

This sermon is based on chapter three of the “Someone Like You” book (pg. 23)

*This message is focused on how the Holy Spirit prompts us to take action when we see injustice and pain in our world. We are empowered and gifted by God to do the work of kingdom ministry.*

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## Introduction

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Today we’re going to be taking inspiration from Brian Swanson’s story and talking about this question: how can we take the things in this world that bother us, that break our hearts, and transform that into motivation to take action and make an impact in our world? Before we get started, I just want to pray over our time together, and everything that’s going to happen here.

### **(Open with prayer.)**

All right, well, the best person to tell Brian’s story is Brian himself. So we have a video of that, let’s take a look right now.



Show the week three sermon video here, available for streaming or download by following this QR code.  
Length: 3 minutes 56 seconds

So in this story, I hope you heard, there’s a key statement that really served as a catalyst for Brian. He was at a men’s weekend, and he kept bringing up this statistic about homeless youth, and a guy stopped him and said, “Look man, if it bothers you that much, do something about it.”

Anybody here have something that just bothers you? Just gets on your nerves?

Like, you go to the restroom and the toilet paper roll... somebody has put it on backwards. Here’s an easy trick to remember, okay? Your toilet paper should have a beard, and not a mullet. All right? That is the key. Like, beards are cool and mullets... well, I’ve seen some mullets around here, so I won’t say anything about that. But it should have a beard. That is the way.

Or you go to the sink and there's all these dirty dishes piled up in the sink, and right next to it is the dishwasher, and it's empty and it's ready to go, and it's just sitting there.

Another one that really bugs me... I'm trying to get on a 70-mile-an-hour freeway, and there's a person right in front of me that wants to go 35 miles an hour all the way up the onramp, and it's like, we are going to be killed by people who are flying by. This semi is going to kill us.

And then, probably one that gets me the most is when I'm going to the grocery store and there's the perfect parking space, and someone has left a shopping cart right in the middle of the space. And the cart corral is literally two spaces over, like it would have taken you 15 seconds. Come on, people!

*At this point, share a story about something **you** do that bothers someone else such as your kids or spouse. The author shared about how his wife fixes the way he dresses before he goes out the door because his shirt or collar may be askew.*

So I kind of want to use this phrase today, "does that bother you," as we talk about different things that might disturb us, but I want to turn it into something positive.

You know, when that phrase was said to Brian, it was probably a little embarrassing, a little harsh. So I want to take it and turn it into something positive. If you know me, you know I like to encourage people. I never like to make people feel guilty or obligated. I know that you are going to be ten times more effective if you're following **your** passion, you're following your heart and God's call on your life. That's a lot more effective than if you're just doing something that somebody told you to do.

### **Point Number One: The Holy Spirit Prompts Our Passion**

My goal today is to try to help you discover your passion. Like, what is the thing that when you hear about it, the Holy Spirit within you just cries out and you can't help but get involved? So we're going to look at a passage from Scripture today, and it's in Romans, chapter eight, verse 26 through 28.

Let's look at this together.

*“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

This is exactly what I’m talking about. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit intercedes for us. You may not even realize that there is a fire burning inside of you for something. But then when you see that injustice, or you hear about that cause, all of a sudden the Spirit within you cries out and you’re like, “Whoa, what was that? Why am I so upset right now? Why is my heart beating so fast?”

It’s because the Spirit within you is crying out and calling out. So if we look at verse 28, we see *“God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”* We’ve been called to fulfill his purpose.

So of course, when we **identify** that purpose, we **see** that purpose, we’re going to **feel** these powerful emotions. We’re going to feel motivation to do something about that thing.

Ephesians 2:10 says it this way: *“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”* God prepared **you** to do good works.

We don’t always know what to do, but that’s okay because God is going to put things in your path. And then when you feel that nudge from the Holy Spirit, we just have to listen to those nudges. We have to chase after that when we experience that feeling, because that’s going to be the most fulfilling thing that you can chase after in your life.

So here’s a phrase that I want to use today. It goes like this. “Does that bother you? You **can** do something about it.” And so I’m going to repeat this a few times as we go through today. And what I want you to do, is if you genuinely feel bothered by something that I’m talking about, then I want you to shout it out and give me a “yes” or “yeah” or whatever you want to say in response.

Okay, so we’re just going to try it out. All right, here we go. This is a practice run.

