

The Bum

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You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him. - James D. Miles

Everyone respects and helps the millionaire, the famous, the boss, those with beauty and brains.

What about the bum on the street?

This is a real story. It happened to me, the writer of MountainWings.com.

I was parked in front of the church cleaning out my Jeep. I was waiting on someone. Coming my way from across the street was what society would consider a bum.

From the looks of him, he had no car, no home, no clean clothes, and no money. There are times when you feel generous but there are other times that you just don't want to be bothered. This was one of those "don't want to be bothered times."

"I hope he doesn't ask me for any money," I thought. He didn't.

He came and sat on the wall in front of the bus stop to wait on the bus. After a few minutes he spoke.

"That's a very pretty Jeep," he said.

He was ragged but he had an air of dignity around him. His scraggly blond beard kept more than his face warm. I said, "Thanks," and continued cleaning out the Jeep.

He sat there quietly as I worked. The expected plea for money never came.

As the silence between us widened something inside said, "Ask him if he needs any help."

I was sure that he would say "yes" but I held true to the inner voice.

"Do you need any help?" I asked.

He answered in three simple but profound words that I shall never forget.

We often look for wisdom in great men and women. We expect it from those of higher learning and accomplishments. I expected nothing but an outstretched grimy hand. He spoke the three words that shook me.

"Don't we all?" he said.

I was feeling high and mighty, successful and important, above a bum in the street, until those three words hit me like a twelve gauge shotgun.

Don't we all?

I needed help. Maybe not for bus fare or a place to sleep, but I needed help.

I reached in my wallet and gave him not only enough for bus fare, but enough to take a cab anywhere in the city and get food and shelter for the day.

Those three little words still ring true. No matter how much you have, no matter how much you have accomplished, you need help too.

No matter how little you have, no matter how loaded you are with problems, even without money or a place to sleep, you can give help. Even if it's just a compliment, you can give that.

You never know when you may see someone who appears to have it all. They are waiting on you to give them what they don't have. A different perspective on life, a glimpse at something beautiful, a respite from daily chaos, which only you, through a torn world can see.

Maybe the man was just a homeless stranger wandering the streets. Maybe he was more than that. Maybe he was sent by a power that is great and wise, to minister to a soul too comfortable in themselves.

Maybe God looked down, called an Angel, dressed him like a bum, and then said, "Go minister to that man cleaning the Jeep, that man needs help."

Don't we all?

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