



- In what sense did Jesus not please Himself in verse 3?
- How was Paul's prayer in verses 5 and 6 going to be answered?
- What is our example when it comes to accepting one another in verse 7?
- Who is glorifying God in verse 9? Why?
- With what does Paul say the God of hope will fill us in verse 13? Why?

How is what was written in the Old Testament an encouragement to us in verse 4?
 Since Jesus came to reconcile both Jew and Gentile, how do we play the antichrist?
 What was the promise made to the patriarchs in verse 8?
 Why is it significant to have a Psalm of David quoted in verse 9 concerning Gentiles?
 How do we see the law and the prophets coming together in verses 11 and 12?

Since Jesus died for all, let us live to encourage all.
Consider how the Holy Spirit helps you in encouraging others.
Make a list of your discouragements and pray through them daily to God.
Memorize James 1:2-5.
In the context of Hebrews 13:1-2, invite a stranger to lunch and find common ground.

Meditation: What Does God Say?

Deuteronomy 15:7-8

Job 6:14

Psalm 41:1

Proverbs 3:27

Proverbs 14:31

Isaiah 1:17

Micah 6:8

Luke 6:35-36

Supplication: What Can We Meditate?

Reaction to a stranger is a revealing reflection of the heart

Twelve cents was what he wanted – a quite specific need. Twelve cents, no more, no less.

The arctic wind blew keen along the street of business buildings and made the bus sign rattle on its pole.

“I’m trying to go home,” the man said. “And I’m 12 cents short.”

Sometimes, for reasons not afterward explainable, we shame ourselves.

In a sidelong sort of way I examined the fellow, with an air of studied disinterest, being careful not to meet his eyes. Thirty years old, he appeared to be, or maybe a bit more. Certainly not old. The coat he wore was worn but warm. His trousers bagged around his broken-over shoes. One earpiece of his glasses was patched with adhesive tape.

Down on his luck, he was, no doubt of that. But not hungry yet. Not looking frightened yet. In short, a man no worse off than tens of thousands to be seen afoot in the land of opportunity in a season of hard times. And better off than some of them.

He didn’t need a dollar. He didn’t need a meal. He didn’t want a drink. Twelve cents would suffice, thank you. A dime and two pennies to put him on a bus, so the bus could take him home, wherever that might be.

“Can’t help you,” I heard a stranger say. Some brittle stranger with a briefcase and a vested suit.

Quite astonished, then, I recognized the voice to be my own.

The trifling appeal had been summarily denied. I tried hastily to examine the reason in my mind.

But it wasn’t my intellect the man had addressed. It was my instinct, my heart, he’d sought to speak to. And in that instant, for whatever reason, my heart had been bad.

And by the time my head commanded me to feel remorse, the man was gone. Without either anger or surprise, evidently being long past both, he just let the wind blow him on along the sidewalk toward the next corner, where people waited for the crossing light to change.

And of course I didn’t follow after him. Mercy that scuttled along behind, in guilty afterthought, would surely be contemptible. Or so I argued to myself.

Someone was coming to collect me in a car. But colder, suddenly, than I’d been before, I left the curb and retreated up inside the heated office entryway. From there, however, the man’s progress could still be seen.

The traffic signal changed. The people at the curb all went across. One last pedestrian came hurrying to make the light but was intercepted by the man with the mended glasses, broken-over shoes and 12-cent need.

This new passer-by bore no briefcase, sported no vested suit. In fact, he was dressed not much different from the petitioner – rough shoes, worn jacket drawn up against the cold. But his response was immediate, and had nothing to do with intellect. He just took some change from his pocket, counted out the coins and pressed them in the other’s hand.

And then strode on without a word, having done a thing too slight to merit thanks.

The first man turned, then, and came back along the street. I would like to report that he stopped other passers, one after the other, and extracted money from them and pocketed it with a smirk.

The fact, though, is that he simply waited for the bus. When it came he boarded it, having exactly the required fare, and rode away toward home, wherever home was. And only then did I feel comfortable to go down to the curb and watch for my own ride.

Daily, in numberless small encounters, we are defined.

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