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**Adult
Bible Study
in
Simplified
English**

**Study
Guide**

WRITER
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**Living Generously
Because of Jesus**

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Study Guide

Living Generously Because of Jesus

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Introduction

Living Generously Because of Jesus

The Bible is our book of truth and shows us how to live as Christians. God in His loving-favor gave it to us that many might be guided by His wisdom, promises and commands. As we live our lives on earth each day and look forward to life with Him that lasts forever, we want and need to know how to follow the path He wants for us.

Our generous God has given so much to each of us as we have need, He wants us to have the joy of sharing, caring and loving one another and others in need. He wants that for us not from us. This is His will for our Christian life, each day, in each situation, and to any who have need.

The great apostles and men of faith in the Old Testament help us learn how we can live generously in all parts of our life. We can live generously in serving others, obeying God, and following the example of Jesus. David, Peter, Paul, James and John all help us find the path to living generously because of Jesus. He is the One who gave all there was to give for each of us.

We start with God's loving-favor. We learn from examples that encourage and those that warn. Lastly, we find that we can live generously in many ways. Let's learn how to find the joy of living generously in our Christian lives and live it each day and in every way!

About the Writer

A teacher by profession both in public and private school settings, Bobette Boyd served as Psychological Coordinator for Dallas County Superintendent's Office. Upon retirement as owner and administrator of a private school and special needs tutoring service, she began teaching English as a Second Language about eight years ago. She currently writes and teaches International Ladies Bible Study for Beginners in Simplified English at Prestonwood Baptist Church in addition to ESL. Bobette and her husband, Dick, live in Frisco, Texas, where she is blessed with three grown daughters, two sons-in-law and four grandchildren. She also enjoys five stepdaughters, four stepsons-in-law and nine stepgrandchildren.

Overview

Living Generously Because of Jesus

Unit 1: Start with God's Loving-Favor

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Word List

Unit 1

Lesson 1

creator: God who made the heaven and earth and all that is in it.

Deity: God, a divine being, the Supreme Being

divine: of or like God, coming from God, sacred

eternal: without a beginning or end; endless

foundation: at the bottom, the base on which something sits

generations: people born and living about the same time; about the same age

sacrifice, sacrificial: offering of an animal, plant, human life or anything of value for the purpose of pleasing God

Lesson 2

concern: to care about someone or something

events: something that happens

lean: to rest against or use for support.

patience: quiet, waiting when you may want something to happen in a hurry

protection: to keep safe from being hurt

timing: the time that something happens; now, later, before, etc.

trusted: to have hope, honor, faith in God who you can depend on

Lesson 3

blamed: to find fault with someone, it was their error or mistake.

eternity: life that lasts forever

obedience: to obey, to do what we are told to do by those who have the power or the right to tell us

sadness: feeling unhappy, to have bad feelings or sorrow

Unit 2

Lesson 4

attitude: a way of acting or behaving that shows what a person is thinking and feeling

baptized: Water baptism is an act of faith to show that sins have been forgiven, a Christian ceremony

behavior: the way one acts and speaks, what one does

possessions: things we own like clothes, furniture, car, etc.

Lesson 5

disagreements: not to agree, to argue, not to see things the same

encourager: to be one who gives courage or hope to another, to lift up another in time of need, difficulty or misunderstanding.

private: not public, done in a way not to let others know it was done by you, not to get praise for one's self

submit: to give in to the power or control of another

support: to give help or to hold up during hard times

Lesson 6

famine: little or no food growing in a big area that causes starving

persecuted: to treat badly and cause great trouble to someone because of their race, religion, or belief

responsible: an event thing, or person in your control that you must answer for

situation: a condition caused by things that have happened

surrender: to give up; to yield to another person or group

tithe: one tenth of income given as an offering to God

Lesson 7

Christianity : the Christian life, its beliefs and practices

integrity: high moral values, honesty

passion: a powerful emotion or feeling such as love or hate

Word List

recognition: to be known by others in a special way or for a special reason

relationship: a bond between people such as marriage, family, ideas, etc.

solved: finding the answer to a problem or situation

Unit 3

Lesson 8

deserve: to have a right to; be one that out to get

inheritance: to get from a relative or friend as an heir

lavish: Something done with excess; very grand, wasteful, not necessary

media: Information and communication from a device like TV, newspapers, etc.

provide: to support in some way such as giving food, a home or other needed things

wealth: Money, what you have, own, posses or things you treasure

Lesson 9

barrier: anything that blocks the way or keeps one from going on or stops one.

contentment: being happy with what one has or is, not wanting more

financial: money or what is received as income and how it is spent

influence: the power to act on or affect others

predictable: knowing what the future may be because of past behavior or events

value: highly though of, wanted or desired

Lesson 10

blasphemous: not respecting or speaking against God, a very serious sin

imagine: to make a picture in one's mind; to think or guess

magnificent: lavish, rich, in a grand way

opportunity: a good chance of happening

personal: of one's own, private

pretenders: those who say untrue things about themselves or act in a false way

Unit 4

Lesson 11

abuses: treats in a way that is harmful, causes injury or is wrong; to speak unjustly, harshly or insultingly to someone

compassionate: to love, show sympathy, be understanding, and treat kindly

negative: to be against, bad, adverse, unfavorable, opposing

qualities: a person's traits, character, features; something that makes a person what he/she is

Lesson 12

counsel: to give advice, opinion or instruction to help the behavior of someone.

credit: honor or pride for some special action or ability

fellowship: friendly relationships shared in a community

outcome: a result, the way something comes to an end

rivalries: a struggle or conflict against one another such as in jealousy or pridefulness

Lesson 13

content: to be at ease, satisfied, happy, fulfilled, at peace

especially: before all else, important, above all

shameful: full of shame, disgraceful, dishonorable, immoral, mean, wicked

temptations: something that attracts or makes someone want to do something wrong

vulnerable: not able to defend oneself, unprotected, open to attack, weak

Memory Verses

Unit 1

Lesson 1

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God’s Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever.” (John 3:16)

Lesson 2

“The Lord is my light and the One Who saves me. Whom should I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom should I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1)

Lesson 3

“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. This is the first law. The second law is this: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself’ No other Law is greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)

Unit 2

Lesson 4

“You have shown me the ways of life. I will be full of joy when I see Your face.” (Acts 2:28)

Lesson 5

“When he got there and saw how good God had been to them, he was full of joy. He told them to be true and faithful to the Lord.” (Acts 11:23)

Lesson 6

“You are proving by this act of love what you are. They will give thanks to God for your gift to them and to others. This proves you obey the Good News of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 9:13)

Lesson 7

“In every way I showed you that by working hard like this we can help those who are

weak. We must remember what the Lord Jesus said, ‘We are more happy when we give than when we receive.’” (Acts 20:35)

Unit 3

Lesson 8

“Then Jesus said to them all, ‘Watch yourselves! Keep from wanting all kinds of things you should not have. A man’s life is not made up of things, even if he has many riches.’” (Luke 12:15)

Lesson 9

“They were very surprised and wondered, saying to themselves, ‘Then who can be saved from the punishment of sin? Jesus looked at them and said, ‘This cannot be done by men but God can do anything.’” (Mark 10:26-27)

Lesson 10

“Then the King will say, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.’” (Matthew 25:40)

Unit 4

Lesson 11

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Hebrew 13:8)

Lesson 12

“There are different kinds of gifts. But it is the same Holy Spirit Who gives them. There are different kinds of work to be done for Him. But the work is for the same Lord.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-5)

Lesson 13

“Tell them to do good and be rich in good works. They should give much to those in need and be ready to share.” (1 Timothy 6:18)



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

UNIT 1

Start with the Loving Favor of God

Lesson 1

Our Generous God

(Genesis 1:1)

(Psalm 100)

(John 3:16)

(2 Corinthians 8:8-9)

(Philippians 2:5-8)

(James 1:17-18)

Lesson 2

God Cares for You

(Psalm 23)

(Psalm 27:1-5)

(Psalm 116:1-9)

(Matthew 6:25-33)

Lesson 3

Obeying Our Generous God

(Psalm 116:12-19)

(Mark 8:34-37)

(2 Timothy 1:8-12)

Start with God's Loving-Favor

All begins with the loving favor of God. These three lessons bring to our minds that all starts, grows and ends with His loving favor. He made earth from darkness. He made all that people would need before He made people. He created us in His own likeness. Why did He do this?

God not only gave us life but He is always there for us in our lives. In His deep love, He wants us to live the best possible life. The apostles Paul, James and John help us know how we are to do that. Moses (Genesis) and David (Psalm) also help us understand our generous God. God cares for us and wants us to obey Him so that our life will be all that it can be. Don't we all want God's best? Sure we do!

It is only in His power and strength we are at our best, living generously in life and into life that lasts forever. Let's share the praises of King David as we come with a grateful heart to understand and thank Him for His generosity. Let's find out why and how our God is so generous in our lives and forever!



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Genesis 1:1; Psalm
100; John 3:16; 2
Corinthians 8:8-9;
Philippians 2:5-8;
James 1:17-18

Memory Verse

"For God so loved the
world that He gave
His only Son.

Whoever puts his trust
in God's Son will not
be lost but will have
life that lasts forever."

(John 3:16)

Word List

creator: God who
made the heaven and
earth and all that is in
it.

Deity: God, a divine
being, the Supreme
Being

divine: of or like God,
coming from God,
sacred

eternal: without a
beginning or end;
endless

foundation: at the
bottom, the base on
which something sits

Our Generous God

Our God was generous from the time of making the earth. His generosity gave hope and promise from the beginning. Why did He create the earth, heaven and people?

God's generosity can be seen in many ways. His worshippers honor and praise Him for His love and care. He blesses their families. He helps to make life better with His **divine** wisdom. No other can forgive sin and give **eternal** life through a **sacrificial** love. How did this happen? What does it mean that "He was rich" but "became poor" so that we might become rich?

How we think as we live our life makes a difference. Thinking like Jesus means not being so full of ourselves that there is no room for God's divine wisdom. Jesus became a servant, even though He was **Deity**. Why is this important for each of us?

Some think that God tempts us to make mistakes and then brings trials in our lives. James is very clear about the truth. What is that truth? The Word of God is truth and says much to help us understand about God. It helps us know His generosity in our lives each day. The Bible helps us understand the answers to all these questions.

Our Generous God Begins (Genesis 1:1)

Before there was a beginning, there was nothing but the **existence** of God. He has always been. God's Spirit was in the dark, black nothing. The dark, black nothing was filled with God.

generations: people born and living about the same time; about the same age

sacrifice, sacrificial: offering of an animal, plant, human life or anything of value for the purpose of pleasing God

Things to Think About

1. How do you see God's generosity in your life as you face trials and tests that are difficult?

2. There is no other than our God who can forgive sins and give eternal life through a sacrificial love. Do you believe this?

