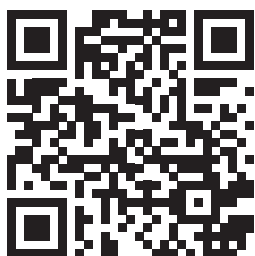




Our vision is to ignite a movement of authentic followers of Christ by reaching 1000 people with the gospel and releasing 200 equipped leaders from the next generation for Church leadership by 2028.

For more information about Ignite and our path for sustaining, growing, and expanding our church's ability to impact the world with the gospel, please visit WhitesburgBaptist.org/Ignite.



Day 1: I Die Daily

**“And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’”
Luke 9:23 (NASB95)**

Tom Elliff is the former President of the International Mission Board for the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Elliff was asked to lead a Kingdom Families Conference for a group of 150 Southern Baptist Missionaries in Thailand. Just before he was to speak, the regional director for the group stood up and said, “By the way folks, if you haven’t done this, go by the office and give us a hair sample, a skin sample, and your fingerprints.” Dr. Elliff thought: “No one seemed disturbed by his request but me. It bothered me because I knew what he was asking for. He was saying you folks are working in an area where you may very well lose your lives. You are giving your lives so that people can come to know Jesus as their Savior. If something were to happen to you, we want to be able to identify you.”

How many times have you been asked to do that? When we read Jesus’ words from Luke 9:23, the idea of “dying daily” comes into sharper focus when we think of these missionaries. The mention of a cross by a Jewish rabbi would have been shocking to first-century Jews. The cross was a public humiliation that always represented death. Jesus meant that something must die before we can live. We must die to ourselves, our rights, and our desire to be lord over our own lives, we must die daily.

•Scripture Reading: Philippians 2:8-12; 1 John 3:16-19; & 1 Corinthians 15:31

•Prayer Focus: As you pray, ask the Father to cultivate in you a heart of self-sacrifice and total abandonment to Christ. Ask the Father to show you anything in your life that you value and place greater importance in than your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Day 2: Grace Made Visible

**“Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia.”
2 Corinthians 8:1 (NASB95)**

That little phrase “grace made visible” is from an article that was written by Jonathan Edwards, a pastor, during the First Great Awakening in the early to mid-1700s in colonial life. During that time, the Holy Spirit poured Himself out in profound ways and thousands of men and women became believers and followers of Jesus Christ. In fact, the Great Awakening shaped us as a nation. Edwards had written an article about the evidence of genuine religious affection to clarify the genuine from the false. In his article he wrote, “Here is how you can see a man or woman who has legitimately experienced grace.” In other words, here is how grace is made visible. Paul, writing to the church in Corinth said that grace is made visible when God’s people live generously (2 Corinthians 8:1). Studying 2 Corinthians 8 we learn how to live a generous life inspired by God’s love. As Tim Keller once said, “According to the Bible, generosity is not less than financial giving, but it’s a lot more. It is possible to be technically generous with money and not radically generous with your whole soul.”

“It is well known that the apostle Paul organized a collection from the Greek churches of Achaia and Macedonia for the benefit of the impoverished churches of Judea. It may seem extraordinary that he should have devoted so much space in his letters to this mundane matter, referring to it in Romans 15, 1 Corinthians 16, and 2 Corinthians 8-9. But Paul did not see it as a mundane matter. On the contrary he saw it as relating to the grace of God, the cross of Christ, and the unity of the Holy Spirit. In fact, it is very moving to grasp this combination of profound Trinitarian theology and practical common sense.” -*John Stott*

How is God’s grace being manifest in your life through generosity? A few years ago, a well-known pastor asked his congregation, “What would God do in us and through us if ALL TOGETHER we made the grace of tithing the floor on which we stood and the grace of overflowing liberality the ceiling over our heads?” Biblical generosity is a journey, not a destination. In the gospels, one verse in every six deals with the topic of money. Sixteen of twenty-nine parables narrated by Christ speak of the Christian and his money. God’s desire is not to deprive you but to develop you.

•Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 8

•Prayer Focus: Pray for God’s grace to be the motivation for living a life of Biblical generosity. Ask God to help you grow in the grace of giving.

Day 3: Abounding

**“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”
2 Corinthians 8:9 (NASB95)**

As followers of Jesus, it is often easy to take for granted all that God has given us in Christ. I’m reminded of a story I read about Waylon Prendergast of Tampa, Florida.

Mr. Prendergast committed a spur-of-the-moment robbery while on his way home from a late-night drinking session. A very inebriated Mr. Prendergast forced his way into the house through an open upstairs window, filling a suitcase with cash and valuables before setting the living room on fire to cover his tracks. He then escaped through the back door and made his way home, chuckling all the way. Only as he turned the corner into his own street, however, and discovered three fire engines outside his house, did he realize that in his drunkenness he had, in fact, burgled and ignited his own property. His comment: “I had no idea I had so many valuable possessions.”

While we may not do anything quite like Mr. Prendergast did, there are times when Christians need to stop and reflect, coming to the same conclusion, “I had no idea I had so many valuable possessions.” Even beyond the physical blessings, there is so much that God has given us in Jesus Christ. As Paul wrote, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:3). God’s generosity toward us should overwhelm us with gratitude that in turn results in an “abounding” life of generosity. Biblical generosity flows from a heart of gratitude. In Hebrew, the word “generosity” literally means to saturate with water, which is a symbol of life. In other words, “to overflow in a way that brings life to people.”

