

Going The Second Mile

The sun beat down from a cloudless sky, a Roman soldier strode along the dusty road and reluctantly behind him a weary Jew struggled under the weight of the soldier's heavy pack.

998, 999, 1000. That's it. The Jew dumped the pack down on the ground, nearly on the soldier's foot.

The Jew had completed the 1000 paces the Roman Government had commanded of any Jew on pain of severe punishment.

The soldier looked round for his next victim.

"Hi you, carry this pack."

The command was directed to a young man working at repairing a roof of a house on the roadside.

The young man climbed down, jerked the pack on his broad shoulders and strode down the road, matching the pace of the Roman soldier. Much to the surprise of the soldier, the young man started up a conversation with him, asking where his home was, was he married and did he long to be back home with his family.

Half an hour sped by hardly noticed, then the soldier realised that they must have walked well over 1000 paces, and he told the young Jew to put the pack down.

The young Jew looked around for someone else to take the pack, but nobody was in sight, so he volunteered to go for another 1000 paces.

The conversation continued and half an hour later the soldier insisted that he took his pack back, and said goodbye to the young Jew. They parted, never to see each other again in this life.

Jesus the Christ walked the hour's journey back to His work.

Matthew 5:41 [NIV] *"If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."*

Jesus Christ had illustrated a way of life by His words and actions.

This spirit of the extra mile is well worth cultivating.

It is one of the secrets of successful and joy-filled living.

How can this affect our day-to-day life?

A harassed mother with a shopping bag, toddler and pushchair struggles to board a bus. The conductor is **not** employed to help people board his bus, but he does. The monotony and drabness of the day is transformed for the mother and conductor by this one small act of *"going the second mile."* The mother is grateful and the conductor feels like *"a knight in shining armour."*

The schoolteacher – teachers are **not** paid to give extra tuition to the slow-plodder, nor are they paid to put on a school play after school hours. Doing this makes them feel *"twice the person they are,"* and is improving relationships with their pupils.

There is no life that cannot be enriched by our *"going the second mile."*

How about giving yourself a daily injection of this *"spirit of the second mile!"*

You will not be forced to engage in voluntary service, you can refuse and still remain a respectable citizen in the society.

But joining in voluntary work will bring great benefits knowing you have responded to the needs of a less fortunate person.

Voluntary work frees us from the domination of self.

Voluntary “*second mile*” work helps us to forget our aches, pains and troubles, as we grapple with another person’s problems, it also makes us more understanding and sympathetic.

The extra mile of thoughtfulness –

Every day thousands of people suffer and weep because of other people’s thoughtlessness.

Thoughtfulness will cost us time, trouble and expense, but we will be making an eternal investment in character.

Thoughtfulness can take a myriad of forms –

Word of appreciation to a shop assistant who has been helpful.

A few flowers to a spinster or widow in hospital.

A greeting card to a pensioner living alone in a one room flat.

A cup of tea for the window cleaner.

A cheery word to the postman on that rainy day.

The extra mile of gratitude –

Everyone likes to be thanked, to feel they are appreciated.

After a pleasant evening with friends, don’t just thank them as you leave, but send them a note of thanks.

Thank your old schoolteachers.

Thank the teachers of your children in a note which is far better than just the spoken word.

A good criteria of your life is the number of people we have made happy as a result of our “*second mile*”, words and actions.

The extra mile of generosity –

Because of innate selfishness most of us find it hard to be generous.

Luke 6:27-28 [NIV] *“But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you.”*

Tolerance is a form of generosity that doesn’t always cost us money.

Luke 6:31-36 [NIV] *“Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get*

anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

Such a generous attitude of mind is causing us to take on the very character of the Creator God.

Luke 6:37-38 [NIV] *“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. **Give, and it will be given to you.** A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

Note that all of these generous acts are rewarded in the future, **not** today.

Generosity is the mind and acts of a servant.

Philippians 2:1-8 [NIV] *“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. **Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.** Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!**”*

Jesus Christ was **not** forced to do this; it was an act of generous “second mile” love for the humans He had created and given life.

Philippians 2:12-16 [NIV] *“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. **Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life, in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour for nothing.**”*

Going the “second mile” is how we work **out** our salvation as God works **in** us our salvation.

[Download our article ‘Work Out Your Own Salvation’ found under the title ‘Salvation’]