3. Jesus became a man at the will of the Father. He became a servant, even though He was Deity. Why is this important for each of us?

4. Do you think God tempts us and then is glad when He brings punishment to you? Why or why not?

Then there was the beginning. Like the birth of a child or the start of a new day, it was filled with hope and promise. God shows who He is as the **creator**. He creates everything. In the Old Testament the word “create” is used only of God and never as a human act.

God was generous in creating all that was needed for life. He didn't create *part* of what was needed, but *all* that was needed. Why did He do this? God is love. Love is a generous sharing of one's self with another person. God created the world to share His love with each of us. It was a generous gift from a loving and powerful God.

Praising Our God's Generous Love (Psalm 100)

The Psalms are praise through prayers, songs and poems. They give a joyful way to honor God, thanking Him for His great love as our creator and the one who cares for us. He is like a shepherd who cares for his sheep and protects them with his life. He leads them to fields where there is plenty of food and water. He takes care of the needs of his sheep. God generously gives us what we need. He made us and we are His people.

The love and kindness of the Lord is forever for believers. He is faithful to all who come after us as well. This is His promise for all the **generations**. God's love is with us always to all generations and it is not like any other love we know.

Our Generous God's Sacrificial Love (John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 8:8-9)

This love is not a feeling or a desire as it is with the world. It is a much deeper act of giving one life for someone else's life.

This is **sacrificial** love. God gave a **sacrifice** of His only Son, who died for the sins of each of us so we can have eternal life. Our God generously gives everyone the choice to be saved from sin and eternal death. It is an important choice to make.

We are to be generous too. We should share the great news of Jesus' love with everyone. When our daughter graduated from college, she really wanted a new car. She went to many car lots looking for the right car and found one. It was "perfect" in every way. She called and said she was sitting in the car. She didn't want someone else to buy this special car. We went and found our daughter smiling and sitting in a shiny black car. We bought the car. Our daughter called everyone she knew. She wanted to share her great news of the new car even with strangers who enjoyed sharing in her joy. The news of Jesus' love is better than news of a new car, be generous and tell others!

In 2 Corinthians the Apostle Paul tells of Jesus being "rich" but for us He becomes "poor" so that we might become "rich." The riches of Jesus were His rights as God. He put aside His power and glory

to come and live as a man. This was done so that we might become "rich." Does this have anything to do with money? No, we as believers become "rich" when we place our trust in Jesus, believing in Him as our Lord and Savior. Our "riches" are forgiveness of our sins and eternal life. Thank you Jesus!

Our Generous Savior and Servant (Philippians 2:5-8)

We all have times in our lives when a change in thinking would make life better. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he says to think like Jesus thought. He was humble and loved others. Christian love sees others as important, caring about the interests and needs of others.

Jesus is fully God. He gave up His important place. He put aside His **Deity** and became humble as a servant. He became human. He obeyed God in His life and in His death on the cross. It was the worst kind of death for anyone. All for us.

We are also called to be loving and generous to others. Only by praying for His help daily can we hope to think and live like Jesus. We all make mistakes, but our generous Savior hears our prayers for forgiveness and help. Prayer is the

foundation of the Christian life, ask Him, listen to Him, and wait on Him for the best path, the right path, for your life.

Live in the Light of Our Generous God (James 1:17-18)

The Bible often speaks of light as goodness and dark as evil. James is writing to Jewish believers to help them with their problems in living in evil cities. Some people may have thought God brought these trials to their lives. James shares God's truth, He brings *all* good and perfect things to us. This is true for us and will be true for generations to come. We know this because God doesn't change. God does this because He wants to for His children. We are generously created, loved and cared for by Him. Our generous God is so great!

Genesis 1

1 In the beginning God made from nothing the heavens and the earth.

Psalms 100

1 Call out with joy to the Lord, all the earth.
 2 Be glad as you serve the Lord. Come before Him with songs of joy.
 3 Know that the Lord is God. It is He Who made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His field.
 4 Go into His gates giving thanks and into His holy place with praise. Give thanks to Him. Honor His name.

5 For the Lord is good. His loving-kindness lasts forever. And He is faithful to all people and to all their children-to-come.

John 3

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever.

2 Corinthians 8

8 I am not saying that you must do this, but I have told you how others have helped. This is a way to prove how true your love is.

9 You know of the loving-favor shown by our Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, but He became poor for your good. In that way, because He became poor, you might become rich.

Philippians 2

5 Think as Christ Jesus thought.

6 Jesus has always been as God is. But He did not hold to His rights as God.

7 He put aside everything that belonged to Him and made Himself the same as a servant who is owned by someone. He became human by being born as a man.

8 After He became a man, He gave up His important place and obeyed by dying on a cross

James 1

17 Whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God. He is the One Who made all light. He does not change. No shadow is made by His turning.

18 He gave us our new lives through the truth of His Word only because He wanted to. We are the first children in His family.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalms 23; 27:1-5;
116:1-9;
Matthew 6:25-33

Memory Verse

"The Lord is my light
and the One Who
saves me. Whom
should I fear? The
Lord is the strength of
my life. Of whom
should I be afraid?"

(Psalm 27:1)

Word List

concern: to care about
someone or something

events: something that
happens

lean: to rest against or
use for support.

patience: quiet,
waiting when you
may want something
to happen in a hurry

protection: to keep
safe from being hurt

timing: the time that
something happens;
now, later, before, etc.

trusted: to have hope,
honor, faith in God
who you can depend
on

God Cares For You

God would not create something He didn't care for. He created us in His own image. He cares for us because we are His own. He teaches us how to live life without worry. How to live a right path as we follow after Him. He gives us His Word to read and know how to do this. He gives us prayer to let Him know what our needs are and to **listen** for His answer with **patience**.

As we read the psalms of David, we see what God will do in our life if we trust and obey Him. Don't ask God for a right path if you are not willing to walk in it. We are to take the steps needed to live a life filled with right living.

Sometimes we fall off the path. God has a plan for that too. Ask for forgiveness and strength to try His way again. We can choose to trust in the Lord and His way or trust in ourselves. We can't be right with Him and **lean** on our own understanding.

We must prepare our hearts for the blessings of God and give thanks to Him each day. We are to rest in His promises in life and in death. We are not to worry, but be happy in our caring God's hands as He cares for our needs. How can we do this?

God Cares If Your Heart Is Ready (Psalm 23)

God knows the hearts of all people. He wants us to each make our hearts ready for His plan for our life. David, the writer of this psalm, helps us know what God wants us to do. David was a man after God's own heart. He can help us see how to get our hearts ready for God. We will read each line of the Psalm and think about what God wants us to know and remember

Things to
Think About

1. What does David say we must do to follow the right path of God? In Psalm 23 everywhere you read me, my or I put in your name. How do you feel hearing your name in these verses?
2. Have you ever wanted to follow the ideas of a famous star or athlete to find the things in life you want? How did that work for you? How does God say that we can have what we need in life and in death?
3. Do you worry about how you will pay bills, buy groceries or care for your family? What is God's answer for your worry?
4. Is He the "strength of" your life? Tell how you know this or why you don't feel this is true.

The Lord is my Shepherd, I will have everything I need.

David **trusted** God for everything. He didn't worry and didn't feel afraid even when things were very bad for him. He knew God would protect and take care of him.

He lets me rest in fields of green grass.

He leads me beside the quiet waters.

God will give us rest for our body and quiet in our heart. He will give us what we need to live each day just as He did for David.

He makes me strong again. He leads me in the way of living right with Himself which brings honor to His name.

David knew God would lead him in a path that would bring honor to God and a good path for his life. David trusted God's strength to lead him. Who do you trust to guide your path?

*Yes, even if I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will not be afraid of anything, because You are with me.*

*You have a walking stick with which to guide and one with which to help.
These comfort me.*

David did not fear death because God was with him. If we need help or if life **events** bring fear to our heart, we can trust in our caring God. We can ask God for His help, guiding hand, and protection. He promises to be there and walk with us through whatever happens. Lean on His strength.

*You are making a table of food ready for me in front of those who hate me.
You have poured oil on my head. I have everything I need.*

There were many who hated and wanted to harm David. God kept him safe and cared for him. We can have that too. We must ask and our caring God gives us what we need, in His time and His way. Think about trusting God's **timing**. Patience is very important in waiting on God's timing and watching Him work.

*For sure, You will give me goodness and loving-kindness
all the days of my life. Then I will live with You in Your house forever.*
David trusted God's protection, goodness and love would be with him each day on earth and forever with the Lord after his death.

Living In A Caring God (Psalms 27:1-5, 116:1-9)

We make our hearts ready to come before a caring God by learning to trust and obey His will for our lives. We make our hearts ready by giving thanksgiving and praise to our caring God. We must now live our life this way and honor God with it.

The problems in life are many times a great "enemy". We can pray for help in finding God's way, hide in fear not wanting to face these problems or we may want to do it our own way. What do you do? We are to seek God's wisdom, not ours. Ask Him what He thinks. He'll let you know

God knows our heart. He wants us to give Him all of it, live in His strength and stay on His right path. If you worry, have fear or don't know what to do, ask Him. Pray for help. Ask for forgiveness. Lean on Him. He hears your voice and prayers.

We will suffer with trouble. Everyone does. Life has both good and bad. Think about what is good in life. The joy of first love. The cry of your first child. Can both of these make a person sad too? Was your first love your only one? Was there a painful break-up? Did you raise a perfect

child or were there times of problems along the way? How about the terrible twos or the terrible teens? Yes, there is always good and bad. That's life.

God cares. He listens and He answers our cries for help. He cares in our time of life on earth and in our time of death. He reaches down and saves. We can "walk with the Lord in the land of the living."

He Cares For All Your Needs (Matthew 6:25-33)

Having **concern** for others means we care about them and help them. Parents are concerned about the needs of the family. If they worry, then the parents are not able to work well to take care of those needs. Their mind is only on the problem and not on how to make the problem right. They may become angry with each other. They are not trusting our caring God to take care of their needs.

Jesus teaches us about worry. We are not to worry about what we will eat or drink or wear. God takes care of the birds of the air and the flowers in the field. We are His creation, created in His image. How much more will He care for us? God knows what we need and what is best for us!

Psalm 23 (printed in the lesson)**Psalm 27**

1 The Lord is my light and the One Who saves me. Whom should I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom should I be afraid?

