

pray . fast . give .



Living Lent | Day 37

Without Notice

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So, when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Matthew 6: 1-4 NIV

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

As the mom of three kids, ages seven, four, and one, and the homeschooling mommy of the older two kids, I often searched for activities that would encourage my children to have a servant's heart. We were fairly new to the community of Stafford, Virginia, as my United States Navy husband was recently assigned to a year of schooling at Quantico.

We'd baked cookies together and delivered them to a women's shelter, helped serve soup and sandwiches to the homeless in a nearby park, and set aside a certain percentage of their chore-earned money to donate to a faraway missionary sponsored by our church. I enjoyed teaching the kids to serve others, but, I'll admit – if social media had been around during that time, I feel certain I would've boasted on my Facebrag page of our latest altruistic adventures.

Christmas approached and I found out that the Salvation Army sought bell

ringers for their iconic red kettle donation stations. With temperatures dipping farther than my south-Georgia blood and clothing were accustomed to, I was pleased to find out one of the stations was located inside the mall. “We’ll be warm and comfortable during our shift,” I told David before heading out with the kids.

Jeb Daniel sat in his stroller, content to watch the mall patrons. Jenifer and Jeremy took turns ringing the bell, and I smiled and thanked those who dropped coins into the kettle and pushed bills into the slot.

Just before our shift was over, two young men came by, and the second one dropped a handful of coins into the bright red kettle after his friend walked past. He shrugged his shoulders and said, “It’s not much, but it’s all I’ve got. My house burned down this week, and I lost everything.”

He walked away as I mumbled, “I’m so sorry. God bless you.”

With just his few words, I felt ashamed that I’d dared to worry about my comfort level while I collected coins for those in need of a roof over their head, warm clothes to wear, or perhaps a loving family to treasure and hold dear.

I vowed to continue teaching my children to give to the needy and serve others compassionately, but I let the young man’s words serve as a reminder to check my pride and rid my heart of a righteous attitude.

I think I’ll write that check for the Children of Morningstar today, but there’s no need for trumpets. I can share their need of support to others, but I’ll do my giving in secret.

Challenge to Prayer and the Exercise of the Privilege of Generosity

As you pray and sacrifice through fasting throughout this Lenten Journey, will you take this opportunity to pay forward in generosity a gift of at least \$1 per day throughout the 40 days for the Children? It is a privilege and a blessing to give as we all look forward to Easter and the Resurrection.

[Donate Now](#)

Contributor

Julie Lavender, Statesboro, Georgia, is the author of *365 Ways to Love Your Child: Turning Little Moments into Lasting Memories*. She is a journalist, author, former public school teacher, and former homeschooling mommy. She is married to her high school and college sweetheart, and she and David are the parents of four, in-laws of one, and grandparents to a practically-perfect grandson. There is no doubt that she is committed to Creating Home for

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