

WEEK TWO

# DAY ONE

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The Miracle of a  
Generous Heart  
Daily Devotionals

Prepared by: Gene Blair  
for October 11, 2021

\*Key thoughts in this devotional were  
taken in part from Chapter 2 of *The  
Pursuit of God, The Human Thirst for the  
Divine*, by A. W. Tozer. Reprinted 2013.

## THE BLESSEDNESS OF POSSESSING NOTHING

**"For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" I Corinthians 4:7**

I remember an unhappy moment in my life, years ago. I'd parked my immaculate King Ranch F150 (5 years old but only 33K miles!) in the old sloping Kroger parking lot, far from other vehicles. With my groceries in place, I got in. Then I saw it: a shopping cart headed downhill at my truck! I couldn't get out in time; a split second later it hit my truck going about 150 miles per hour. It left not a ding, but a DENT! I stared in disbelief. What had I ever done to deserve this? How could life be so cruel?

I then smiled sheepishly, as I remembered the book I had just read *The Pursuit of God* by A. W. Tozer. Chapter 2 is intriguingly entitled *The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing*. God gives us many things. In fact, He gives us everything. As I Corinthians 4:7 says, "What do you have that you did not receive?" My truck had gone from God's gift to a possession. It assumed more value, although it was still just a "thing." It would never be as valuable as say, a person, or even a noble thought, like liberty. Really it was just transportation from point A to B.

Clearly, I over-valued my pick-up. Conversely, I remember a new Christian who was proud of his vintage Mustang. But when he had to choose between the Mustang and a new church building, he sold it and donated the money to the building fund. He was able to separate himself from a gift before it became a possession. The sad truth is that God's gifts can easily take the place of God Himself in our lives, if we submit to the tyranny of things. Self-denial is the weapon of choice against possessiveness. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24) In each of us there is a weakness: possessiveness. However, this enemy can be destroyed by self-denial and the cross. The "poor in spirit" are no longer slaves to the tyranny of owning things. In truth, they possess all things - the kingdom of heaven.

Abraham was willing to give up Isaac, his most prized possession, because Abraham's first allegiance was to God rather than family. And Job acknowledged that he had everything, but possessed nothing. Do we use God's gifts to glorify Him and help others, or are we "possessed" by our things? God gives each of us unique gifts and talents. He also provides us with opportunities to demonstrate that we love Him more than any "thing" He has created. Secure in our love for Him and His love for us, and freed from loving our possessions, it will take a lot more than a speeding shopping cart to ruin our day.

- **Prayer Challenge:** What things come between you and your Savior? Ask God to reorder your priorities and sort out your possessions.

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Prepared by: Kathy Cleere  
for October 12, 2021

## GIVING SERVANTS

**“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)**

Are there people in your life who appear happiest when they are giving to others? They are the first ones to offer help when there is a need. They have servants' hearts. They are generous with their time, their resources (both monetary and non-monetary), and their God-given abilities. They give cheerfully, never acting like their service is a burden. I married into a family of giving servants. My father-in-law was the most generous man I knew. As a result of his example, my husband has a generous servant's heart. Now, I see my sons following the same example. God gave His Son to die on the cross for us, and that sets the example for God's people to be sacrificially generous.

Living through two bouts of cancer, I have been on the receiving end of immense generosity. People volunteered to drive me to cancer treatments; they provided food; they helped with childcare (my sons were ages two and six the first time I was diagnosed); they even set up an account at a gas station to help pay for gasoline as I travelled back and forth for cancer treatments. As a result, I have tried to pay that kindness forward to others. I have always found that if you are generous and serve others cheerfully, generosity returns to you. You will be enriched and blessed by giving and receiving. If you plant the seeds of generosity, you will reap the blessings! God loves a cheerful giver!

WEEK TWO

# DAY THREE

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Prepared by: Holly McMichael  
for October 13, 2021

## WHEN YOUR ALL IS IN THE RIGHT HANDS

**"One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten." John 6:8-13**

What a scene. Imagine the look of doubt on Andrew's face as he tells Jesus about 5 loaves and 2 fish while staring at the immense crowd. Imagine the look Jesus gives the unnamed boy who gave all he had. Imagine the trust in the boy's eyes; he knew his small gift would make a big difference when he placed it in the right hands. The boy's small everything became a miracle in the hands of Jesus, for Jesus fed everyone "as much as they wanted."

What a scene afterward. I imagine the 12 disciples had 12 baskets for a reason. Jesus didn't just have a miracle planned; he had a lesson for the disciples, a kinesthetic lesson in faith, bending and picking up piece after piece and filling up a heavy basket to carry back to the feet of Jesus. Their legs and backs probably felt the strain the next morning. He was preparing them. Jesus knew that the weight of the first church would be on the backs and legs of these men, too. He knew that He would no longer be physically present with them when things got rough for the first church. He knew they would need stamina to boldly serve and give abundantly. As He prepared them, He asked them to place their lives in His hands, so He could change the world through them. Generous lessons that day from a generous God. Generous lessons still today.

Consider how God has been generous to you. What do you need to place in His hands, so He can use you in this generation?