2 When sinful men, and all who hated me, came against me to destroy my flesh, they tripped and fell.

3 Even if an army gathers against me, my heart will not be afraid. Even if war rises against me, I will be sure of You.

4 One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I will look for: that I may live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to look upon the beauty of the Lord, and to worship in His holy house.

5 For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His holy tent. In the secret place of His tent He will hide me. He will set me high upon a rock.

Psalm 116

1 I love the Lord, because He hears my voice and my prayers.

2 I will call on Him as long as I live, because He has turned His ear to me.

3 The strings of death are all around me. And the fear of the grave came upon me. I suffered with trouble and sorrow.

4 Then I called on the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I beg You, save my life!"

5 The Lord is loving and right. Yes, our God is full of loving-kindness.

6 The Lord takes care of the child-like. I was brought down, and He saved me.

7 Return to your rest, O my soul. For the Lord has been good to you.

8 For You, O Lord, have saved my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

9 I will walk with the Lord in the land of the living.

Matthew 6

25 "I tell you this: Do not worry about your life. Do not worry about what you are going to eat and drink. Do not worry about what you are going to wear. Is not life more important than food? Is not the body more important than clothes?"

26 Look at the birds in the sky. They do not plant seeds. They do not gather grain. They do not put grain into a building to keep. Yet your Father in heaven feeds them! Are you not more important than the birds?"

27 Which of you can make himself a little taller by worrying?"

28 Why should you worry about clothes? Think how the flowers grow. They do not work or make cloth.

29 But I tell you that Solomon in all his greatness was not dressed as well as one of these flowers.

30 God clothes the grass of the field. It lives today and is burned in the stove tomorrow. How much more will He give you clothes? You have so little faith!

31 Do not worry. Do not keep saying, "What will we eat?" or, "What will we drink?" or, "What will we wear?"

32 The people who do not know God are looking for all these things. Your Father in heaven knows you need all these things.

33 First of all, look for the holy nation of God. Be right with Him. All these other things will be given to you also.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalm 116:12-19;
Mark 8:34-37;
2 Timothy 1:8-12

Memory Verse

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. This is the first law." "The second law is this: 'You must love your neighbor as yourself' No other Law is greater than these."

(Mark 12:30-31)

Word List

blamed: to find fault with someone, it was their error or mistake.

eternity: life that lasts forever

obedience: to obey, to do what we are told to do by those who have the power or the right to tell us

sadness: feeling unhappy, to have bad feelings or sorrow

Obeying Our Generous God

Our God is generous in *all* He does for us. He cares if we are cold or hungry, have **sadness** or fear in our life, are lonely or helpless. Have you ever felt that way? He sees our needs and finds a way to give us what we need. Thank you, God, for caring about us. God protects us from the bad things in life by always being there for us to get us through. Has this ever happened to you? We are to honor and praise Him for who He is.

We are asked to lay down our selfish way of life and be **obedient** to God's plan for our life. We have a choice to make about how we will spend our **eternity**. We may have a lot of money or things, but if we do not trust in Jesus our soul is gone for eternity. It will be too late to get it back, not a happy thought.

Sometimes it is very hard to talk about Jesus. We may be afraid. We may think others will not like us anymore or maybe they will be angry with us. But, God has chosen us to share the Good News with others. We may think we cannot do this alone. That is true. We need the power and strength of God to help us do what He wants us to do. Prayer, listening to Him and waiting for the right time will help us be obedient to the Lord.

Giving Thanks and Honor to a Generous God (Psalm 116:12-19)

The Apostle Paul in the book of Romans tells us that we are to give thanks to God and to give Him honor and glory. David also tells us we are to give thanks and praise His name. What are these men praising and giving thanks to God for? " For all the good things He has done for me" (12).

Things to Think About

1. God shows us His love by giving us what we need each day. Tell how this is true in your life and your family's lives. In what way has God done good things for you?
2. Why and how do you thank and honor God? Is it ever a good thing *not* to give God praise for what we have or do? Why?
3. If we give our life to Jesus but can't always be what we know Jesus wants us to be, should we give up? What should we do? Why?
4. Why does God ask us to share His Good News? Why should we, even if it is hard? Did someone share the Good News with you? Talk about that if you like.
5. Is sharing the Good News with others showing love and obedience to God? Is it being a good neighbor? Why?

God shows us His love in giving us what we need each day. The food we need, our homes to live in, the clothes we wear are all from Him. He also gives us protection from those who might want to harm us in some way like saying things that are not true or taking something that was ours. Sometimes people who work with you may want to seem to be a better worker to the boss than you. They may say work that you did was done by them. This can cause problems at work. Have you ever been **blamed** for something you didn't do? That can be a problem too. God answers our prayers for help in knowing what to do about these problems at work and at home too. He is generous in His love by being there to help with our needs and to guide us through our problems each day we live.

God is also with us in death. He set us free from our sin so we may live in heaven with Him. We are all of great worth to Him in life and death. He also cares about our sadness and tears in the death of those we love.

David called on the name of the Lord and gave praise and honor to God for all He did. We are to do the same. We are to do this before *all* people that they might see our God is worthy of our praise.

Giving Up Yourself for God (Mark 8:34-37)

God gives a lot to each one of us. He pours out blessings in many ways every day. Jesus tells us what we are to do to be followers and live in **obedience** to Him. We are to "give up" doing things our own way, living in our own desires. There is a better plan for our life than the one we want.

Have you ever had a "great" plan to do something and it was not blessed by God? It may have been a good plan or idea to you but was not a God-plan or God-idea. Did you move on with the plan and didn't wait for God? Did you pray about it? Were you in a hurry? Did you just ask God to go with your idea? Maybe you forgot that it might be better to ask God for His plan and then you go with Him. What happened?

If we want to live in our own way, doing what we want to do, Jesus says we will lose our life. We must make a choice. We can live in sin, doing what we want, or follow Him. If we choose to live in our own way we will lose not only our life in death but our soul as well. Even if we have the whole world and lose our soul, how will we ever get it back? Some choices we make are for all eternity. Will you live your life for a generous God or lose your soul in eternity?

**Stand Up, Do Not Be Ashamed of God
(2 Timothy 1:8-12)**

It is not easy to follow Jesus. There are those who do not believe in Jesus and may want to say bad words to you, make trouble for you, or even kill you. Many who live in other countries can lose their life or

lose their job for saying they believe in Christ Jesus. But we are not to be afraid or ashamed to talk about Jesus and the Good News because He will give us strength to do so. We should tell everyone.

It was Jesus who saved us from eternal death, not leaving us to die in " the punishment of sin" (9). We are to tell others about this Good News in the power of Christ Jesus, not hiding in fear from those who do not believe. God saved us and choose us to do His work. "He put a stop to the power of death and brought life that never dies" (10).

Sharing our faith with others does not mean putting our faith in the face of sinners saying: "See how good I am !!" But letting others see the life of Jesus in the way we live our own life, in the way we act and speak. No one likes to listen to someone who talks about how "good" they are. We want to watch a person live in a way that honors God. With God's help, we can be helpful, friendly, and caring like He is. We can show others about Christ Jesus by living in Him each day. Others are looking at how we do that. Let them see Jesus in us!

Psalm 116:12-19

12 What should I give to the Lord for all the good things He has done for me?

13 I will show Him my thanks for saving me with a gift of wine and praise His name.

14 I will keep my promises to the Lord before all His people.

15 The death of His holy ones is of great worth in the eyes of the Lord.

16 For sure I am Your servant, O Lord. I am Your servant, the son of the woman who served You. You have set me free from my chains.

17 I will give a gift of thanks to You and call on the name of the Lord.

18 I will keep my promises to the Lord before all His people,

19 in the holy place of the Lord, and in the center of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

Mark 8:34-37

34 Jesus called the people and His followers to Him. He said to them, "If anyone wants to be My follower, he must give up himself and his own desires. He must take up his cross and follow Me.

35 If anyone wants to keep his own life safe, he will lose it. If anyone gives up his life because of Me and because of the Good News, he will save it.

36 For what does a man have if he gets all the world and loses his own soul?

37 What can a man give to buy back his soul?

2 Timothy 1:8-12

8 Do not be ashamed to tell others about what our Lord said, or of me here in prison. I am here because of Jesus Christ. Be ready to suffer for preaching the Good News and God will give you the strength you need.

9 He is the One Who saved us from the punishment of sin. He is the One Who chose us to do His work. It is not because of anything we have done. But it was His plan from the beginning that He would give us His loving-favor through Christ Jesus.

10 We know about it now because of the coming of Jesus Christ, the One Who saves. He put a stop to the power of death and brought life that never dies which is seen through the Good News.

11 I have been chosen to be a missionary and a preacher and a teacher of this Good News.

12 For this reason, I am suffering. But I am not ashamed. I know the One in Whom I have put my trust. I am sure He is able to keep safe that which I have trusted to Him until the day He comes again.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

UNIT 2

Example that Encourage

Lesson 4

God's Glad-Hearted People
(Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-35)

Lesson 5

Always Encouraging
(Acts 4:36-37; 11:19-26)
(Acts 15:36-40)

Lesson 6

Giving Themselves First
(1 Corinthians 16:1-4)
(2 Corinthians 8:1-15)
(2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

Lesson 7

More Blessed to Give
(Acts 20:17-35)

Examples That Encourage

The early church is such an encouragement to us as they show believers how to grow in faith and live with one another. God is always so good to give us a special plan for how He wants believers to live. He wants us to come together in Christ and learn how to be generous with one another and with others.

The wonderful person whose name was Barnabas was filled with the Holy Spirit and took living generously to a personal level. His example shows us how living generously is done life by life and day by day. His joy in loving Christ and living His faith brings a smile to anyone's face!

Paul teaches the sharing of faith with others and giving of possessions to those in need. His life is action packed and shows us how to live it and do it in the strength and example of Christ.

The Bible gives us so many good examples to encourage us in our faith walk. These next four lessons are a real "how to" in the "joy of the Lord" as we live each day. Let's learn what we should do and get the encouragement given by the church, the saints and most importantly the example of Christ.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-35

Memory Verse

"You have shown me the ways of life. I will be full of joy when I see Your face."

(Acts 2:28)

Word List

attitude: a way of acting or behaving that shows what a person is thinking and feeling

baptized: Water baptism is an act of faith to show that sins have been forgiven, a Christian ceremony

behavior: the way one acts and speaks, what one does

possessions: things we own like clothes, furniture, car, etc.

God's Glad-Hearted People

The Book of Acts shows us how the early church began and the foundation that was so important for the early believers. They came together to worship God. They helped those who were poor and had needs. Many powerful works were done. It was a time of changing hearts and minds, much like today!

