

the **STORY BOARD***THE SLIGHT DETOUR*

His long white hair and bushy beard were unwashed and a bit matted, and he sat on an overturned bucket by the stoplight. His misshapen cardboard sign simply said “Homeless. Anything helps.” I quickly ran down what I had in the car with me that I could give him: an almost empty canister of peanuts, and a half eaten bag of pretzels. I discarded these options as a bit too used, and as I was heading to the grocery store anyway, I thought to just get him something unopened and fresh. Bread, peanut butter, fruit, water and crackers. Surely that would get him through a few days at least. I prayed he would still be where I had last seen him as I drove back to that spot. He was—and there was another man standing there talking with him, which I thought was a nice gesture. Another giving soul. Little did I know as I parked at the nearby fast food restaurant that the white haired man would not actually be the recipient of the food bag—but would rather be the vessel God used to feed another.

As I walked across the grass to where these two men talked, the white haired man got up off his bucket, and stepped toward me with a, “You bring a bag full of food?” I responded that I had indeed. “Well,” he said, “I can’t take it...” This caught me quite by surprise for a brief moment before he continued, “...but I can get it to someone who needs it.” Well, good enough, I thought. At least someone who is hungry will have something to eat today—whoever that is, wherever they are.

It was then that the other man who was standing there said, “God bless you.” I looked up at his face, but it was not the clean, well-intentioned one I had expected to see. It, too, was dirty, and his hair was greasy under his cap. The smile he gave me was beautiful in spite of the missing and rotten teeth, and it lit up his whole face. I suddenly noticed none of the uncleanness of either of these homeless men, but just sat in the goodness of God in this interaction, sensing I was about to be blessed, once again.

The man with the white hair turned around and passed the bag of food on to this other man, someone he seemed to have just met. “He’s the one who needs this,” he stated. The second man asked my name, which I told him. And I asked for his. “It’s Brandon.” Nice to meet you. “God bless you,” he repeated, and I returned the blessing. Walking back to my car, I was amazed at the unselfishness of the white haired man (who didn’t seem too interested in giving his name) who simply knew of a need greater than his own, and shared what he had been given. I observed a lot in that short minute or two, as is so often the case when obedience and sacrifice are chosen over plans or agendas.

Thinking back, I can remember exactly the faces, situations, and locations where I saw someone who needed help, but I kept on walking for one reason or another—in spite of the intense feeling/prompting that I should stop and lend a hand of some sort. It’s haunting. I have since determined that it’s worth the inconvenience, and perhaps even being taken advantage of at times, to help those who are in need however I can. It’s incredible. May you be encouraged to do the same.



John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”

THANKFULNESS

At *THE BOOK DROP*, we have recently received a very special bunch of thank you notes – from low income kids who were able to pick out a few books each to take home to read for the summer. This is because of your donations of new and gently used children’s books!!—some of which we have been able to pass along to a local school for their summer reading program for these needy kids.

We are so thankful for your participation in this project, and in the other ways you give—both through The Encouragement Project, and in the ways you are involved in things and encouraging others in your own circles.

It is incredible what a simple word of thanks can do. I have been on both the giving and receiving ends of that...and have seen and experienced the omission of an expression of thankfulness far too often. The Bible speaks generously of being thankful and living with a thankful heart.

And so we THANK YOU!—from these beautiful children, and from us at The Project!



*Let us not grow weary in doing good,
for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Ephesians 6:9

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

God has generously given all of us stories to tell out of our experiences—good stories, stories that, when shared, have the ability to inspire and encourage. Some of our stories are extraordinary, and most are no doubt simple and often part of daily life. But God can be seen in all of them.

It is through stories that we best learn, are challenged, encouraged, and motivated.

At *THE ENCOURAGEMENT PROJECT*, we would love to encourage you to share your stories with those around you. You’d be surprised at the ways God can use the things you have walked through—both the exciting things, as well as those times when there seemed more to endure than celebrate.

We would also love to hear your stories, and perhaps even share them with others who would benefit from hearing them. If you would like to write about an experience, situation, event, learning process, etc., that you have been blessed to be a part of that, however simple or grand, would hold the blessing of encouragement for others, we would love to hear it!

Please share your stories great and small with us via the contact information below.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT PROJECT is run solely with the financial gifts and donations of those of you who are interested in helping and encouraging others through this ministry. Gifts of any amount are helpful, and go toward seeing believers encouraged, and those in need helped. We greatly appreciate your willingness to be a part of this team. Would you join us monthly at the...

\$10 ~ *ground level* ~ \$25 ~ *creative level*

\$50 ~ *encouragement level* ~ *other amount*

Checks made payable to “The Encouragement Project” can be mailed to: **The Encouragement Project**
PO Box 452 ~ Alpharetta, GA 30009

If you prefer to set up a recurring monthly gift, please let us know and we will send you the banking information.

The Encouragement Project is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All gifts are tax deductible.