

## The Work of the Light

inspired from Genesis 2:15, Exodus 20:9, John 5:17 and 9:4, Acts 20:33-35, and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12

Raymond wiped the dust from his hands and leaned against the half-built community greenhouse, watching the late afternoon sun filter through its skeletal frame. The structure stood in the middle of a once-abandoned lot cracked concrete now softened with soil, seedlings, and hope.

Flint climbed down from a ladder, a toolbelt clanking at his hips. “Man,” Flint said, grinning, “this place looked like a wasteland three months ago. Now look at it.”

Raymond nodded, his eyes scanning every beam. “We were put here for this,” he said quietly. “To tend something. To build something meaningful.”

Flint raised an eyebrow. “You and your deep thoughts.”

Raymond chuckled. “I’m serious, think about it, work isn’t just survival, It’s purpose.”

April approached from the far end, carrying a crate of young plants. “And it’s exhausting,” she added, setting the crate down with a sigh. “But worth it.”



### A Calling to Tend

Raymond had always believed work was sacred, even before this project. Years earlier, he'd taken whatever jobs he could find: construction, sanitation, warehouse work, not glamorous, but he carried himself with quiet conviction.

“There’s dignity in it,” he would tell anyone who complained. “We’re meant to take care of what’s been placed in our hands.”

When the city granted permission to revive the abandoned lot, Raymond was the first to volunteer. He saw more than broken ground, he saw a garden waiting to be restored.

“Why this place?” April had asked him on the first day.

“Because it needs tending,” Raymond replied. “And so do we.”

### Six Days of Work

The team worked tirelessly six days a week, often from sunrise to sunset.

Flint once joked, leaning on his shovel, “You ever think about taking a break, Raymond?”

Raymond smiled. “Work has its rhythm... rest has its time... but while the light is here, we use it.”

April nodded thoughtfully. “You always say that.”

“Because it’s true,” Raymond said. “We won’t always have this chance or this moment, this energy, this opportunity.”

They all paused, looking at the soil beneath their feet as if it were more than dirt.



### Work with Purpose

Not everyone shared their zeal.

One afternoon, a group of young men lingered nearby, watching but never helping. They’d come often leaning against the fence, scrolling through phones, occasionally mocking the effort.

“Why work so hard?” one of them called out. “The city should pay someone else to do that.”

Raymond walked over, wiping sweat from his brow.

“No one forced us,” he said calmly. “We chose to build this.”

“Why?” another asked.

“So that people can eat... so kids can learn... so this place becomes life instead of decay.”

The group shrugged.

“Sounds like a lot of effort,” one muttered.

Raymond looked at them steadily. “It is. And that’s the point.”

### **Leading by Example**

The next morning, Raymond arrived before everyone else. He began clearing debris, moving stones, and preparing soil.

Flint and April showed up soon after.

“You’re here early again,” Flint said.

Raymond smiled. “I wouldn’t ask others to do what I won’t do myself.”

April crossed her arms playfully. “You’re making the rest of us look bad.”

“Not at all,” Raymond replied. “Just doing my part.”

By the end of the week, something unexpected happened. One of the young men from the fence showed up.

“Got an extra shovel?” he asked awkwardly.

Raymond handed him one without hesitation. “Plenty.”

### **The Joy of Giving**

The greenhouse was completed by early autumn. Rows of vegetables flourished with tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, and herbs. The once barren lot now overflowed with life.

They held a small opening, inviting the neighborhood.

An elderly woman approached Raymond, holding a small basket.

“I haven’t had fresh vegetables like this in years,” she said, her voice trembling. “Thank you.”

Raymond shook his head gently. “Take what you need.”

April leaned in. “We should start selling some of this produce,” she whispered. “We could make money, expand.”

Raymond considered it. “Maybe someday. But first, this belongs to the community.”

Flint smiled. “You really believe it’s better to give than to take, don’t you?”

Raymond nodded. “It’s not just better. It’s fuller!”

### **A Lesson in Responsibility**

Not everyone who joined stayed committed. Some would come, take produce, and leave without helping.

Flint grew frustrated. “They should at least contribute something.”

Raymond didn’t disagree.

“Everyone should carry their weight,” he said. “Not because we demand it, but because it strengthens them.”

The next day, Raymond posted a simple sign:

***“All are welcome. All are invited to help.”***

April read it and smiled. “No rules, just an invitation.”

“Exactly,” Raymond said. “Work teaches responsibility better than lectures ever could.”

### **Work Without Ceasing**

Months passed! The garden thrived through seasons each one bringing new challenges, new growth.

One evening as they closed, Flint asked, “Do you ever feel like stopping?”

Raymond looked out over the garden, glowing softly in the sunset.

“No,” he said. “Because the work isn’t just about the garden.”

April tilted her head. “What do you mean?”

“It’s about what it grows in us,” Raymond replied. “Discipline, generosity, purpose. We’re not just building this place, we’re becoming something through it.”



## The Light Remains

Years later, the garden would expand into a full community center. Schools would visit, families would gather making the once-forgotten lot would become a place of life, learning, and connection.

And at the center of it all stood a simple principle Raymond lived by:

Work isn't a burden-it's a calling.

One evening, as they locked the gates, April looked at Raymond.

“You think this will last?”

Raymond smiled, placing his hand on the fence they once built from scratch.

“As long as there are people willing to work, to give, and to care,” he said, “the light will never go out.”

Flint chuckled. “And I guess that means we're not done yet.”

Raymond laughed softly.

“We never are.”