The foundations were there in these days long ago. They are still with us today. As we follow Christ's plan for the Church and each of us, it may change us in small ways or in big ways as we grow and learn. It's good for us to look at how we are seen by *Christ* as we live our lives. How would I know a glad-hearted person of God? Is it someone who cares for others, sharing their gifts, **possessions** and the joy of the Good News of Christ?

God Changes Us to be Glad-Hearted People (Acts 2:41-47)

When Jesus comes into our lives, our lives change forever. We change from the inside to the outside. God's wisdom guides us in that change. As believers we want to know more about Him and His plan for our life. We are **baptized** and listen faithfully to the teachings of God to learn more. We pray, worship and study together. Believers did this in the early church also.

Have you ever known someone who made a big change in what they believed in and then seen the change in **attitude** and **behavior**? There was a man who used bad language each time he spoke. , often using God's name in vain. He drank alcohol often and was mean to his family when he did so. His most important thought was to have enough money to drink more. When he had a

**Things to
Think About**

1. Why is it important for God's wisdom to change believers?
2. How will being a glad-hearted believer change your attitude and behavior? How long will it take?
3. Who will know your life is changed? How will this be known?
4. What do you see as the blessings of belonging to a church of believers?
5. A generous life is something God wants *for* us not *from* us. Why do you think this is true? What are the blessings of being a glad-hearted generous person? What do *you miss* if you are not?

job his paycheck was not spent on the needs of his family. His children went without lunch money at school and had only enough clothing to wear one or two days a week to school. He spent money on other women that he drank with and spent time with. Life was very hard for those who loved him and lived with him. Those who depended on him and needed him were hurt.

After many years this man accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior. What a *huge* change. He gave up the drinking of alcohol and using God's name in vain. He was able to hold a job and take care of his wife and himself. Although his children were older and gone from home he was able to ask for and receive their forgiveness. His wife, a Christian, also forgave him. As God filled his heart he became a loving and caring husband and father. He stopped looking inside to his needs and began to look outside himself at the needs of those around him.

The change on the inside made a great difference in his attitude, how he spoke, and how he treated others. He was living with a spirit-filled heart from God. His glad heart was a joy to see and live with. The inside change in his heart could be seen by others on the outside in his life.

God changes our behavior. The things we do and how we act. What we believe can be seen in our behavior. If a child believes he can get what he wants if he cries and yells then he will surely cry and yell until he gets what he wants! If a teenager believes he can argue for something, then he will argue until it happens. Believers in Christ need to think about how their behavior looks each day. Does it look like a changed heart following the teachings of a generous God?

We learn to be a person who shares with others and to do so with a glad heart. Maybe they have little food, no home or job or in many other ways they may be in need. Perhaps they have never heard about the Lord. Perhaps they need a friend to encourage them during a difficult time.

God wants us to share together, join together for the good of all. Do it with a glad heart. Be generous just as the early believers were in the first church, helping one another, sharing their faith and their lives.

The Blessings of Glad-Hearted People (Acts 4:32-35)

The blessings of the church are many. Those who believe in the risen Christ coming alive from the dead find favor with God. They belong together as believers to be baptized, to worship, to sing praises and pray to the Lord with joy in their hearts! This is a foundation of the early church and the church today. Believers who do not come together to worship and praise God are alone and may lose their way. They may start believing things that are not true. It is good to ask others to come to church, learn truth and share the joy of faith in God.

We change step by step in following Christ. The Bible becomes the center of our life as we grow in His Spirit. Be generous in all ways. A generous life is something God wants *for* us not *from* us.

The Lord wants us to experience the true joy of a life given over to Him, a life that comes to know the blessings of having a loving and caring heart. If you have ever spent time with people who are struggling in life, you know how they bless your life far more than you can ever bless theirs. This is what the Lord wants each of us to know.

He doesn't need us to care for others. He can do that without a doubt! He can feed hundreds on a hillside with just two loaves of bread and three fish. He can turn water to wine for a celebration. But, God wants for us to know the joy of a spirit-filled, glad-hearted life. We can only know this by doing it.

Ask a neighbor or someone you work with to come to church or Bible study with you. Share your faith. Let others see God and praise Him for what you have done in their lives, because of Him. Don't miss out on the blessings!

Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-35

2:41 Those who believed what he said were baptized. There were about 3,000 more followers added that day.

42 They were faithful in listening to the teaching of the missionaries. They worshiped and prayed and ate the Lord's supper together.

43 Many powerful works were done by the missionaries. Surprise and fear came on them all.

44 All those who put their trust in Christ were together and shared what they owned.

45 As anyone had need, they sold what they owned and shared with everyone.

46 Day after day they went to the house of God together. In their houses they ate their food together. Their hearts were happy.

47 They gave thanks to God and all the people respected them. The Lord added to the group each day those who were being saved from the punishment of sin.

4:32 The many followers acted and thought the same way. None of them said that any of their things were their own, but they shared all things.

33 The missionaries told with much power how Jesus was raised from the dead. God's favor was on them all.

34 No one was in need. All who owned houses or pieces of land sold them and brought the money from what was sold.

35 They gave it to the missionaries. It was divided to each one as he had need.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Acts 4:36-37;
11:19-26; 15:36-40

Memory Verse

"When he got there and saw how good God had been to them, he was full of joy. He told them to be true and faithful to the Lord." (Acts 11:23)

Word List

disagreements: not to agree, to argue, not to see things the same

encourager: to be one who gives courage or hope to another, to lift up another in time of need, difficulty or misunderstanding.

private: not public, done in a way not to let others know it was done by you, not to get praise for one's self

submit: to give in to the power or control of another

support: to give help or to hold up during hard times

Always Encouraging

Do you have an **encourager** in your life? Someone who sees what you need or sees the problems in your life and wants to help. Do you know someone who shares the love of Christ with you? It may be someone in your family or maybe a close friend.

Barnabas was a gifted encourager. He found a way to help others in small and big ways as they turned to God as believers. He used the gift of encouragement to spread the Good News of Christ. When nonbelievers saw what Barnabas did in helping others, it encouraged them to become believers also. He was the first to travel with Paul as a missionary. How might he have been helpful to Paul when he was discouraged?

Barnabas shows his very human side. Sometimes he put his will ahead of the Lord's. At other times he accepted that he was making a choice not in the will of God. Did Barnabas change to **submit** to God's will? What happened? Let's look at the events in Barnabas's life to learn what God has to show us about being an encourager, dealing with disagreement and submitting to the will of God.

Encourage by Doing (Acts 4:36-37)

An encourager is always welcome. We all need to have someone come to us when we most need help, **support** and someone who will be on our side. That was Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the missionaries. The new name given to him means "Son of Comfort". He got this new name because he sold some of his land and brought the money to the missionaries.

Things to Think About

1. Do you need to be rich or own a lot of land to be an encourager for Christ? Tell about some ways you can be an encourager for Christ.
2. If our life is hard, does that mean we can't be an encourager for Christ? Tell an example of a person who has a hard life but still finds a way to be an encourager.
3. If you live in a foreign country and may be returning to your homeland will you take Christ with you? How will you do that?
4. Can you share Christ with others from your country now? How about your neighbor? What is a good plan to do that?
5. If you don't agree with everything said by some Christians or Pastor, how will you seek to understand? Whose wisdom should you seek first? Why?

He choose to do what he could to help those who had very little money. He had a strong desire to help those who needed encouragement. His quiet deeds, done often in a **private** way helped many who were not believers to see what being a believer in God was about. The Holy Spirit working through early believers made it possible to encourage the weak and needy.

A longtime friend has been in a wheel chair for many years. To talk to her without seeing her, you would never know her body is twisted and her hands very crippled. It never stops her from being an encourager. She listens closely to others' needs. She prays for others from her hospital bed, her car, and from home. She shares the Word of God in person or over the phone. Her face shines with a smile when she greets you. She is willing to share what she can in any situation. She is a Barnabas. She has a willing heart to comfort others and share God by doing what she can wherever she is. We all have a Barnabas in us, are you being a Barnabas for God?

Encourage Wherever You Are (Acts 11:19-26)

Because of the trouble that started over Stephen's death, many went different places. In the cities of Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch they had preached the Word only to the Jews. But it was God's plan to also preach His Word to other people. This was an important change for the spreading of the Word in the early church. As many went to cities far away, they took the Word of God and shared it with everyone. When Barnabas heard of this he went to Antioch, a very large city in Rome. There he saw "how good God had been to them" and he was full of joy.

Barnabas encouraged new believers to be true and faithful to the Lord. He was full of the Holy Spirit and had strong faith. He did not keep it to himself but helped others grow in their faith. In the city of Antioch the followers were first called Christians. This was because they came from many races, cultures and languages but were brought together because they were followers of Christ. This is as true today, as it was then. Wherever we are, we are to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with our families, friends and anyone else we meet. We should be full of joy and live our lives so that others see Jesus in us and are encouraged to grow in their faith.

His Will Be Done (Acts 15:36-40)

Wherever there are people, there will be **disagreements**. Even as Christians there will be times when we do not agree with one another. How do we know who is wrong and who is right? Let's look at the argument between two very good Christian friends, Paul and Barnabas.

Paul wanted to visit in the cities where he and Barnabas had preached the Word of God to see how they were doing. They

agreed on this, but Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them and Paul did not. John Mark left them in Pamphylia and had not helped in the work there.

Barnabas, always the encourager, felt strongly about his desire to take John Mark, to help him grow in his faith or just to give him another chance, the Bible doesn't tell us why. But, Paul felt just as strongly about not taking him again! So they went different ways. Barnabas took John Mark with him to the island of Cyprus. Paul chose Silas to go with him through Syria and Cilicia. After the Christians asked for the Lord's favor, Paul and Silas were on their way.

There were now two teams to go and spread God's Word and not one. God can work even through our disagreements. Christians do not always agree with one another. But if each seeks to let God's Will be done and pray for His plan and not their own, He can use everyone to help others find and accept Jesus and grow in faith. We see that happened here. Sometime Christians disagree but God can still use that to make His plan happen. Paul and Barnabas did God's will, how about you?

Acts 4:36-37; 11:19-26; 15:36-40

4:36 Joseph was among them. The missionaries called him Barnabas. His name means Son of Comfort. He was from the family group of Levi and from the country of Cyprus.

37 He had some land which he sold and brought the money to the missionaries.

11:19 Those who went different places because of the trouble that started over Stephen had gone as far as the cities of Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch. They had preached the Word, but only to the Jews.

20 Some of the men from Cyprus and Cyrene returned to Antioch. They preached the Good News of Jesus Christ to the Greek people there.

