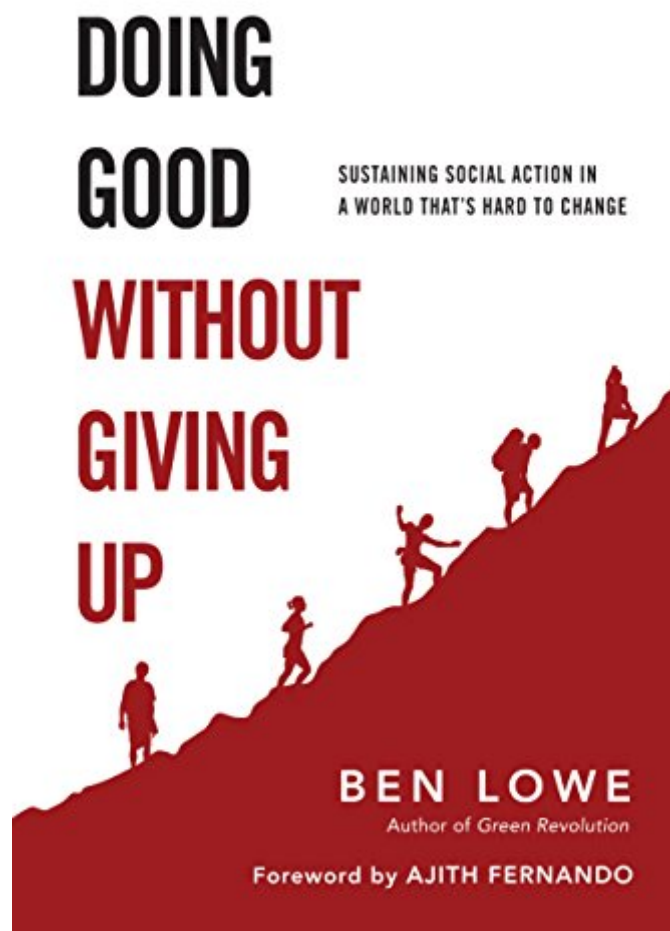


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Doing Good Without Giving Up: Sustaining Social Action In A World That's Hard To Change



Synopsis

12th Annual Outreach Resource of the Year (Social Justice)"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." - Galatians 6:9 If you're working to make the world a better place, you might find yourself discouraged. Needs are overwhelming, resources are limited, opposition is real and progress is slow. How do we persevere when the novelty wears off and our enthusiasm runs out? We all want change in the world. But as C. S. Lewis put it, we don't get second things by placing them first; we get second things by keeping first things first. As Christians, we don't just aim at change; we aim at faithfulness, and out of faithfulness comes fruitfulness. Activist Ben Lowe renews our mission with key postures and practices for sustaining faithful social action. What makes social action distinctively Christian includes such things as living out Jesus love, having a prophetic witness, building bridges with opponents, repudiating idolatries, and practicing repentance and sabbath. Moving beyond theory, Lowe showcases practical examples of what it looks like to persevere in faithful activism and advocacy today. Take heart. As you work for God, God is at work in you to keep your hope alive.

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Customer Reviews

"Doing Good" is a truly helpful book for all Christians who are working for the Kingdom. Speaking from his own personal experiences as well as sharing insights from fellow laborers whom he has met along the way, the author provides practical help for how to persevere when the weight of the world's problems are overwhelming. With specific advice on scheduling rest (Sabbath), handling opposition with love, practicing repentance, and uniting social action with evangelism, Ben's wisdom can help us avoid burnout and stay in the race for the long term. I was deeply blessed and encouraged by this book, and I highly recommend it to all others who desire to "run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus."

I've been waiting for this book since 2010, when Ben Lowe ran an inspiring campaign for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in Chicago's western suburbs. In this book, Lowe reflects on some of the most difficult aspects of a life of service. By challenging the idolatry of success, he helps us to face with faithfulness the discouragement and failure that occasionally attend our best efforts, and to have patience with real, even if sometimes slow and fragile, progress.

As a young Christian this book really speaks to me. Ben addresses so many of the struggles that my generation goes through when trying to faithfully follow Jesus in an increasingly complex world. Two of his points that really struck home were Ben's exhortation to being involved in social action as a Christian and his engagement with the perceived tension between social justice and evangelism. To the first point, I have often shied away from pursuing social action because of the controversy and messiness of many of the issues. Ben's words have inspired me to confront the risky nature of social action by putting Jesus at the forefront of my desire to pursue justice. To his second point, I tend to struggle with the apparent tension between proclaiming the word and 'doing' what the word calls for. Ben approaches this by recognizing the inherent goodness for both approaches and then persuasively challenges the reader to transcend any tension. His clear and compassionate writing style really drives home the points he is making. Overall, this book emanates so much hope for not only young Christians, but all Christians who are attempting to deal with the nuances of our modern world. I highly recommend it and I plan to continue reading it devotionally.

Interweaving biblical understandings and personal experiences, Lowe has done excellent work in expressing the ways in which we can sustain our social action. Being vulnerable by sharing some of the highs and lows of his years as an activist, Lowe's writing is personal and powerful. This book is

for everyone from college students trying to decipher their calling to pastors and para-church professionals who have been in ministry for a long time - essentially anyone who is interested in how to live out their Christian witness and not become burned out by doing so. My favorite line from the book reads, "But getting results is ultimately not the first priority in our social action - being faithful is."

Lowe's book is a wonderful exhortation from one who has really been in the trenches. Full of engaging stories of the highs and lows of social action, it is both a powerful introduction and challenge to those seeking to first become involved in social action, and an encouragement to those involved for years. Lowe has written a simple but profound guide to seeking justice well, avoiding burnout, and putting faithfulness first. If you are seeking to follow God's call to social action, or considering leaving that work because you are weary, this is a great book to pick up and engage with.

I'm grateful for this book's exhortation to do good for the long haul and it's practical suggestions on how to actually do so. Ben provides a very practical framework based on his own lived experience of doing good. I appreciate the holistic vision he provides for Christian mission in a broken and fragmented world.

Ben Lowe's stories are inspiring to Christians who have been slogging through the fight for justice for years and may feel that their vocations could use an energy boost. This may be considered a manual (though it reads much easier than most) for those who struggle to see the full results of their work. It's practical without being superficial and gives a solid biblical perspective without coming off as preachy. This text has encouraged me and will undoubtedly give countless others the hope and motivation to continue to serve God as he has called them.

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