So tonight in Minnesota, 6,000 young people, many of whom have been abused, are out there sleeping in cars or on couches or on the street because they have no place to call home. **Does that bother you?** (pause for response) **You can do something about it.** Let's go, nice job. You can support and volunteer with HOPE 4 Youth.

*You can replace this statistic with the national statistic "Each year, an estimated 4.2 million youth, young adults and teens, many of whom have been abused, experience homelessness in the United States." Or you can find the numbers for your state. You can also encourage people to support their local homeless youth liaison, one of which is assigned to every school.*

I like to say you **can** do something about it because this is good news. It's the truth and it correctly describes the power that you have, especially when we come together with other people.

See, I look around this room, and I just see an incredible amount of power that you have to impact this world. And by the way, that includes introverts, because I'm sure some of you have thought, "Well, I'm an introvert. I'm not an up-front type, I'm not good with people," but that's totally fine. Every single organization in this book had to have people that worked behind the scenes.

Introverts have just as much power as anyone else to make an impact. We all just have to listen to those nudges from the Holy Spirit. So, what can a nudge from the Holy Spirit achieve? How can it change our lives? Let me tell you a story.

In the early days of HOPE 4 Youth, Blaine High School hosted a sleepout in cardboard boxes to raise awareness.

So HOPE 4 Youth was invited to give a presentation, and there was actually a large group of high school students that spent the night sleeping outside in these cardboard boxes to raise awareness. Now, there was a dad by the name of John Sitars, who found out that his daughter had participated in this event, and she had slept outside, and he was absolutely furious.

He pulled his daughter aside and he said, "What are you doing? Why are you sleeping outside? There aren't any homeless youth up here in Anoka. Are you crazy?" And she looked him right in the eyes and she said, "Dad, there are five students at my school that are sleeping in their cars. Now you're involved."

And I believe in that moment, something changed. Something clicked. The Holy Spirit cried out within John's heart, and over time, he discovered an incredible passion that he had for helping these young people. In fact, he became the organization's lead fundraiser and a few years later, at a HOPE 4 Youth gala, they were trying to raise money to buy and renovate Hope Place, which is the apartment building where they house some of these young people.

And John Sitars got up in front of everybody, took the mic, and he said, "We're going to raise one million dollars in 45 days, or I'm going to sleep outside until we do!"

And I'll tell you something... John didn't have to sleep outside.

They raised the million dollars. And because of that, over a hundred young people have had a place to stay at Hope Place because of this ministry.

As we continue to go through this series, I just want to encourage you to have an open heart. Let your heart be softened, have an open mind and listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit. When you feel that spark trying to ignite a fire in your soul, don't push it away. Don't dismiss it. Lean into it. Let's let ourselves experience these feelings, and nudges.

### **Point Number Two: Jesus Calls Everyone to Ministry**

I also have to say this so we're on the same page. I need to make one thing clear, which is this: Jesus calls **all** of us to ministry. It's not just the pastors, it's not just the staff. It is the church, big C church, which is every person **in** the church. In First Corinthians, Paul describes how the church is like a body, has all these different parts, and all the parts need to work together. He says, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

So, **each one of you**. That means 100% participation. Now, don't get me wrong, this is not me saying "You have to do this. You're obligated to do this." No, what I'm saying is, "You're equipped to do this. You're designed to do this. This is the thing that will make you come alive." Because God put this purpose in your heart when he made you. When you step into the ministry that God has created for you, it is the healthiest, it is the most fulfilling, it is the most exciting thing that you can do because you're doing what you were put on this planet to do. The very purpose for which you were made, which is to glorify God and to love those around you.

Jesus doesn't call us to ministry because he wants to place a burden on us. He doesn't want to make us uncomfortable. He doesn't call us to ministry so that we can earn points or have a false sense of self-righteousness.

Jesus says this: "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." He wants to give us **life!** He wants to give us **joy.** And he knows that the best life that we can have is one of humility and surrender and serving the needs of others, because that was the life that he modeled for us. He equips us with everything we need to live this life.

### **Point Number Three: You Can Do Something About It**

So I want to ask you today about a few things, and please remember, you can't do everything. Don't try to do everything, but everyone can do something. And if everybody does something, nobody has to do everything. And God gets all the credit, right? So I'm going to ask you about some different things. And this is your chance to respond.

1 in 3 women in the United States have suffered abuse, and many of them are in danger with no place to go. **Does that bother you?** (pause for response) **You can do something about it.** Last week we talked about Door of Hope and The Dwelling Place, two awesome ministries that you can support and get involved in.

