Flowers Anyone?

Written by Bill Strom

As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

Luke 17:12-19 (NIV)

My wife arrived home with flowers more beautiful than any I had ever given her. A dozen roses: pink, white, yellow, red, orange. They burst from the vase amid baby’s breath and leafy filler. And she wore a smile that told me she felt appreciated.

My wife is a career counselor and coach, and she helps people figure out why they can’t get employment or keep it. Each month she sees a dozen clients pass her way who struggle with issues related to work and home. Some lack schooling. Others perseverance. Still others carry deep wounds from hurtful pasts that make them seethe with anger—and it shows. For many their hurts act like leprosy, gnawing away at their vocational potential.

By the time clients leave the course they have picked up important insights into their personalities, how they manage time (or not), how they handle conflict (or don’t), as well as interview and resume-writing skills. During the program some people huff and gruff and argue “I know all this,” or “The problem isn’t me; it’s been my four bosses!” and they leave largely unchanged. Others show a more humble posture, listening, learning, soaking it in.

One attentive client was Nadia, and within a few weeks of finishing the program, she landed her dream job as office administrator and bookkeeper for a small construction firm. And days later she returned with the roses as a thank you. My wife will see a hundred clients a year, but only a handful return to say thanks. Like the nine lepers who were healed, the other ninety-some are busy about their lives, forgetting whom they might thank.

It really doesn’t matter who we are or what we’ve accomplished, we’re all lepers in some way. And along our journey others have helped. A teacher, a coach, a parent, a friend. May we be thankful for those who have invested in us, and let them know it.

Question: Who has touched you? Who might you hand a dozen roses?

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