

IMPERSONATING ANGELS

We know that angels serve God by doing good things for us (Hebrews 1:14). For example, we are told that angels have a special care for children (Matthew 18:10), and those of us who are parents know they need it! While we are not aware of all the ways in which angels serve us, we are thankful for all the things angels do in our behalf.

However, I am also thankful for all the people who have been "angel impersonators" in my life. One such person was my second cousin Edna who left some time ago to be with the Lord. My sister and I grew up during the "great depression," a time when money was in short supply for most of us, and what money there was went for the absolute necessities. What made our cousin Edna a "substitute angel" was that when she came to our house, we could look forward to some special gift. This gift might have been a toy, or a bag of candy, or even a needed item of clothing. Our hearts would beat with joyful anticipation whenever we heard that Edna was coming to pay us a visit.

It may be that Edna had a special tenderness of heart toward us because she had been left an orphan of both parents as a little girl. Also, she did not marry until late in life and never had the privilege of raising children of her own. Consequently, in a sense our family became her family. What we do know is that we will always be thankful for the gifts of love showered on us by Edna, gifts that came out of the poverty in which she was also living. I am thankful that in our adult years, we had occasion to thank Edna for her kindness toward us, and tell her how much these things meant to us.

I would imagine that almost all of those who read this article will have their own Edna who comes to mind. If you have the opportunity to do so, take the time to tell your "substitute angel" how grateful you are! However, our greatest "thanks" will consist in our willingness to be "angel impersonators" for children with whom we are in contact. I truly believe that such activities on our part will please the Lord, will gratify young hearts, and will be a means of leading people to the Lord. Allow me to point out some places to look.

Obviously, a first place to look is within our own families. In our time of affluence, it may seem that such opportunities do not exist, but they do. What is important is the love and regard that our gifts and attention show! As adults come and go, it is easy for little children to feel unimportant and overlooked. Becoming their "substitute angels" will catch their attention and be remembered and appreciated long after we are no longer in this life.

We have many such occasions to give attention to children within the context of the church we attend. In addition to material gifts, we can be substitute fathers and mothers, or uncles and aunts to children with whom we are in contact. In this time of broken homes and divided families, the need is great!

A third place to look for such opportunities of service is within the neighborhood where we live, especially in the poorer areas. It may be that we have here some of our most significant opportunities to show the love of Christ, and turn lives to the Lord.

Other occasions certainly exist, but these are enough to illustrate that both the need and the opportunity to be "angel impersonators" exist everywhere. This is really an ideal way to give gifts to our Lord who has given so much to us. He is the one who said that a good deed either given to or withheld from even the least regarded person, is considered as having been given to or withheld from the Lord (Matthew 25:40,45).

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