



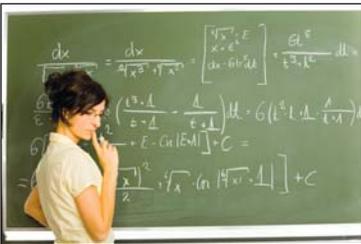
## Be a part of life's solutions

By Bill Webb

In case you hadn't noticed, the past year ended leaving a lot of us a bit uneasy. Many of the reasons are still with us.

The economic crisis in the nation and the world continues despite some indications that it is showing some improvement. Businesses both massive and tiny continue to fail or to experience downsizing, another way of saying that people are losing their jobs and families are feeling the pinch.

Churches and other non-profits that typically reach out to hungry and impoverished people are naturally affected by joblessness and their ability to give at previous levels. Fewer resources are available to help the poor. Food pantries have trouble keeping their shelves stocked.



What is the average believer to do to help effect positive change on such wide scales? Here are a few thoughts intended to be constructive:

**Use your influence to affect positive change.** Become better informed about legislative issues and communicate with senators

and representatives. To remain silent and then complain about a legislative outcome is irresponsible.

**Live responsibly.** Many families have been forced to revisit their priorities, including personal and charitable spending. These and others have taken a harder look at living within their means.

**None of us can control the attitudes and actions of others but we can influence others in a positive way.** People are easy to provoke. A well-chosen word, even an inflection or a facial expression will do the trick. It is a form of manipulation, and a lot of people like



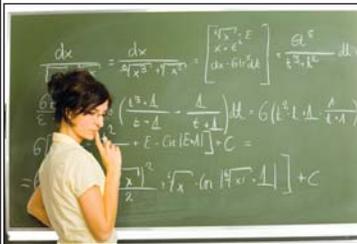
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the power it gives them over others. Interestingly, a well-chosen word, inflection or expression also can lift up or inspire a person.

**Take steps that demonstrate your own integrity and protect your reputation.** My parents, especially my father, often used the old line, “Don’t forget who you are,” at strategic times in my life, usually when the potential for temptation was ripe. Believers would do well to start each day with a focus on living worthy of the family name of Christian. Those who seem so natural in their expression of their faith know it takes diligence, commitment and will to function faithfully.

**There is little to be lost and much to be gained in cutting others some slack.** Plan to see the worst in someone else and that is what you will see. You will hurt people, reveal your own unhappiness and repel others. Giving others the benefit of the doubt is a sign of respect that refreshes your sphere of influence and your friendships.

**Intentionally perform a random act of kindness at least once a week.**



That may not in itself cure all of society’s woes, but it will do something for you. I have observed that kindness expressed to others moves beyond being a series of random acts to a Christ-like lifestyle. And it is contagious.

Surely that makes God smile.

*Bill Webb is editor of Word&Way.*

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