



Kelley Manning: Hello, and welcome to Women Going Beyond Wealth podcast. This is episode #5 and it is going to be a quick but hopefully impactful one. In the introductory episode, we highlighted the intent of this podcast – to live joyfully, to live a life of value, a life of legacy, one that leads you to your best life. A life of intention. A life of abundance.

Recently, I was completing my morning devotional, reading from the gospel of Mark, chapter 14 – the story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is when Judas Iscariot and a great multitude, including chief priests, scribes, and elders, come into the Garden to take Jesus away. During this exchange, one of Jesus' disciples takes his sword and cuts off the ear of a servant of one of the high priests. Jesus takes his finger and healed the servant.

I have read this story in the Gospels multiple times. But what amazed me today was the fact that this miraculous healing did not change the minds of all of the people who witnessed it. They still escorted Jesus to the chief priests for trial and the eventual persecution. These people did not know Jesus – they needed Judas to identify him in the Garden - but had heard of Jesus and had already made a decision as to his character. They witnessed a miracle, but it didn't change their heart.

Let me ask you, friend – how many times have you seen a miracle, but it didn't change your heart? I highly doubt you have ever seen a re-creation of an ear – but have you seen someone that maybe you had created a negative preconceived notion perform a true act of kindness and you did not allow it to change you? Have you ever been in a bad mood, saw someone perform a selfless, generous act but you stayed stuck in your dreariness? Or maybe someone has hurt you in the past despite time and their repentant efforts, you are unwilling to forgive?

Today, we live in a world that is filled with hate, criticism, mistrust, with deep divides racially, politically, even culturally. How do we play a part in making the world a better, more compassionate and loving community? How do we help close the chasms that divide us? My answer: be the change you want to see in the world. Live joyfully & courageously. Open your heart to opportunities & possibilities. Let go of preconceived notions. Start a conversation to learn and understand – not accuse but to listen and appreciate the differences. Show kindness and compassion. Volunteer your time to help the less fortunate. Compliment a stranger.

One last comparison – this one from Les Miserable. Have you read Victor Hugo's book, watched the movie or been lucky enough to see the musical production? It's the rags to riches story of Jean Valjean. He was penniless (or since the story is set in 19th century France, franc-less) and was thrown in jail for stealing a loaf of bread. When he broke parole, he was relentlessly pursued by Inspector Javert. Valjean turned his life around – became an employer to many and charitable to the poor. That did not change Javert's heart – he died because of his hatred for Valjean – despite all of Valjean's good work. Let's compare that to the Bishop, whom Valjean stole from when he was released from prison. The Bishop saw the goodness and let him go, even allowing him to take the stolen items. That is the moment that changed Valjean – the compassion of a stranger changed his heart and his life. Are you courageous enough to be that stranger?

My grandfather had a saying, I don't know where he got it but it is framed in my office - "If you find someone without a smile, give them one of yours." So, go my dear friends. Give your smile to one that needs it. Don't

only be the light but look for the light, and celebrate the light, in others. Intentionally open your heart to the many possibilities that life brings to you. And be willing to see the miracle in others.

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