

KIRBSTONES

ALONG THE NARROW WAY

curb-stone (kûrb'stôn') - *noun* - one of the stones or a range of stones forming a curb, as along a sidewalk or roadway. Historically, the curbstones were placed vertically along the edges of the roadbed, and the paving material was backfilled against the row of curbstones. The curbstones served ^{to} to hold the material in the roadbed, ^{to} to prevent the scattering of the material along the edges, and ^{to} to define the road itself from all the adjoining areas.

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¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT." - MATTHEW 7:13-14 - NIV



There is a question every Christian needs to answer, and it is not merely theological. It is deeply personal and asks why we do good for others in our lives. *Why do I serve? Why do I give? Why do I help others?*

The world tells us that doing good is its own reward. We hear, "If it makes you feel good, do it," or "Helping others brings happiness." While there is certainly joy in serving, the Christian's motivation reaches far deeper than personal satisfaction. We do not love others because it makes us feel good. We love others because Christ first loved us.

Our acts of kindness, generosity, compassion, and service are not performed to earn God's favor, nor are these meant to improve our self-image. These acts are the response of a heart that has been transformed by God's grace.

When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, his answer established the foundation for every good work we will ever do.

³⁷ Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 22:37-39 - NIV

Our love for others grows out of our love for God. We do not begin with people; we begin with Christ. The *vertical* relationship shapes every *horizontal* relationship.

That changes everything. The meal prep, the encouraging note, the visit, the gift, the prayer we offer—all become *expressions of our love for Jesus*. These are not random acts of kindness. These are true acts of worship!

The Apostle Paul reminds us that our salvation is entirely the work of God's grace.

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith...⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:8-10 - NIV

Good works are never the cause of our salvation. Our good works are the evidence of it. When we truly understand what Christ has done for us in his suffering and death on the cross, gratitude naturally overflows into service. We

cannot keep God's love to ourselves because his grace changes our hearts and priorities. That is why Christians have built hospitals, cared for orphans, taught children, comforted the grieving, fed the hungry, and carried the gospel around the world for centuries. Christians do not try to earn heaven, instead they respond to the One who has already secured it for them.

Perhaps the greatest danger we may experience in serving others is allowing ourselves to become the focus of our efforts. Jesus warned his disciples against performing righteous acts to be noticed. Instead, we are to focus on the Father.

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:16 - NIV

That verse helps us examine our motives. If people notice our kindness, but never see Christ, we have missed the point. If our generosity becomes a platform for our own recognition, we have settled for far less than God's purpose.

The Christian life has never been about making more of ourselves. It is about making more of Jesus. Ironically, when we stop serving to make ourselves feel better and begin serving simply because we love Christ, we often discover a deeper joy than we ever expected. Joy becomes the byproduct, not the goal of our reaching out to others. Peace becomes the blessing, not the motivation.

The greatest servants of Christ are often the quietest. They seldom seek recognition. They love Jesus enough to keep showing up, keep giving, keep praying, and keep serving. They know every cup of cold water given, every reassuring word spoken, every act of generosity matters because it is for him. May that be true of each of us.

Our community does not simply need more nice people. It needs more followers of Jesus whose lives are so captivated by his love that good works become the natural overflow of grateful hearts. When Christ remains our first love, service becomes a privilege. In the end, every act of love points to the One who first loved us and gave himself for us.

³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 - NIV

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