



# Thursday Thought

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## Enablers

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**Verse for the week: Matthew 5:42 (NLT) “Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow.”**

We have received numerous requests from people over the years. My wife and I have been asked to co-sign student loans for people that we don’t know. I’ve been asked for money for all sorts of reasons, and the church has as well. Last year we had an individual stop in the church who wanted to buy a lottery ticket. They had been praying that God would help them win the lottery and wanted us to give \$20.00 to purchase the ticket. We didn’t give the funds. (We probably lost out on winning \$2.00). Another time I had someone call the church whose vehicle broke down as they were traveling home to some other state. They said they needed funds to assist with the repair. Just the day before I was talking to a police officer who told me if I ever received those calls that they had a contingency fund to help travelers. I informed the individual of this and they said some very inappropriate words and hung up on me. The stories, whether true or not, always seem sincere and heart breaking. Because of what Christ has done for us, we feel as though the loving thing to do would be to help. BUT, is that always the right thing to do? It can be very hard to know what to do! At church we’ve had some lengthy discussions about, “are we loving or enabling?”

- Helping is doing something for someone else that they are not easily capable of doing for themselves.
- Enabling is doing something for someone else that they can and should be doing for themselves.

Knowing the difference between helping and enabling isn’t always easy but something we must wrestle with. Psychology Today has a few great questions to help you discover if you are an enabler:

- Do you often ignore unacceptable behavior?
- Do you find yourself resenting the responsibilities you take on?
- Do you consistently put your own needs and desires aside in order to help someone else?
- Do you ever feel fearful that not doing something will cause a blowup, make the person leave you, or even result in violence?
- Do you ever lie to cover for someone else’s mistakes?
- Do you consistently assign blame for problems to other people rather than the one who is really responsible?
- Do you continue to offer help when it is never appreciated or acknowledged?

If these questions make you think, you might be an enabler, and it is important that you take action. Sometimes the best way to show a person you love them is to say “NO!”

**Challenge Question:** Is there someone in your life that you are enabling? Is there someone in your life that you should be helping?