21 The Lord gave them power. Many people put their trust in the Lord and turned to Him.

22 The news of this came to the church in Jerusalem. They sent Barnabas to Antioch.

23 When he got there and saw how good God had been to them, he was full of joy.

He told them to be true and faithful to the Lord.

24 Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and faith. And many people became followers of the Lord.

25 From there Barnabas went on to the city of Tarsus to look for Saul.

26 When he found Saul, he brought him back with him to Antioch. For a year they taught many people in the church. The followers were first called Christians in Antioch.

15:36 After awhile, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the Christians in every city where we have preached the Word of God. Let us see how they are doing."

37 Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them.

38 Paul did not think it was good to take him because he had left them while they were in Pamphylia. He had not helped them in the work.

39 They argued so much that they left each other. Barnabas took John Mark with him and went by ship to the island of Cyprus.

40 Paul chose Silas. After the Christians asked for the Lord's favor to be on Paul and Silas, they went on their way.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 16:1-4;
2 Corinthians 8:1-15;
9:6-15

Memory Verse

"You are proving by this act of love what you are. They will give thanks to God for your gift to them and to others. This proves you obey the Good News of Christ."

(2Corinthians 9:13)

Word List

famine: little or no food growing in a big area that causes starving

persecuted: to treat badly and cause great trouble to someone because of their race, religion, or belief

responsible: an event thing, or person in your control that you must answer for

situation: a condition caused by things that have happened

surrender: to give up; to yield to another person or group

Giving Themselves First

There are always those in need in every part of the world. This has always been true. We read about it in the Old Testament during times of famine and flood, life in slavery and at war. Life events change our **situation** from day to day, year to year and generation to generation. How can we know what will come next or how we will take care of our families?

God has a plan for our lives and the lives of others. He doesn't want us to worry about what our situation will be tomorrow. He wants us to know we can **surrender** our lives to Him and trust Him with our tomorrows. This is faith.

Paul helps us understand God's plan for taking care of us wherever we are and whatever our situation is just like the Christians in the early church. We need to depend on trusting the Lord's plan each day.

How Can We Help? (1 Corinthians 16:1-4)

Jerusalem was suffering from a severe **famine** in the land. Many were poor and in great need of help. The Jerusalem Christians were being **persecuted**. Men and women were taken away from their homes and put in prison. Stephen was killed. There was much sorrow. Others were made to leave and went to places like Judea and Samaria.

Paul asked Christians in Galatia and Macedonia as well as the Corinthians to follow a plan to help their Christian brothers and sisters in Jerusalem. On Sunday of each week they were to give some of the money they had earned. This was to be collected before Paul arrived. The church would choose men to be **responsible** for the collected money. Paul would send letters with them to Jerusalem to explain the purpose of their visit.

We are asked to surrender to the church a **tithe** of one tenth of our money. (Leviticus 26:30-32) We are to do this with a

tithe: one tenth of income given as an offering to God

Things to Think About

1. Does God expect us to help change the world? Where would we start? What could we do?
2. What does it mean we should give willingly and completely with joy? Why should we do this?
3. What does it mean to surrender to the Lord first? How do we live a spirit-filled life?
4. Do we have to give up everything? What if we don't want to give?
5. Would you say the widow had surrendered to the Lord first and was then willingly to help with the need of others, as Jesus told us to? Do you think she trusted the Lord for the needs of her tomorrow? Explain.

heart of willingness and joy. Why? All we have comes from the Lord. He gives us the opportunity to have work and to meet our needs. The money we give for the Lord's work goes to spread the Good News to the world, to give others the opportunity to know about God. It helps those who have needs after storms and disasters here and around the world. It also feeds the hungry and brings medicine to the sick. All this and more for others no matter where they live or what language they speak.

As the early church chose men to be responsible for the money and how it would be used, so do our churches today. It is important to choose men who can be trusted to make good choices about where the money is to go and how it is to be used. Our responsibility is to surrender our part, as we are able, to the work of the Lord.

**Each One Give Willingly and Completely
(2 Corinthians 8:1-15)**

Paul encouraged the Corinthian believers to give sacrificially to the church in Jerusalem as the Galatians and Macedonians had. The Macedonians were also poor but they wanted to help and gave from their hearts. They gave much more than Paul expected. Paul reminded the Corinthians that a year before they had been the first to want to give. He points out that they were "rich in everything". They had faith and could preach. But he encourages an attitude of giving with the same "strong desires" of generosity they had when they started.

It's not so important how much we give, but how and why we give. Christ gave sacrificially of His life for the forgiveness of sin for all believers. He set the example to give willingly. The Macedonians gave themselves first to the Lord and then to the needs of the Jerusalem Christians. Paul explained that each man was responsible to give all that he could but was not expected to give "what he does not have".

A widow gave two very small pieces of money in the money box at the church. When the Lord saw this He said, "I tell you the truth, this poor woman has put in more than all of them. For they have put in a little of the money they had no need for. She is very poor and has put in all she had. She has put in what she needed for her own living." (Luke 21:2-4) Would you say she had surrendered to the Lord first and then willingly gave to help with the needs of others? Did she trust the Lord for her tomorrow?

Paul also told the Corinthians that they may need help at some time, then other Christians would help them. We are all to share what we have with one another as there is need. It doesn't matter where Christians are or who they are. We all need help sometime.

To live a spirit-filled life surrendered to Christ, stay strong in your desire to give in love. Keep your attitude strong to finish willingly and completely in surrender to the will of the Lord, in all ways. The thanksgiving to the Lord will grow as our obedience to service grows.

**Don't Lack Faith in Giving Generously
(2 Corinthians 8:1-15)**

Some may wonder if they give the tithe of one tenth will there be enough left over to meet their own needs. What if there

was a job lost or a serious illness? Plans need to be made for the future in case something goes wrong. Right?!

Paul explains this in verse 7-8. All we have comes from the Lord. Everything. He has given what is needed for each day and more. We give back with joy.

In past generations my family planted vegetable gardens behind their homes. As children we always enjoyed fresh vegetables for snack when we were playing outside. My parents and grandparents and generations before them always planted gardens so we would have vegetables even in times of great need. If they were making a living off the planted fields they planted a lot of seeds. If they just wanted to plant for the needs of their family they planted fewer seeds. But God made the harvest much more than was needed. They had lots to share. I loved to go when we gave. We were always greeted with smiles. They thanked us and God!

The Lord wants us to know the joy of giving generously and willingly. When we don't give, others miss the opportunity to praise God for His goodness. Let's give!

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

1 I want to tell you what to do about the money you are gathering for the Christians. Do the same as I told the churches in the country of Galatia to do.

2 On the first day of every week each of you should put aside some of your money. Give a

certain part of what you have earned. Keep it there because I do not want money gathered when I come.

3 When I get there, I will give letters to the men you want to send. They will take your gift to Jerusalem.

4 If I can go, they can go with me.

2 Corinthians 8:1-15 9:6-15

1 Christian brothers, we want you to know how the loving-favor of God has been shown in the churches in the country of Macedonia.

2 They have been put to the test by much trouble, but they have much joy. They have given much even though they were very poor.

3 They gave as much as they could because they wanted to.

4 They asked from their hearts if they could help the Christians in Jerusalem.

5 It was more than we expected. They gave themselves to the Lord first. Then they gave themselves to us to be used as the Lord wanted.

6 We asked Titus to keep on helping you finish this act of love. He was the one to begin this.

7 You are rich in everything. You have faith. You can preach. You have much learning. You have a strong desire to help. And you have love for us. Now do what you should about giving also.

8 I am not saying that you must do this, but I have told you how others have helped. This is a way to prove how true your love is.

9 You know of the loving-favor shown by our Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, but He became poor for your good. In that way, because He became poor, you might become rich.

10 This is what I think. You had better finish what you started a year ago. You were the first to want to give a gift of money.

11 Now do it with the same strong desires you had when you started.

12 If a man is ready and willing to give, he should give of what he has, not of what he does not have.

13 This does not mean that others do not have to give and you have to give much. You should share alike.

14 You have more than you need now. When you have need, then they can help you. You should share alike.

15 The Holy Writings say, "The man who gathered much did not have too much. The man who did not gather much had enough."

...9:6 Remember, the man who plants only a few seeds will not have much grain to gather. The man who plants many seeds will have much grain to gather.

7 Each man should give as he has decided in his heart. He should not give, wishing he could keep it. Or he should not give if he feels he has to give. God loves a man who gives because he wants to give.

8 God can give you all you need. He will give you more than enough. You will have everything you need for yourselves. And you will have enough left over to give when there is a need.

9 The Holy Writings say, "He has given much to the poor. His right-standing with God lasts forever."

10 It is God Who gives seed to the man to plant. He also gives the bread to eat. Then we know He will give you more seed to plant and make it grow so you will have more to give away.

11 God will give you enough so you can always give to others. Then many will give thanks to God for sending gifts through us.

12 This gift you give not only helps Christians who are in need, but it also helps them give thanks to God.

13 You are proving by this act of love what you are. They will give thanks to God for your gift to them and to others. This proves you obey the Good News of Christ.

14 They will pray for you with great love because God has given you His loving-favor.

15 Thank God for His great Gift.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Acts 20:17-35

Memory Verse

"In every way I showed you that by working hard like this we can help those who are weak. We must remember what the Lord Jesus said, 'We are more happy when we give than when we receive.'" (Acts 20:35)

Word List

Christianity : the Christian life, its beliefs and practices
integrity: high moral values, honesty
passion: a powerful emotion or feeling such as love or hate
recognition: to be known by others in a special way or for a special reason
relationship: a bond between people such as marriage, family, ideas, etc.
solved: finding the answer to a problem or situation

More Blessed to Give

Paul is called the greatest missionary that ever lived. He was a man on a mission. He was a man surrendered to the Lord. His deep desire to share the gospel with the world took him into Asia and across the Roman Empire. It was often at great danger to himself and those who were with him.

But Paul also brought a new idea that was not done in the world at that time. It was the idea of giving without receiving. The very idea was one that was hard for the elders of the church and even believers to understand. Why would anyone do that? Surely there must always be a return for something giving!

Paul also encouraged others to serve the weak, another new idea. The weak were mostly made to be servants in the world at this time. Why in the world would anyone serve someone weaker that they could make serve them? Paul gave his voice of **passion** to share the Good News of Christ and be an example for giving and serving others with love.

Give Humbly with Passion and Integrity (Acts 20:17-21)

The apostle Paul was a man of great passion and **integrity**. He believed strongly and with honesty in his heart. He hunted Christians and took them to prison. Not just one or two but many. He gave approval for and watched the stoning of Stephen.

