

# IN THE MARGINS: The joy of serving others

*By Tony Martin*

*Editor*

There's something about this time of year that just brings out the desire to give, isn't there? Maybe it's the carols, the twinkling lights, or just the simple reminder of God's greatest gift to us – Jesus. But one of the most beautiful ways we can reflect the hope we have in Christ is by serving others.

Let's talk about this, and I've even included some little assignments if you're so inclined to earn some extra credit.

In **Galatians 5:13**, Paul says:

*“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”*

Serving others isn't just a good deed; it's a tangible way of sharing hope. When we step outside of ourselves to help, love, or encourage someone, we're reflecting the very heart of Jesus. And here's the thing about serving: it doesn't just bless the person you're helping – it fills you with hope, too.

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## **Serving Is a Reflection of Christ's Love**

Jesus came not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28). He healed the sick, comforted the brokenhearted, washed His disciples' feet, and ultimately gave His life for us. When we serve others, we're reflecting that same love and sacrifice. We're saying, *“I see you, and God sees you, too.”*

In a world that can feel cold and disconnected, a simple act of kindness can be a warm light of hope.

**Challenge:** Think of one way you can serve someone today. It doesn't have to be grand – holding a door open, helping with groceries, or checking in on a neighbor can make a world of difference.

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## **Serving Shifts Our Focus**

When life feels overwhelming, one of the best things we can do is look for ways to serve someone else. It's like a reset button for our perspective. Instead of being consumed by our own worries, serving helps us see the needs of others and remember that we're all in this together.

I've found that when I take a moment to encourage someone else, I walk away feeling encouraged, too. It's a reminder that God can work through even the smallest acts of love.

**Tip:** If you're feeling down or discouraged, find a way to brighten someone else's day. You might just find your own hope refreshed in the process.

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## **Hope Multiplies Through Kindness**

Ever notice how kindness has a ripple effect? One small act can inspire another, and before you know it, hope is spreading far and wide. When you serve someone with love, you're planting seeds of hope that can grow in ways you may never see.

Galatians 6:9 reminds us, *“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”* Your kindness matters, even if it feels small. God is working through it.

**Action:** Leave a note of encouragement for someone today – a coworker, a family member, or even a stranger. Let them know they're seen and loved.

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## **Freedom to Serve**

Galatians 5:13 says we're called to freedom. And that freedom isn't about doing whatever we want; it's about being free to love and serve without holding back. When Christ sets us free, we're free from fear, selfishness, and the need to protect our own interests. We're free to love others fully and generously.

That kind of freedom is contagious. When people see you serving with joy and hope, they start to wonder what's different about you. And that's your chance to point them to Jesus.

**Prayer:** "Lord, thank You for the freedom I have in You. Help me use that freedom to love and serve others. Let my acts of kindness point people to the hope I have in You."

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## **Small Acts, Big Impact**

Serving doesn't have to be complicated. A kind word, a helping hand, a listening ear – all these little things reflect the hope of Christ. When you serve others, you're showing them that they matter, that they're loved, and that there's hope even in the hard places.

And here's the best part: when we serve, we're not just reflecting hope; we're *experiencing* it. We're reminded that God is still at work, using ordinary people to spread His extraordinary love.

**Challenge:** This week, look for small, intentional ways to serve. Maybe offer to help someone with their Christmas prep,

send an encouraging text, or simply smile and ask someone how they're doing. You never know how much hope you might bring.

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So, y'all, let's serve with hearts full of hope. Let's be the hands and feet of Jesus, sharing His love through simple acts of kindness. Because when we do, hope shines a little brighter in this world – and that's something worth celebrating.

Blessings to you all!