

Give and Forgive in Christ Presence

“...and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.”

Isaiah 58:10 (NIV)

Forgiving others is a way of releasing pain, resentment, or tragic memories that often reside in our heart and soul. Giving physically and emotionally changes lives. Try it. Let the negative thoughts go. Pay attention as the emotions soften within your heart through God's transforming presence. This month we wear orange to show our desire to stop gun violence, especially in schools. Admittedly, my words are meaningless to readers who have experienced a loss of a family member at the hands of angry gunmen. Imagine the extent of grief and anger when the loss is a child. Personally, being asked to forgive a person demonstrating cruelty is negatively influenced by sadness and distress in my soul. Letting go is difficult.

Perhaps we can begin to know the past has only as much hold on our lives as we will allow. Significant mental strengthening comes from knowing forgiveness is a choice and giving is a reward. The Christ energy in our divine essence equips us with the power to forgive others and forgive ourselves. From personal experience, the heavy feeling in my chest relaxes when the words “I forgive” are spoken out-loud and with sincerity. Providing service to other people who have needs is another way of releasing the anxiety and fear associated with painful events in our lives.

More than a few years ago, Garry Hamilton drafted me to serve with him on the American Heart Association Board. Feelings of great joy grew as our work led to dollars for research. Research translated into medicines and healthy eating and exercise methods to improve physical well-being and make life livable. Concerned citizen volunteers gave resources to influence change and enhance the lives in and around our community. I was inspired by the visible results.

Working with the AHA gave me a lasting desire to give so others might live. Over the last two decades, I have on again, off again donated blood at the Red Cross and Carter Blood Care on the assumption my one blood donation would possibly make a difference in a life. It was rewarding, but the “off again” giving was mostly because I couldn't associate my gift with a specific person or need. One day while donating blood, I was asked if I would be willing to give platelets. Why? I questioned.” The phlebotomist's answered, “If you donate them today, four children with cancer will receive your platelets and be better TODAY!”

Hooked is the best description of my feelings. Now, I show up to appointments at Carter Blood Care or AHA regularly. Two hours is the time investment. I ask them draw from my left arm so I can use my phone to contact family and friends or read something fun or useful. I am always amazed how God talks to us about caring for other human beings by giving and forgiving each day. Using us, He provides real opportunity to make differences in lives of other human beings.

Peace always,

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