In the US, 74% of babies prenatally diagnosed with Down syndrome will be terminated as a result of that diagnosis. **Does that bother you?** (pause for response) **You can do something about it.** Next week we're going to learn about Jack's Basket, which is celebrating babies and changing the narrative surrounding Down syndrome.

There are thousands of adults struggling with homelessness in our area. Many of them have disabilities or mental health issues. Some of them are veterans who have fought in wars for our country. And this winter, they're going to be out on the streets and some of them will starve and freeze to death. **Does that bother you?** (pause for response) **You can do something about it.** We're going to be learning about 2.4 Ministry and Massey's Mobile Mission, and there are so many wonderful places you can make an impact.

There are roughly 30 million people across the globe who are victims of human trafficking. 43% of them are women and young girls. **Does that bother you?** (pause for response) **You can do something about it.** We're going to learn about a company called Dignity Made, fighting human trafficking. And I'm sure there are others as well.

Last... 100,000 children in the United States are legal orphans. Their parents have lost parental rights. So these kids are living in foster care, and every other person in their life has abandoned them. **Does that bother you?** (pause for response) **You can do something about it.** We're going to learn about The Reel Hope project. And then of course, there's always adoption from foster care.

I want to share another story. There was a young high school girl who used to come to the HOPE 4 Youth Drop-In center, as it was called back then. She was living outside, sleeping in a tent in the woods, in the winter. So if you've experienced Minnesota winter, you know that's a dangerous place to be.

But she was working hard, going to school, doing her best in this incredibly difficult situation. One day she came to the drop-in center and she was just crying. And it was a school day. So they were surprised to see her because she never liked to miss school, she was a good student. When they finally calmed her down, they asked her what happened. Why didn't you get to school today?

She said, when I woke up this morning, I couldn't get up because my hair was frozen to the ground.

And so in order to get free, I had to tear some of my hair off. So she was too ashamed to go to school because of the way she looked.

**Does that bother you?** (pause for response) **You can do something about it.** I truly believe you can do something about it. Call your school district. Support these ministries. Find a way to get involved.

As we wrap up, I want to share two very important things. One of them is a root cause analysis, which I just think is really helpful if you're a parent or if you're a student or anybody who works with youth.

Brian and his team spent months researching and analyzing these questions, “What are the factors that cause youth homelessness? What are the things that can prevent youth from ending up in these situations?” And they found out that without exception, if three things are present in a young person’s life, they end up in a healthy place:

**(Show these on screen.)**

Number one, **the young person believes that they are capable**. They’re not simply a victim of their circumstances, but they have the power to impact their own future.

Number two, **the young person believes that they are valuable**. They experience authentic love and care from the individuals around them.

And number three, **the young person has a meaningful relationship with a positive role model**. Do not underestimate the power that you have, as you interact with people who are younger than you. By being a mentor to a young person, you could literally be saving their life.

Last thing I want to say is something that bothers **me**, so I want to do something about it.

I’ve spent a lot of time over the years on different social media sites and image sharing sites. I’m usually looking for webcomics and memes and, you know, funny things like dad jokes and things like that. But way too often I’ve seen people post things that they think are funny and ironic, but they’re actually devastating.

Things like, “It’s okay, you don’t matter,” or “There’s no real point or purpose to any of this anyway.” And people believe these lies. And so they just drift from work to home, work to home, and back again just believing that their lives don’t matter.

Listen to me. **You matter**. You matter. Because you have a creator. And he loves you so much that he was willing to die for you.

Don’t believe the voices that say that your life doesn’t have meaning. **That is not true**. You are God’s child. Billions of people have experienced God’s power, and have witnessed it firsthand, and billions more are going to experience the love of God. Because those of us who have experienced the love of God can’t help but share it with other people, because it’s so awesome.

So if you're sitting here today and you've never given your life to Christ, I want you to remember: Jesus came that you might have life and have it to the full. The absolute best version, if you were to look at every path that you could choose, the best version of your life is the one that is **with Jesus**, the one where you follow him.

It's not an obligation. It's not a burden. It's an opportunity to partner with the God of the universe who wants to build you up into his masterpiece, to do great works and amazing things through your life. So are you ready, today, to start your journey with God? Don't be afraid. It is the best decision that you will ever make. Let's pray.

**(Close with prayer.)**