He knew the Bible well and was a well trained Jew. He thought **Christianity** was not true and would hurt the Jewish faith and way of life. He traveled a long way to hunt Christians and persecute them.

Things to Think About

1. If we had the same relationship with other believers as Paul did with the early Christians how would things be different today?
2. Do we as believers expect life problems and troubles to be solved or taken away because we are Christians? Why or why not?
3. Why is it important for each of us as believers to go life to life and heart to heart to build a relationship with others? Give an example.
4. Have you ever known anyone who gave of their time and possessions when the need of others was important? How was that done?
5. Why is giving without receiving so hard to do? Does surrendering your heart to God make it possible? Why?
6. In what way is it more blessed to give than receive? Share an example from your life.

Then he met Christ on the road. His life was changed forever. From then on his passion was for teaching the Good News of Jesus to all who would listen. The same passion and integrity was now taking the message of Christianity across the great Roman Empire.

But life as a Christian missionary was not an easy one. The way of a believer has problems that may not be taken away or **solved**. Just as Paul had once hunted Christians to kill and put in prison, the Jews tried to kill him. Paul continued on never stopping or surrendering in any situation. Through tears and sorrow he served humbly those who were weak and poor, he shared the Good News of the Gospel with all. He encouraged the church leaders. The early church was built on the blood of Christ and the sweat and tears of the believers for one another.

Paul preached in public, out in the open. He preached from house to house as needed. He taught the Jews and others the same message, turn away from sin and to Christ by faith. He knew the joy of trusting Christ in faith was far greater than the difficulties he faced. Paul was a giver in bad times and difficult times.

Giving Yourself to Others (20:22-27)

Paul encouraged the leadership in the churches both by his example in the way he lived and in his teaching. He preached with the power and wisdom of Christ. He did not know what was going to happen to him, but the Holy Spirit led him to understand there would be trouble and chains wherever he went. Paul being brave of heart and with great passion pushed on to finish the work the Lord Jesus gave him to do. He wasn't looking for

rewards for himself. He did not desire to have lots of money, possessions or **recognition.**

Paul's **relationship** with other believers was one of caring for them, loving them and tearfully helping with their problems. They prayed, rejoiced and shared each other's sorrows. Paul gave himself away to others. This is how we as believers should give ourselves to one another.

As believers in Christ there are many ways we might give ourselves to others. Paul was such a great example of this in the early church because he followed the example of Christ. We all need to follow in the power and strength of Christ Jesus. Don't be afraid but have a brave heart and a passion for following Christ.

Giving Your All (20:28-35)

Paul got ready to leave the church and sail on to Jerusalem. He reminded the believers that he had given his best and held back nothing of God's will for them. They would never see each other again because he must continue to tell others of the generosity of God in other places.

Paul's last words to the believers of

the early church were much like those of parents to their children at graduation. Paul wanted only the best for them. He prayed for them and with them. He also gave them words of warning. As parents, we see the darkness of the world and pray our children will act in a responsible way.

Paul said there would be those who would try to bring harm to them. There would be hard decisions to make. They must choose to stand firm in the truth, telling others about Jesus even if it meant persecution. They would need to give generously and expect nothing in return for themselves. There was much hard work left to do in serving others.

Paul's life example was one of a man who found his happiness and joy in serving the Lord and living in a relationship of love with others. Each of us can serve well if we surrender our life to the Lord. We can give loving support in difficult situations. We can patiently share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others, in His strength. In return, we will learn that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive'.

Acts 20:17-35

17 From Miletus he sent word to Ephesus. He asked the leaders of the church to come to him.

18 When they got there, he said to them, “From the first day that I came to Asia you have seen what my life has been like.

19 I worked for the Lord without pride. Because of the trouble the Jews gave me, I have had many tears.

20 I always told you everything that would be a help to you. I taught you in open meetings and from house to house.

21 I preached to the Jews and to the Greeks. I told them to turn from their sin to God and to put their trust in our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 “As you see, I am on my way to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit makes me go. I do not know what will happen to me there.

23 But in every city I have been, the Holy Spirit tells me that trouble and chains will be waiting for me there.

24 But I am not worried about this. I do not think of my life as worth much, but I do want to finish the work the Lord Jesus gave me to do. My work is to preach the Good News of God’s loving-favor.

25 “All of you have heard me preach the Good News. I am sure that none of you will ever see my face again.

26 I tell you this day that I am clean and free from the blood of all men.

27 I told you all the truth about God.

28 Keep a careful watch over yourselves and over the church. The Holy Spirit has made you its leaders. Feed and care for the church of God. He bought it with His own blood.

29 “Yes, I know that when I am gone, hungry wolves will come in among you. They will try to destroy the church.

30 Also men from your own group will begin to teach things that are not true. They will get men to follow them.

31 I say again, keep watching! Remember that for three years I taught everyone of you night and day, even with tears.

32 “And now, my brothers, I give you over to God and to the word of His love. It is able to make you strong and to give you what you are to have, along with all those who are set apart for God.

33 I have not tried to get anyone’s money or clothes.

34 You all know that these hands worked for what I needed and for what those with me needed.

35 In every way I showed you that by working hard like this we can help those who are weak. We must remember what the Lord Jesus said, ‘We are more happy when we give than when we receive.’ ”



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

UNIT 3

Examples That Warn

Lesson 8

Greedy Living
(Luke 12:13-21, 16:19-31)
(James 5:1-6)

Lesson 9

Choosing Things over Jesus
(Mark 10:17-31)

Lesson 10

Failing to Be Generous
(Matthew 25:31-46)

Examples That Warn

Just as our earlier lessons help us know how to live in the generosity of Jesus these lessons focus on what happens when we choose to live focused on ourselves. How easy it is to have a "what I want to have and do" list that is all about us, doing only what we want to do and meeting our own desires.

When life is good and we live in a time of plenty, we look for ways to get more. We want to have more and get bigger and better of whatever it is we desire. When life is hard, we want to hold all we have close so no one will take it because there might not be enough to go around.

It is easy to look past and not see those around us who live each day in need and great stress. The poor, weak, very young, very old, or widowed often have little power and strength to make a difference in their own lives. They have problems that are too hard to solve by themselves. Their situations are bad and there seems to be no hope.

There is a price to be paid for choosing to look past their needs. These lessons are to bring the needs of this group of people to our minds, and help us really look, that we might make different choices. Matthew, Mark, Luke and James warn us against greed, wrong choices and failing to be generous.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 12:13-21;
16:19-31; James 5:1-6

Memory Verse

"Then Jesus said to them all, 'Watch yourselves! Keep from wanting all kinds of things you should not have. A man's life is not made up of things, even if he has many riches.'"

(Luke 12:15)

Word List

deserve: to have a right to; be one that out to get

inheritance: to get from a relative or friend as an heir

lavish: Something done with excess; very grand, wasteful, not necessary

media: Information and communication from a device like TV, newspapers, etc.

provide: to support in some way such as giving food, a home or other needed things

Greedy and Uncaring Living

"Money is the root of all evil." You may hear that said often. Is that true? Don't we need money to **provide** for our families and ourselves? Doesn't the church need money to send the Good News to the world, help the poor and feed the hungry?

This lesson is to help us better know and understand about greed. Jesus talks about it and James tells of the eternal "rewards" waiting for those who live a life of greed. How can we have a Godly attitude about our money, possessions, time and talent that are all blessings from the Lord? Need is not the same as greed. We are to store up treasures in heaven as we live in generosity for Jesus' sake.

The Heart of the Matter: Greed (Luke 12:13-21)

We all know in our hearts that greed is not something we should seek, but what is greed? Are there different kinds of greed? Can I have an attitude of greed and not really know it?

We don't have to travel far to see large barns or businesses sitting empty and falling down from not being used in a very long time. They stand empty like ghosts of the past in a time of great **wealth** now gone, no longer needed or used. Once they were providing much desired possessions that now are often not known to the younger generation. New "can't live without" items have replaced them. Our televisions and other **media** tell us how happy or even successful we'll be if we just eat, drink, buy, wear or use their products or services. We **deserve** it, right?!

There are all kinds of greed. The desire for what we do not have is one. We pay for places to store all kinds of things we had to have. We don't have time and patience to give to encourage someone that is in sadness. We are too busy to share a talent that might bring a smile to suffering children in a cancer hospital or

wealth: Money, what you have, own, possess or things you treasure

Things to Think About

1. Name some things you "had to have" years ago that are not being used, you threw away or stored away. How much money was spent on those items? How could that money have been better spent?
2. Describe greed in a person, a business, or the world and your own life. What can you do to change this in even a small way?
3. How much is enough for you? Is there excess that could be shared with others in need? How can you begin to live a more simple life?
4. Can money buy God's blessings? (Acts 8:9-24) Do you give special honor to those who have it? (James 2:2-6) Do you rely on it (Ps. 62:10) or think it will last? (Jer. 17:11) Do you worry about it (Matt. 6:34) or think you need to keep it only for yourself? (Luke 12:15, James 5:2-6) Do you use it to buy peace in your life? (Prov. 15:16-17)

share God's Word with an unbeliever. Maybe our time, patience, and talent is spent looking to make our own life easier and more fun or making us seem more important than others. What did Jesus say about the blessings we have all received from the Lord?

Jesus was asked to decide what was fair in dividing an **inheritance** between two brothers. His answer was not about which brother should get how much. Jesus knew the question was really about greed. He warned against having an attitude of desiring all kinds of "things". Living the good life has nothing to do with having a lot of money or being thought of as important.

This was probably not the answer the young man was looking for. Not an answer many of us want to hear either, but the heart of the matter is an attitude of greed. Jesus warns us that what should be in our heart is a right relationship with God and doing His work.

Big barns filled with harvest and large businesses will one day be empty and unused. Things rust, ruin, are used up or replaced with the next new "thing" that everyone wants to buy. So how much is enough? Planning for our daily lives and future is wise but we are to prepare for death as well. How can we please God in the use of our money and possessions? We must each be concerned about helping others in need. Giving of our money, possessions, time and talent for those in need is seeking to be rich in the Lord. None of us wants to be spiritually poor in life and certainly not at death. There is more to life than what you own or possess and how important you are.

The Right Thing to Do (Luke 16:19-31)

Jesus tells a story of a man who is rich and another man who begged at his gate for small bites of food and help. The story is not about how having a lot of money or possessions makes you a bad person. It is a story about the heart of a man.

In Jesus day, and even today, many thought success was a sign of living a "good" life. If a man comes by his riches honestly it must surely be blessings from God for his righteous living. Also, if he is poor or appears not to be richly blessed by the Lord then surely he must not be living in God's favor. But, Jesus says this is not true.

