

## Bearing Another's Burdens

Booker T. Washington (1856 – 1915) was an American educator, author, orator and political leader. He was the dominant figure in the African American community in the United States from 1890 to 1915. Born into slavery to a white father and a slave mother in a rural area in southwestern Virginia, he worked in a variety of manual jobs before making his way to Hampton Roads seeking an education. After working his way through what is now Hampton University and attending college at Wayland Seminary, he went on to become the first leader of the new Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881.

Washington gained access to top national leaders in politics, philanthropy and education. His efforts included cooperating with white people and enlisting the support of wealthy philanthropists, which helped raise funds to establish and operate thousands of small community schools and institutions of higher education for the betterment of blacks throughout the South, work that continued for many years after his death.

In his autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, Washington recalled a beautiful incident of an older brother's love. He said the shirts worn on his plantation by the slaves were made of a rough, bristly, inexpensive flax fiber. As a young boy, the garment was so abrasive to his tender, sensitive skin that it caused him a great deal of pain and discomfort.

His older brother, moved by his brother's suffering, would wear Booker's new shirts until they were broken in and smoother to the touch. Booker said it was one of the most striking acts of kindness he had experienced among his fellow slaves.

What a wonderful illustration of "bearing one another's burdens," which we are admonished to do in Galatians 6:20.

Such kindness is the rule – and must be – daily in the work of Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home as we care for those entrusted to us.

– Beecher Hunter