



God created the human heart in a very special way. Within each of us is a “seeker.” We seek for something, for more, for better, for truth. It is the way God designed us to be. Yet, this part of us that is directed by free will can easily be misdirected. People who are designed to seek God — to recognize that peace and security come from God — often look for it from other sources and in other places. Our culture promises that the right job, person, home, activities and enough money will give us that security and enjoyment in life. People can spend a lifetime following this dream.

How might seeking God and His righteousness change your priorities? What are the ways that a generous nature changes those priorities?

Jesus gives an unlikely command, “Do not be anxious!” Seeking God first is the only way to keep this command!

GPS for Families

GrowPrayStudy.org/family

Teach generosity to your children:

Talk openly with your kids about why you give your time and resources to others and what your gifts, along with others, are accomplishing. Help them understand the sacrifice in giving, not to induce pride but to help them understand that generosity is important enough to make those sacrifices.

Explain the difference between “wants” and “needs.” We may want a lot of things, but we only need a few. Get in the habit of using the right language in your home to distinguish the difference. Explain that we give to meet other’s needs, and we may sacrifice our own wants.

Develop friendships with other families who are mutually generous. Offer babysitting when parents are stressed or sick. Share a meal or offer carpooling to help when time is in short supply. Be a good neighbor and then graciously accept their generosity in return. Modeling these giving relationships as part of everyday life will teach children how to operate in our daily lives.

Serve as a family on mission trips or with local ministries. Pick a neighbor who needs help with yard work or minor repairs, then pitch in as a family to help. You will have fun with your family and get to see the fruits of your labor immediately.

Don’t forget that generosity always starts with a relationship. So, give your time, ears and heart to those in need and your family as well.

MESSAGE

“How does God Use Generosity to Change Us?”

SCRIPTURE

Luke 12:13-22

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- The guy focused on the wrong problem.
 - The guy took credit where credit wasn’t due.
 - The guy was extremely shortsighted.
1. The guy was making a lot of bad choices due to bad priorities. He thought that comfort was the highest good and that stuff somehow gave him control of his future. It didn’t.
 2. The guy’s focus was on himself and today, not on God and eternity.
 3. Somehow the guy thought that God did not care what he did or didn’t do with his stuff.
 4. Jesus tells this story not as judgment and condemnation but out of love for the listener, seeking to help them live better and be better.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Almighty God, we want to thank you for the many ways you are generous with us. You provide in great and faithful abundance. You forgive with amazing grace. You walk by our side in gentleness and power. You save us, help us, guide us and fill us with hope. We are grateful. May the spirit of generosity represented by your gift of Jesus Christ be reflected in us. All glory and honor is yours. Amen.

In the letter to Philippi, Paul is giving thanks to the church for their financial generosity. In sacrificial ways, they had given above and beyond to Christ's cause. There are several principles the Bible teaches in this important Bible book:

There is a sharing in giving and receiving that reflects a partnership with God. Giving is part of a relationship with God and others. A gift given to God results in a different kind of profit for the giver. A generous gift is a fragrant aroma to God and pleases God. God promises to supply every need for those who live in generosity.

Why do you think the Bible teaches that there is a blessing in generosity?

What are the ways we might consider giving as an act of faith and trust in God?

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The book of Hebrews was written during a chaotic time in the life of the Church. The persecution of the early Church had been escalating to the point that for some it was easier to leave the Christian faith than it was to continue what had become increasingly difficult. The writer is seeking to encourage the believer to continue the Christian journey despite its sacrifices and offers a few pointers as to the how-to's. Much of Hebrews is about the significance of Jesus Christ and not quitting.

In a culture that points in every direction, how difficult is it to keep one's eyes on Jesus? Can Jesus not only be the one we believe in and follow but also an inspiration to not give up?

How can giving connect us with Jesus, inspire the giver and help keep us on track?

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Love not reflected in respect and behavior is not love. This phrase might be a good paraphrase of this passage from 1 John — respect for God should be reflected in a love-motivated behavior that blesses God and others. Somehow the love God has for us is not completed until it is acted on, acted on by those who have benefited from the love of God.

One of the ways that generosity turns the soul of humanity is a refocus of life. The culture is one that centers in the person, the needs, wants and desires of that person. Christianity centers in Christ, the will, plan and purpose of God in Jesus Christ, a life changed by an encounter with a loving God who challenges that life to be centered in generosity.

How is Christ-centered living connected with generous behavior? How can generous actions change one's soul?

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These two verses teach a core principle that change the focus of the life of those who accept them, and even more when we accept the one who teaches them and lived them out as the most generous person who ever lived, Jesus Christ. Everything good, every perfect gift, all that matters is from above, comes from God, the "Father of Lights" (verse 17).

When we live by the idea that anything belongs to us, even our own lives, then we are basing life on a misconception. Life that is an abundant life is one built upon the truth (Jesus said the truth shall set you free). What is true is that everything we are, own, will be and ever will have is a gift of a generous God.

If I live like I believe this is truth, what must I change?

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