

I'll leave the preaching to Priscilla. You've met her already. Or if not, I'm sure you will meet her soon. And what a story it will be because you see, she is blessed with the gift of gab, or in technical terms, exhortation. The thought of public speaking terrifies me. Don't be surprised if I faint just trying to get through this.

I do have an offering to give. I am here to offer the gift of helpfulness. Some people look at me and say, "I don't know how you do all you do for others when most of them never even say 'thank you.'"

Well, the answer to that is easy. I am a disciple of a man named Jesus. He helped so many; he served ALL people, never expecting a thank you. I'm just doing the best I can to follow in his footsteps.

I live in between worlds. Some of you may even know me as Tabitha. That is what my Jewish friends call me. My Greek friends call me Dorcas. There are one or two in each of those groups who don't understand how I am able to be friends with and, in fact, help people from such different backgrounds. Again, I'm just trying to be a good disciple. It is a small thing to perform acts of charity, but that is my gift.

No, I'll leave the preaching to Priscilla. I prefer the "behind the scenes" kind of work. That is why the biggest blessing in my life was also the biggest curse. I had lived a good life. I was able to help widows, children, and people of all sorts. Yes, I helped in small ways, quiet ways, but I felt that I was making a difference. Then I died. I know that may sound dramatic, but I did. I died.

I'm standing here with you, so you know what happened. I was raised, raised from the dead, by Peter himself. And, while that may seem the big miracle, what amazed me was that all of those people cared so much about me that they made sure Peter helped me. I am truly grateful for that.

But, suddenly, I was a superstar – "the woman come back from the dead." That felt like a curse to me - people staring at me all the time, strangers wanting to touch me. Every time I tried to take a pot of soup to one of the widows, people were pointing and talking about it. I just can't stand to be the center of attention.

Please don't misunderstand. I'm incredibly thankful for my life being returned to me, for so many diverse people reaching out to me, but I do prefer the quiet, "behind the scenes" kinds of help. That is my offering. That is what I bring. Because I am a disciple of Jesus, I help others. There really isn't a need to make a big deal about it.

Discussion Suggestions - Dorcas

In Biblical times, one of the worst things that could happen to a woman was to become a widow. Widows were often the poorest of poor, without anyone to represent them or protect them. Too often, they were abandoned by society and left to fend for themselves without access to any resources that would help them survive.

The acts of charity and compassionate deeds from Dorcas to the widows of Joppa ensured that they could live their life with their basic needs met. So we can understand, then, why her death caused great grief not just to the widows, but also to the whole community in Joppa.

In her monologue, Dorcas stated that she preferred the “behind the scenes” kind of work, and that “it is a small thing to perform acts of charity” claiming that that is her gift.

- ✦ Ask your group how they see God calling them to use their collective gifts to perform “acts of charity” within your community.

- ✦ Brainstorm together ways your group can help make the lives of those less fortunate in your community better. Is there a women and children’s shelter to which you can minister either in person or by donations? Do the children of your local schools have their basic needs met as far as school supplies go (remember, supplies need refreshing year round)? Is there a clothes closet in your community for which your group can organize a clothes drive? Does your local food pantry need extra support and donations? Are there people (widows, homebound, etc.) in your church and community that could use a meal or a visit on a regular basis? If so, set up a rotation schedule for members of your group to take them something simple and visit with them each week. The ideas and the needs to fulfill are endless. Consider committing together as a group to adopt one or more of these needs as your project for a year (or more!).

Group Activity:

Make an announcement prior to the meeting date that each lady is to bring with her to the meeting one yard of fleece and a pair of scissors. You will be making fleece blankets together to distribute to those in need (shut-ins, nursing homes, new moms, etc.). Have each lady pair up with a partner. Each pair will place their fleece back to back. Cut out a square from each of the four corners of the paired up fleece. Then proceed to cut about three inch long strips around the perimeter of the paired up fleece. Tie the strips of the paired up fleece together in knots to make a blanket.

While they work in pairs, invite the ladies to offer sentence prayers related to the needs of those less fortunate in your community and your opportunities to respond to those needs. When all the blankets are completed, close with the prayer below or one of your own wording.

PRAYER:

Thank you, God for calling us to join with you in serving our neighbors in need. Help us to always show your love and goodness to others. Amen.”