WEEK TWO

# DAY FOUR

The Miracle of a  
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Daily Devotionals

Prepared by: Chris Hoover  
for October 14, 2021

## C.S. LEWIS & GENEROSITY

Hands down, my favorite author is C. S. Lewis. His opinions on why we must have good theology AND imagination speak straight into my artistic heart. About 5 years ago, I began collecting vintage Lewis books; now they are on the list of “things you grab if your house catches on fire”.

With that being said, it was natural for me to seek C. S. Lewis’ thoughts on generosity. This was the first quote from my investigation:

**“I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. If our giving habits do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we want to do but cannot do because our giving expenditures exclude them.”**

**-CS Lewis, Mere Christianity**

Regarding money, I confess a different phrase may be true for my life. It would be something like, “What’s the least acceptable amount I can give?” To be clear, my enemy is not so much greed as it is resourcefulness. I pride myself in being resourceful, which means I don’t really like the words like ‘extravagant’ or ‘pinch’. In my work as a minister, I count and calculate to save the church money. I will put in extra hours and be frugal in my purchases. So what does it say about me that I will sacrifice time but struggle to give away my resources with a cheerful heart?

Are you like me? If so, what can we do?

- Make a list of where you are generous. For many of us, we will lean to the side of ‘giving more’ in our service to the church, or in parenting or our business. But this is not always so with money. Begin to be curious about what it would take to add money to your list of generosity.
- Be honest. Acknowledge that thoughts about money bring anxiety and fear. Begin to envision what it would look like to depend on Christ as not only our resource for money, but also your resource for peace, joy, love, and kindness.

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# DAY FIVE

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Prepared by: Luke Rogers  
for October 15, 2021

## OBEDIENCE OR SACRIFICE

**Read 1 Samuel 13:5-14 and 15:1-23**

Saul was the first king of Israel, and what a king he was! He is described as everything that the Hebrews desired in a king, and he quickly established himself as a military leader. The episodes in the readings above are the beginning of Saul's fall from leadership in Israel. Eventually, David would replace Saul as king. As we continue in our series, what can we learn about generosity from these passages?

Saul was instructed to make a sacrifice with God's prophet Samuel and then to go to war in the Lord's timing. Instead, he offered a sacrifice alone to gain God's favor as the Philistines were closing in on Israel. While directly disobeying the Lord, Saul still attempted to win God's favor.

Later, Saul was instructed to go to war in order to achieve God's purposes alone. He was to take no spoils of war. In this way, Israel would have publicly established itself as a nation for God's will. Destroying everything would have proven that Israel was in fact after no selfish gain. Their failure to do this was actually a failure to worship God.

God values obedience over sacrifice. Saul used sacrifice for selfish reasons. He believed that his sacrifices were more pleasing to God than his obedience. In fact, the exact opposite is the truth. Saul thought too little of God. He saw God as a good-luck charm that blesses one's personal endeavors. He saw God as someone that "needs" to receive offerings to be pleased. He failed to see that everything he could ever sacrifice already belonged to God! All things are God's things. They must be seen and used in the ways which God instructs. We must not value success, security, or the items of wealth more than we value God's will. We must obey God when He gives us instructions concerning these things.

In our context, we must remember that the things we give to God (time, tithe, offerings, service to others, service to the church) are not an act of charity from us to God, but are an act of obedience. "Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you." (Mt.5:42). God has commanded us to give freely to one another. This is why we must be prayerful and intentional with the things we give to God, His church, and the world. God values obedience over sacrifice.

**Pray: What is God leading you to do with your time, talent, and treasure? Are you serving God & others for any reason other than simply loving and obeying God? Ask God to reveal to you the condition of your heart.**



WEEK TWO

# DAY SIX

The Miracle of a  
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Prepared by: Jake Giroux  
for October 16, 2021

## LASTING JOY OF A GENEROUS HEART

**"The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing."  
Proverbs 10:28**

Think about something in the past that you have done for someone or given to someone very intentionally. If you put effort into this deed, I would bet that the results for you and whomever you served was JOY. Now, even looking back at said deed, I would bet you find pride and continued happiness that you were able to give generously and intentionally to someone either by way of time or resources.

Now think about a time when you have been filled with need or desires. If those needs/desires were for worldly things, think for a moment about how that played out. If you received what you wanted, did you feel JOY? Did that JOY last? Did you want more? If you didn't receive what you wanted, how did you feel? Did you experience anger?

Now... I am not trying to say that to have personal desires and wants is wicked, but I do think that when our desires and intentions are aligned with God's plan, the result is lasting JOY. I firmly believe that God's, very simply, plan is for us to love each other at its core. So when we are giving GENEROUSLY of our time, efforts, resources to others we are able to lavishly experience the JOY that God has intended for us. Conversely, when we are seeking things of our own we begin to walk away from freely giving to those around us.

For me, when I think back on the times I was intentional about serving my wife or children by being present, I see almost exclusively JOY; JOY from connection to each other; JOY from a known and palpable love in those moments; JOY from experiencing what God intended for us as His creation.

**Think and Pray on what God would have you GENEROUSLY give back to His kingdom, whether that be a GENEROUS amount of your time and effort invested into the church, someone in your 5 perhaps, or another avenue. Or that may mean being intentionally and prayerfully GENEROUS to the church with resources. Whatever the case may be for you, pray to God to show you how He would lead you to be generous so that He may in turn bless you with overwhelming joy.**