

How We Grow: Implementing the Spiritual Disciplines

Week 3 - Generosity

March 31, 2024

Additional Teaching Notes

Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. - Deuteronomy 15:10

There's a difference between giving and generosity. Generosity is not just giving, but it's changing the way you think about managing your resources.

Proverbs 11:24 says "One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty."

The reason we should be generous is simple: nothing really belongs to us anyways. Every single thing we have belongs to God. God was generous from the beginning of time by creating us, providing for us, loving us, and saving us.

As God created the universe and all within it - he appointed us, His greatest creation, to rule over it. In turn, he provides for us our daily needs. He does this because He is a generous God.

Jesus taught a whole lot about money and possessions. He warned us about these things, to be on guard against desiring more and more, because our life does not consist in the abundance of possessions. After all, what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

The problem tends to be not with the money, or our riches. It's the attitude we have about money. It is really challenging at times to be happy and content with what we have.

Richard Foster says "Money is an effective way of showing our love to God because it is so much a part of us. One economist put it this way: 'Money as a form of power is so intimately related to the possessor that one cannot consistently give money without giving self.' In a sense, money is coined personality, so tied to who we are that when we give it we are giving ourselves. We sing - Take my life and let it be, consecrated, Lord, to Thee - But we must flesh out that consecration in specific ways, which is why the next line of the hymn says, 'Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold.'" We consecrate ourselves by consecrating our money."

It can be scary to think about giving up our money to help others. What if I run out? What if I need it? This money provides security for me! But again, if we want to truly obey Jesus - he says "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" in Luke 9:23.

It can be downright freeing to give and give generously. Giving freely and generously releases the power that money has on us all. And it's not just money - we give lots of things including money, but also we give of our time, and we give of our talents.

You may possess a certain set of skills that can greatly benefit others. These aren't necessarily skills that are so fine tuned that no one else could achieve them. But simply you may have the ability and the time to cut someone's lawn, and they don't have those same things. So by giving of your time to do that for someone who can't, you're giving more than you can imagine to that person.