



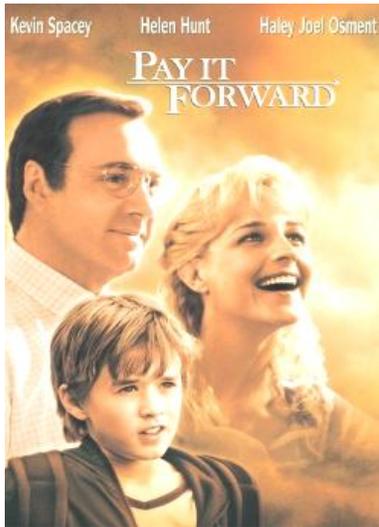
Newsletter

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- Up Words # 46

PAYING IT FORWARD?



Whenever the news reports on someone doing something good for another person they seem to often use the expression "pay it forward" to describe the doer of some good deed. The current cliché may be based on the movie "Pay it Forward" released in the year 2000. That movie documents the account of an eleven year old boy who launches a goodwill movement in response to his teacher's assignment to come up with an idea that would change the world forever.

Now I'm not against the concept of doing good to others but I am a little concerned about what is communicated in the phrase "pay it forward." The problem I have with the phrase is in the meaning of the word "pay." It seems to me that "paying" for something implies trading one thing in exchange for another. There is nothing wrong with paying for things, but is our Christian motivation for doing good things best captured by the word "paying?" Should we not be giving and expect nothing in return?

The Bible commands us to be givers. When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandments He replied, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27). Jesus indicates that giving to our neighbors should be motivated by love. Paul shows that this kind of loving sacrifice is an obligation; he writes, "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law." (Rom 13:8). The recipients of this favored treatment can be anyone. Paul reminds the believers in Galatia that as long as they have opportunities, they should do good to all people. (See Galatians 6:10). In another place Paul indicates that this even includes our enemies! (See Romans 12:20-21)

When Paul wrote to encourage Pastor Titus, he states, "This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men." (Titus 3:8). Paul reemphasized that again just a few verses later in Titus 3:14.

As believers let's not pay it forward but give it sacrificially. Hebrews 13:16 sums it up this way,

"And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

Looking Up!

Pastor Chuck Circle