partner with God to intentionally bless others through prayer and making the most of the opportunities God provides. It's not about how often you are seen but following what God calls you to do. Make the most of little moments when you can be a blessing in simple ways. You'll find you are blessed as your heart fills with joy when you serve others.

You'll also find your families hearts fill with joy through serving others and loving them as Jesus calls us to do!



Check out my book

[\*52 Weekly Devotions for Families Called to Serve\*](#)

We are all called!