



REFLECTIONS

July 29, 2018

**Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given
for the common good.**

1 Corinthians 12:7

Johnny' Story

It's familiar to many today, the story of a young grocery bagger with Down's syndrome. Johnny's story first came to my attention in a book entitled *Everyone's a Coach* co-authored by Don Shula and Ken Blanchard. Johnny, inspired by a consultant's challenge, found something to put a personal touch on his work to let customers know how important they are.

So, as the story goes, Johnny informed the consultant that he had drawn from his large collection of quotes as his token of appreciation to each customer. "I'm putting my quote of the day in your bag. I hope it makes your day brighter," he told them.

After a few days, the store manager watched as Johnny's checkout lines lengthened; and customers refused to move to other lines because they wanted to receive Johnny's quote of the day. Johnny's success stirred other workers to find ways to place something personal on their work too. The butcher sealed his packages with Snoopy stickers, and the flower department pinned customers with corsages they made from damaged flowers. "What a difference one person can make in bringing a vision alive," the authors observed.

Of course, the story's point is *everyone's a coach*. All of us, no matter the station in life, physical or mental capacity, influence those around us. But let's look a bit deeper.

Jesus said of the man blind from birth, "*this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.*" (John 9:1) Johnny was born with Down's syndrome. Imperfect, we might think. No. Johnny is *fearfully and wonderfully made*. (Psalm 139:14) He's just the way God intended him to be. So, in my book that makes Johnny perfect. *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus... There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* (Galatians 3:26, 28)

Throughout the seasons of life, we witness tragedies. People lose life and limb and the effects of those events reach into other lives far beyond the victims'. Johnny's parents could be an example. They are mentioned in Johnny's story as supporting their son in the realization of his assignment. But it's easy to imagine the concern cast over them when they first learned of their son's condition. But don't forget. They have a part in God's plan too. *God works all things for good for those who love him.* (Romans 8:28) So, try to imagine how many lives may have been shaped by Johnny's story.

Now, imagine how many lives have been shaped by yours.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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