In this story of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man lived a life of excess. His **lavish** living in how he ate, dressed and his behavior each day, were very different from the man named Lazarus. He was taken to the rich man's gate to wait for bites of food and help. Both men died. Lazarus was taken into the arms of Abraham in heaven. The rich man was in hell and in great pain.

God has commanded that we are to love Him and to love our neighbor. The rich man must have passed Lazarus at his gate many times. He offered no help or food to this man who was in great need. The rich man had plenty of food. He could have helped the needy man. He chose not to show any concern for the man in need. This shows his selfishness and disobedience in not following God's command to love your neighbor as yourself.

We are to do what we do from a heart of love for the Lord and for others. The amount of money, size of gift or

service has nothing to do with following this commandment. We are to love our neighbor, then we are to act in a way that shows that love for them. We are not to be lovers of money and possessions living in lavish ways. We are to do the right thing for the right reason, loving God and loving others.

Uncaring Living (James 5:1-6)

James gives a clear and strong warning about those who abuse others in order to have wealth for themselves. They are dishonest in the way they pay or reward the work of those who work for them. They hurt poor people in many ways. Money and possessions are not the problem. We all need money to provide and care for our families. The church needs money to help the poor and spread the Good News to the world. It is the *love* of money that is evil and causes some to abuse others in order to get more and to live a lavish life they feel they deserve.

James warns that weeping and wailing are the eternal rewards for those who abuse others because of the love of money. Be sure worldly love of possessions and money does not cause you to lose sight of God's eternal inheritance. All that is in the world will pass away but the love of the Lord is forever.

Luke 12:13-21

¹³One of the people said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the riches that our father left us.” ¹⁴Jesus said to him, “Friend, who has told Me to say who should get what?” ¹⁵Then Jesus said to them all, “Watch yourselves! Keep from wanting all kinds of things you should not have. A man’s life is not made up of things, even if he has many riches.” ¹⁶Then He told them a picture-story, saying, “The fields of a rich man gave much grain. ¹⁷The rich man thought to himself, ‘What will I do? I have no place to put the grain.’ ¹⁸Then he said, ‘I know what I will do. I will take down my grain building and I will build a bigger one. I will put all my grain and other things I own into it. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many good things put away in your building. It will be all you need for many years to come. Now rest and eat and drink and have lots of fun.”’ ²⁰But God said to him, ‘You fool! Tonight your soul will be taken from you. Then who will have all the things you have put away?’ ²¹It is the same with a man who puts away riches for himself and does not have the riches of God.”

Luke 16:19-31

¹⁹“There was a rich man who dressed in purple linen clothes everyday. He lived like a king would live with the best of food. ²⁰There was a poor man named Lazarus who had many bad sores. He was put by the door of the rich man. ²¹He wanted the pieces of food that fell from the table of the rich man. Even dogs came and licked his sores. ²²“The poor man who asked for food died. He was taken by the angels into the arms of Abraham. The rich man died also and was buried. ²³In hell the rich man was in much pain. He looked up and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus beside him. He cried out and said,

‘Father Abraham, take pity on me. Send Lazarus. Let him put the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in much pain in this fire.’ ²⁵Abraham said, ‘My son, do not forget that when you were living you had your good things. Lazarus had bad things. Now he is well cared for. You are in pain. ²⁶And more than all this, there is a big deep place between us. No one from here can go there even if he wanted to go. No one can come from there.’ ²⁷“Then the rich man said, ‘Father, then I beg you to send Lazarus to my father’s house. ²⁸I have five brothers. Let him tell them of these things, or they will come to this place of much pain also.’ ²⁹Abraham said, ‘They have the Writings of Moses and of the early preachers. Let them hear what they say.’ ³⁰But the rich man said, ‘No, Father Abraham. If someone goes to them from the dead, they will be sorry for their sins and turn from them.’ ³¹Abraham said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and to the early preachers, they will not listen even if someone is raised from the dead.’”

James 5:1-6

¹Listen, you rich men! Cry about the troubles that will come to you. ²Your riches are worth nothing. Your fine clothes are full of moth holes. ³Your gold and silver have rusted. Their rust will speak against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have saved riches for yourselves for the last days. ⁴See! The men working in your fields are crying against you because you have kept back part of their pay. Their cries have been heard by the Lord Who hears His people. ⁵You have had everything while you lived on the earth and have enjoyed its fun. You have made your hearts fat and are ready to be killed as an animal is killed. ⁶You have killed men who are right with God who were not making it hard for you.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Mark 10:17-31

Memory Verse

“They were very surprised and wondered, saying to themselves, ‘Then who can be saved from the punishment of sin? Jesus looked at them and said, ‘This cannot be done by men but God can do anything.’”

(Mark 10:26-27)

Word List

barrier: anything that blocks the way or keeps one from going on or stops one.

contentment: being happy with what one has or is, not wanting more

financial: money or what is received as income and how it is spent

influence: the power to act on or affect others

predictable: knowing what the future may

Choosing Things Over Jesus

Our malls are full of shoppers looking for the right pair of jeans and shirts. The car lots are full of shiny new cars in every color and shape. The real estate papers tell us we need a bigger and better home. The insurance companies want to sell us the policies that will protect all this from being stolen, destroyed or broken. Lots of choices and we are told by those who sell all this that we can't live without it! It's necessary for our happiness. Really?

Is it the comfort of the possessions that we buy that makes us happy? Is it having the things our heart desires? Jesus shares with Peter and the disciples about the importance of owning and desiring things and why that may not be good.

The world is trying to get us to look at what they **value** and take our eyes off the greatest value of all, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The difference is as far as heaven is from earth and life on earth is from eternity. What choice will you make?

Trusting the Comfort of Possessions (Mark 10:17-22)

We put many things around us to make us comfortable. We have the comforts of home. We own special chairs, pillows, and things that we gather around us to please us. We have the comforts of living. Our own car, home and possessions give us a warm feeling of **contentment**. We learn to trust in the comfort of our possessions. We have an attitude of being safe when everything we have and own in our own little world is **predictable** and under control.

The news comes on our TV and tells of killer tornadoes that rip across the country and take homes, possessions and even lives in just moments. There are pictures of people walking through the sticks and stones that once were homes and

be because of past behavior or events
value: highly though of, wanted or desired

Things to Think About

1. How are needs and desires different? How important are each in your life?
2. How much time and money do you spend seeking and caring for things for your own personal comfort? How much time and money do you spend seeking God and serving those in need?
3. What in your life makes you feel in control? If it were all gone how would that change your life?
4. Why is power, wealth, influence and the need to be in control a barrier to seeking and serving the Lord? What are your barriers?
5. Why is the world trying to get us to spend our time, money and passion on things? Is it working? Are we happier? How can we change our attitude and what can we do to honor God?

businesses. A tearful and emotional woman says "We've lost everything we had! There's nothing left!"

A husband and father is taken from the family through an accident. A family's **financial** base is lost due to a serious illness or loss of a job. Dad decides to leave the family for other reasons. Life happens. Our lives are no longer predictable, not under control or comfortable. It's hard and we are afraid of losing everything important to us, our home, our car, possessions and sometimes even those we love.

Where is Jesus in all this? Is it hard for you to see the love of Christ in difficult times or when you've lost your things? What if our trust was in the comfort of the grace and peace of the Lord instead of our possessions. What the tearful woman on TV lost was her possessions and maybe her way of life. It was a hard and life changing event. Would you have said something different?

Can you serve Christ first, with or without possessions? This is the choice the young man in Mark had to make. He trusted himself to provide for his own needs in a way that was comfortable and in his control. His things were more important than loving and trusting God. He made the choice to trust his own ability to provide for his own needs over seeking and serving God. This attitude kept him from turning his whole heart over to loving and serving God. The same is true for us. The first commandment tells us nothing must be more important than God. That means all our things. That includes desiring what we don't have as well as loving what we do have.

Given and Not Earned (Mark 10:23-27)

Jesus told his disciples how hard it would be for someone who has wealth to enter the kingdom of God. The disciples were surprised and wondered how anyone can be saved from the punishment of sin. Weren't the riches of this young man blessings

from God for his good living? Why then was it so hard to be saved when you have riches?

Others who have great power and **influence** often find comfort in their own ability to control and provide for their own lives. When they feel empty or have need they just buy whatever makes them feel better. This becomes a **barrier** to seeking and serving Jesus.

No one is able to earn their way into heaven no matter how wealthy, powerful and influential they might be. No matter how much service is given, there is only one way to eternity. We must have the grace of God, freely and generously given by Him, to enter the kingdom of heaven. Our earthly wealth and power are not signs of our great faith or of God's favor on us.

Earthly Desires or Heavenly Riches (Mark 10:28-31)

Peter tells Jesus that he and the other disciples had surrendered everything, all possessions and family, to follow Him. Peter is trusting in the idea that because he had given up all he had to follow Jesus, that was all that was needed. Peter was depending on his own acts of unselfishness to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus is quick to let Peter know that anything that was given up for His sake would be given back one-hundred times. But Peter and the others

would have these blessings because of a new life in God's kingdom, a new family in the followers of Christ and a new home in God's kingdom.

Peter is also promised persecution. He is not promised possessions or family. Indeed, some may lose their earthly families for accepting Christ. It is not easy. We are not to choose Christ only for the rewards of eternity. There are prices to be paid in our lives as we make hard choices in seeking and serving Jesus.

Our culture tells us to spend, spend, spend so we might have anything our heart desires. We deserve it! Whatever we want is owed to us! This is upside down and backward to what the Bible tells us. Jesus says get rid of your things! Get rid of the barriers of attitude; desire for things, power and influence in your life. Instead, surrender your life for a passionate relationship with Christ and serving His kingdom.

The world hates God. It gives ideas of greedy fun to take us away from the truth of God's Word. We need a loving and obedient relationship with Him. The things that are of value here on earth have no real value. How much do we really need if we truly love and trust the Lord? Don't let things get in the way of seeking the Lord first in everything and serving Him.

Mark 10:17-31

17 Jesus was going on His way. A man ran to Him and got down on his knees. He said, “Good Teacher, what must I do to have life that lasts forever?”

18 Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? There is only One Who is good. That is God.

19 You know the Laws, ‘Do not be guilty of sex sins in marriage. Do not kill another person. Do not take things from people in wrong ways. Do not steal. Do not lie. Respect your father and mother.’”

20 The man said to Jesus, “Teacher, I have obeyed all these Laws since I was a boy.”

21 Jesus looked at him with love and said, “There is one thing for you to do yet. Go and sell everything you have and give the money to poor people. You will have riches in heaven. Then come and follow Me.”