•Scripture Reading: 1 Chronicles 29:14; Proverbs 11:25; & 1 Timothy 6:18

•Prayer Focus: Ask the Lord to give you a heart of gratitude. List the many ways God has blessed you physically, financially, and spiritually. Prayerfully ask that your life will “abound” in Biblical generosity.

Day 4: The Adventure of Grace

“Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NASB95)

“Do you trust me?” This is a big question from God that we must answer in every area of life. Trusting God and walking by faith is the most joyful, adventurous, and eternally rewarding path we can follow. In 2 Cor. 9:1-10, Paul invited the Corinthians to an adventure, a spiritual journey of trust and faithfulness. As we long to experience the abundance of the Christian life, our challenge is: Don’t miss the opportunity to grow spiritually by exercising trust and faithfulness to God. Spiritual growth is the process of becoming more and more like Jesus Christ. Are you aware there is a connection between generosity and spiritual growth? In 2 Cor. 9, Paul makes that connection.

“Now, what does it mean to sow sparingly? It means to give in a hesitating, restrained way—a stingy, miserly, tightfisted, parsimonious way. A farmer who sows his seed sparingly sows his seed as if he wants to have seed left over to spare. So picture it. It’s springtime. Farmer James has a large field, a field whose soil he’s plowed and tilled in preparation for planting season. He’s neatly organized furrows of soil that are ready to receive the seed for his crops. And so he grabs his seed bag, filled to the brim with seed, hoists it up onto his shoulder, and heads out into his field to sow. And he gets out there, and he finds the row he wants to start in, and he reaches into his seed bag. And between his thumb and his index finger, he pinches out three or four seeds, and he carefully and gently places them into the furrow like he’s trying not to crack an eggshell! And then he walks a few steps, reaches into his seed bag, pinches out another couple of seeds, and lays them down. Farmer James is sowing sparingly—stingily, tightfistedly. And come harvest time, what’s Farmer James’s crop going to look like? Well, it’s not going to look like much at all! He’s not going to have any trouble gathering his entire crop all by himself. Why? Because he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. You see, the problem with Farmer James is that he thinks that by casting his seed into the ground he’s parting with it forever.” -*Mike Riccardi*

God issues you a challenge. God says, “If you will demonstrate that you trust me to supply all of your needs, and if you will be committed to the task for which I have called you, I will increase your spiritual harvest.”

•**Scripture Reading:** 2 Corinthians 9:1-10; 2 Peter 1:3-8; & Proverbs 3:9-10

•**Prayer Focus:** As you pray, reflect on God’s numerous gifts to you. Remind yourself of His promise to reward generosity. Ask the Father, “Am I becoming more or less generous as I grow older and more mature in Christ?”

Day 5: Open Handed

“You will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.”

2 Corinthians 9:11 (NASB95)

“I’ve been going to professional baseball games and trying to get a souvenir baseball as far back as I can remember. A foul ball, a home run ball, or even a batting practice ball—anything would do. I was taking in batting practice for the St. Louis Cardinals, and as I watched Mark McGwire and his teammates, I got to know a five-year-old boy who was also trying to get a ball. His name was James. He tried hard to pronounce the players’ names as he politely asked for a ball: “Mr. Timwin (Timlin), can I have a ball, please?” Before I knew it, my mission became getting a ball for James. For about 20 minutes, I told him the names of the players who had a ball near the fence we stood behind, and the players turned and smiled as James tried to say their names. Still, no ball. Finally I told James he could have my ball if I caught one (I had been unsuccessful in catching a ball for almost 28 years, so that felt like a safe promise). I wouldn’t be telling this story if you didn’t know what happened five minutes later. I caught a ball, and yes, I gave it to James. I wonder how often God waits to give us something until we are willing to give it away?” -*Mike Herman*

“One cannot read 2 Corinthians 8-9 without gaining a new attitude toward giving. In the Christian life, there is no such thing as ‘material’ and ‘spiritual.’ All that we have comes from God, and all that we have must be used for spiritual ends. Paul teaches that giving is not a burden but a blessing. He shows us that true Christian giving enriches the life and opens the fountains of God’s blessings. Giving is a grace (8:1, 6-7, 9, 19; 9:8 and 14), and the Christian who understands something of grace will understand how to give.” -*Warren Wiersbe*

Paul is reminding the Corinthians to have a proper perspective on their prosperity. Once the Corinthians had the proper perspective on their prosperity, they then could better understand how God intends to use their prosperity for His glory. God has blessed you so that you in turn can be a blessing to others, and to the Lord.

•**Scripture Reading:** 2 Corinthians 9:11-15 & Proverbs 3:9-10

•**Prayer Focus:** As we look forward to our MCP offering on September 10, prayerfully ask the Lord to make clear His will for your part in this offering. If you will simply live “open handed,” God will guide and direct you not just for this special offering, but also each and every day.



PRAYER GUIDE
by Pastor Darryl Craft
July 10-14, 2023

WHITESBURG
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