



*Small Things with Great Love: Adventures in Loving Your Neighbor*  
Available

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978-0-8308-3817-2

## Loving a World in Need, Practically

Here's the rub: a lot of us with rich, full lives do take seriously Jesus' command to love our neighbors the way we love ourselves. We're even willing to entertain the probability that his signature "good Samaritan" definition of *neighbor* calls us to befriend the unlikely and sometimes inconvenient type of person he describes in the story. And so the rich, full lives we lead, packed with important stuff—but without much margin left over to know those who live on the world's margins—sort of beg an important question.

Is God scowling in judgment because we're changing the batteries in our smoke detectors instead of going door to door collecting eyeglasses to send to Haiti? Is God looking down from heaven feeling sort of resentful that we're using the "look inside" function on Amazon.com instead of visiting prisoners? Isn't God angry that Americans keep getting fatter while so many on the globe are starving? You'd think so, right? A world in which a God who loves the poor would be a little bent out of shape that the rest of us are so darn self-involved is pretty imaginable.

And though it's certainly easy to conjure up that kind of a heavenly dichotomy, I simply don't think it's the case. Here's why: God's love for you and God's love for the larger world in need cannot be separated. God's longing to see you liberated for life that really is life can't be neatly pulled apart from God's longing to see the poor liberated for life that really is life. The two are inextricable. God's concern for the stuff of our lives, and God's concern for the lives of those who live on the margins, can never be neatly parsed. Wess Stafford, president of Compassion International, sees this pretty clearly. Wess will be the first one to tell you, "Compassion's work—releasing children from poverty in Jesus' name—is releasing me from wealth in Jesus' name."

That's God's big plan.

Who do you imagine when you think of those who live on the world's margins? Close your eyes for a moment and visualize these precious ones that Jesus called "the poor." Who do you see? What do they look like? If



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you are privileged—by race or status or income or gender—you may find that you think of non-white minorities. If this is true of you, *own* it.

I only mention this because, if you're anything at all like me, you'll want to deny or minimize noticing as quickly as possible.

In my own heart, this devilish bind can precipitate one of two things. It can paralyze me so that, stuck, I stay trapped in my privilege-ghetto, segregated from so many that God loves. But acknowledging the mess can also drive me to prayer when I recognize that the tainted kind of power I do have—by virtue of race and education and affluence—only interferes with, rather than lubricates, authentic kingdom relationships. Then, to get unstuck, I cry out, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” (Luke 18:13). This is pretty much how it goes.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Finally humbled, I realize that embracing the adventure of loving a world in need is—at its best—about giving Jesus, in us, access, through us, to the ones around us he already loves.

It's about doing small things with great love.

—adapted from the introduction



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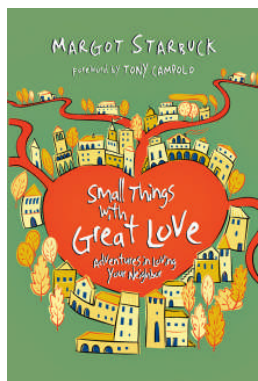
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## Working Out the Adventures of Loving Your Neighbor

What does it mean to do “small things with great love”?

How does one practically engage a world in need without becoming overwhelmed?

Is this book only written for young people who have the time and energy to be active in their communities?

Why is it important that we be in relationship with those at the world’s margins?

Do you need to travel to foreign countries or faraway areas to start this type of mission?

What are some practical examples of engaging in hospitality with your neighbors?

Are there any specific examples that can be followed for executing these practical assignments?



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# BIO

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Margot Starbuck,  
M.Div., Princeton  
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**Margot Starbuck** is a writer and speaker who cares deeply about what it means to follow Jesus in the sneakers, pumps or Doc Martens in which we find ourselves. She is passionate about communicating God’s great love for the world—inextricably bound to God’s love for individuals—in print and in speech.

Margot studied art at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. At the beach and in dorm rooms, she began to notice the bind in which women find themselves today, specifically as they’re pinched by the culture’s insistence on the value of appearances. She was further equipped to process these issues theologically at Princeton Seminary. Today, Margot continues to be energized by the kingdom reality of God’s big plan for our bodies which have been called *good*.

Her first book, *The Girl in the Orange Dress*, describes the way she came to know that the God who “so loved the world” cares deeply for her. Her second book, *Unsqueezed*, is about that inextricable love setting people free to be agents of the new kingdom Jesus ushered in.

When she’s not writing books, Margot pops up online in places like *Relevant*, *Kyria* and *New Christian Voices*. Though disheartened by much of Christian culture’s silent insistence on keeping up appearances—namely, by simply doing it—Margot is regularly inspired by those countercultural heroes and communities who are exercising different practices.

Right now, Margot is writing a lot about what it looks like for normal-ish folks to exercise love and justice in our cars, at the grocery store and in our neighborhoods. When audiences invite her to speak about how we can live with less stress, or spend more time with God, or grow in our faith, she still often seems to end up right there where the recycled rubber meets the road.



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