

GENEROUS LIVING

ALL OF ME
IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM



On September 13, 2008, Hurricane Ike slammed into Texas, crippling the town of Bridge City, Texas. First responders from around the country and students from Adventist academies made their way to Bridge City immediately after the storm passed through.

Working with the disaster response group ACTS, mobile kitchens from the conferences of Florida, Carolina and Gulf States were all stationed in the parking lot of a school in Bridge City to provide two meals per day to over 1,500 citizens, policemen and firemen. My wife, Deborah, was asked to plan meals, process inventory requests and assist the students in meal prep. In addition to preparing meals, many of our academy students were assessing needs and cleaning or gutting houses. Of the 3,800 houses in Bridge City, all but 15 were unlivable. There was much work to be done.

In order to complete the requirements for graduation, local high school students were required to participate in community service. Members of the girls' volleyball team and cheerleader squad asked Deborah to allow them to work with the Adventist students so they could complete their community service hours. After completing their hours, many of the girls continued to return to the work site, day after day, and brought their mothers to work as well. Each day the girls showed up ready for work with huge smiles on

their faces, a twinkling of joy in their eyes and an eagerness to do whatever needed to be done to help others.

One of the mothers asked my wife what had we done to her daughter. With a puzzled look, Deborah responded, "I don't know what you are asking me." The mother replied that her daughter had always been self-centered and only concerned with her wants and needs. Now, her daughter just wanted to be on the work site to help others. The mother could not understand how we had made such a change in this young lady in less than a week.

Deborah replied, "Oh, we didn't do that. Your daughter has been touched by the Holy Spirit and has learned the joy of serving others. Once someone experiences that joy, nothing will ever be the same for them."

True joy lies not in pleasing ourselves. It only lies in seeking first and foremost to please God and secondly in serving others. The guideline for generous and joyful living can be found in Matthew 22:34-40: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Let God help you experience the joy of serving Him first and then others. Experience the joy of all of you in response to all of Him!

— Rick Hutchinson,
Trust Services
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