22 When the man heard these words, he was sad. He walked away with sorrow because he had many riches here on earth.

23 Jesus looked around Him. He said to His followers, “How hard it is for rich people to get into the holy nation of God!”

24 The followers were surprised and wondered about His words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children! How hard it is for those who put their trust in riches to get into the holy nation of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to heaven.”

26 They were very surprised and wondered, saying to themselves, “Then who can be saved from the punishment of sin?”

27 Jesus looked at them and said, “This cannot be done by men but God can do anything.”

28 Then Peter began to say to Him, “We have given up everything we had and have followed You.”

29 Jesus said, “For sure, I tell you, there are those who have given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands because of Me, and the Good News.

30 They will get back one hundred times as much now at this time in houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands. Along with this, they will have very much trouble. And they will have life that lasts forever in the world to come.

31 Many who are first will be last. Many who are last will be first.”



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Matthew 25:31-46

Memory Verse

"Then the King will say, 'For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.'"

(Matthew 25:40)

Word List

blasphemous: not respecting or speaking against God, a very serious sin

imagine: to make a picture in one's mind; to think or guess

magnificent: lavish, rich, in a grand way

opportunity: a good chance of happening

personal: of one's own, private

pretenders: those who say untrue things about themselves or act in a false way

Failing to Be Generous

Our loving God gives us stories to help us know what He wants us to do and how we should act and speak as Christians. He wants us to be clear in our understanding of what He expects from us. We are His disciples and the rest of the world sees Him through our actions, speech and attitude.

We cannot solve every problem nor meet every need. But we can be generous and help those in a hurting and dying world. We can help them find the love and saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. As His disciples, we know that He is always with us. He is alive in the world. It is important for us to see the world as God sees it, with love. The story of the sheep and the goats before the Lord helps us see that even though we are saved by faith, we are to serve in faith, reaching out to the least among us.

Nations Gathered Before Him (Matthew 25:31-34)

Jesus often called himself the Son of Man, as did others. He was making it known that He was the Messiah. This is one of the things that the Jewish religious leaders of that time said was **blasphemous**. They accused Jesus many times of speaking against God's will and law, because Jesus said He was the Messiah whom God had promised.

In reading this passage Jesus tells of a future event. It's the most glorious event we could ever **imagine** on earth. Imagine the most **magnificent**, lavish event you have ever been to. Add the power and great brightness of heavenly light around the person of Christ with angels all around. He sits on the throne of His glory.

Things to Think About

1. How would your family and friends describe your actions and speech towards those in need?
2. What is your attitude toward helping others in need? How about the “least” among us?
3. Tell how an unbeliever sees the love of Christ in someone’s actions? In someone’s attitude?
4. What do you see as acts of kindness done each day in your life? In your family? In the workplace?
5. How can you *see* the needs of others more clearly? How might you be missing opportunities to serve others? How will you change that?
6. Christ makes acts of mercy and kindness given to others personal. How will you follow His example?

Now picture the great honoring, adoring, worshiping, praising peoples of the nations of the world sitting, standing and bowing before Him. What a picture! WOW!

Then, Jesus begins to separate the people from each other. They are not separated by nations or language. They are not separated by those who have given great wealth or possessions. He separates the believers from the **pretenders** and unbelievers. The believers are sent to His right hand and the unbelievers and pretenders are sent to His left.

The picture of the goats and the sheep grazing together is like on earth, the believers and unbelievers in Christ are all in the world together. We live next to each other, work together, go to school together and maybe go to the same church together. Believers and unbelievers may speak the same language, come from the same family, and be of the same culture. But, God knows their hearts and separates them, the sheep separated from the goats.

In Faith We Serve (25:35-40)

It is very clear that our Lord wants us to do acts of kindness. It does not matter how big or how small. It does matter that we do these acts of mercy in any place or at any time we have **opportunity**. They are not to be done for recognition or reward but in private. It builds our relationship with Jesus and shows concern for those who are the "least of My brothers".

These acts of mercy and kindness are to be done for those in need. Some may have great need and others may have need for that moment or that situation. Many examples are given to the

reader as things we might do or provide out of concern for others and in obedience to our Lord.

Think about immigrants. When they come to a new country and don't speak the language, who helps them get a place to live, a telephone, or a car? Is a handshake and smile a welcome act of kindness? What if someone asks them to church to share God's Word and meet others in Bible Study? Who offers to help them learn the new language? There are so many ways to help others.

Jesus said, "...The man who receives much will have to give much..." (Luke 12:48b) We are all to give freely of what we have. That means time, talent, money, and an attitude of loving kindness.

Should we expect a reward for our actions, maybe recognition or a gift? Should we make known how much we spent or how hard we worked to serve others? Jesus tells us when we do acts of kindness and mercy for others, "you did it to me". Not for me, but to me. Christ makes it **personal**. What we do as Christians does matter to our Lord and Savior and it matters to others. The sheep got it right. They

focused on others and not on themselves.

Failing to Be Concerned (25:41-46)

There are those who go through life an example of living for self. They seem to be content to pass by others in need without concern for their financial, personal or spiritual situation. They find contentment in relationships that are **convenient** and ask little in return. They feel no responsibility for the support of the poor, encouragement of the "least" or protection of the weak. They seem to not even see them! They can't even imagine being in such a situation. They may blame the person, saying they deserve to be or are responsible themselves for being in this difficult situation. The pretenders and the unbelieving fail to be generous.

In these Scriptures the goats are asking "when did you, Lord, ask for food, water, clothes or care?" These unbelievers may not be murders or thieves or even people who do bad things to others, but they fail to be obedient to the Lord in caring for others. This is a big barrier in receiving the blessings of God. The goats got it all wrong focusing on self, not on others and failing to be generous.

Matthew 25:31-46

31 “When the Son of Man comes in His shining-greatness, He will sit down on His throne of greatness. All the angels will be with Him.

32 All the nations of the earth will be gathered before Him. He will divide them from each other as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats.

33 He will put the sheep on His right side, but the goats He will put on His left side.

34 “Then the King will say to those on His right side, ‘Come, you who have been called by My Father. Come into the holy nation that has been made ready for you before the world was made.

35 For I was hungry and you gave Me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave Me water to drink. I was a stranger and you gave Me a room.

36 I had no clothes and you gave Me clothes to wear. I was sick and you cared for Me. I was in prison and you came to see Me.’

37 “Then those that are right with God will say, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You? When did we see You thirsty and give You a drink?

38 When did we see You a stranger and give You a room? When did we see You

had no clothes and we gave You clothes?

39 And when did we see You sick or in prison and we came to You?’

40 Then the King will say, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of My brothers, you have done it to Me.’

41 “Then the King will say to those on His left side, ‘Go away from Me! You are guilty! Go into the fire that lasts forever. It has been made ready for the devil and his angels.

42 For I was hungry but you did not give Me food to eat. I was thirsty but you did not give Me water to drink.

43 I was a stranger but you did not give Me a room. I had no clothes but you did not give Me clothes. I was sick and in prison but you did not come to see Me.’

44 “Then they will ask, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger? When did we see You without clothes or sick or in prison and did not care for You?’

45 Then He will say to them, ‘For sure, I tell you, because you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

46 These will go to the place where they will be punished forever. But those right with God will have life that lasts forever.”



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

UNIT 4

You Can Live Generously

Lesson 11

Be Generous
in Your Relationships
(Colossians 3:12-14)
(Hebrews 13:1-8, 14-16)

Lesson 12

Be Generous with Your Gifts
(1 Corinthians 12:4-31a)
(Ephesians 4:11-16)
(1 Peter 4:10-11)

Lesson 13

Be Generous
with Your Money
(Luke 21:1-4)
(1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19)

You Can Live Generously

There are many ways we may choose to live generously. God has provided us with examples of how we can live in loving and caring relationships with our family, friends and with others. It may not be easy at times but we can love everyone with God's love and build good relationships with those He brings into our lives.

We each have many gifts that make our lives happier and better in many ways. Our generous God gave us many of these gifts. They come in many ways, shapes and sizes because each Christian is a special part of the body of Christ. We are given these gifts to share with others in helping better their lives better and to help the church work well together. He provides us with money, possessions, time and abilities that need to be shared as God directs us.

These next few lessons are about us taking a good look at all our generous God has given us in so many different ways. We are to find out how each of us can use these gifts for the generous life He wants for us. Let's find out what your gifts are and how you might choose to use them in the service of the Lord!



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Colossians 3:12-14;
Hebrews 13:1-8,
14-16

Memory Verse

"Jesus Christ is the
same yesterday and
today and forever."
(Hebrew 13:8)

Word List

abuses: treats in a
way that is harmful,
causes injury or is
wrong; to speak
unjustly, harshly or
insultingly to someone

compassionate: to
love, show sympathy,
be understanding, and
treat kindly

negative: to be
against, bad, adverse,
unfavorable, opposing

qualities: a person's
traits, character,
features; something
that makes a person
what he/she is

Be Generous in Your Relationships

The Christian life is about relationships. When the Holy Spirit comes into people, they are changed from the inside out. They see the world differently, not like before they came to know Christ. They change their behavior and the way they talk. They change what they think is important in life. They praise and thank God for all He does for them with a grateful heart. They look at relationships in a new way.

Christ teaches us by his example to be generous in compassionate caring and giving. We are to clothe ourselves with love in an ever changing world that hates our Lord and **abuses** Christians. We are to be generous in sharing and praising Him as we serve others. How are we to do this? Put the past aside and follow the example of Christ.

Clothe Yourself with Love (Col. 3:12-14)

It seems much easier to follow the example of Christ in being **compassionate**, kind, humble and patient on some days. On other days it seems really hard to be all those things. It's hard to treat other people with kindness and patience when you're in a hurry, running late, trying to find a way to pay all the bills or not sure when the next paycheck is coming. Sometimes those closest to us see those **negative qualities** in us when we are trying our best to just get through a day of stress and worry in our life.

How can we follow the example of Christ each day and clothe ourselves with love? When we worry about our daily

Things to Think About

1. How important is love in a relationship? How about compassion and kindness?
2. How can love bring us together as Christians?
3. Which of the spiritual qualities are most difficult for you? What steps can you take to change that?
4. What negative qualities are barriers to you following Christ's example? How can you change that?
5. Name some opportunities for you to be generous in relationships?
6. Does this lead to opportunities to share your faith with others? In what way?
7. What old practices and past will you leave behind to follow Christ?

problems we are focused on ourselves. Most of our worries never happen. Many of our worries have already happened and we can do nothing about them. Others are not even worth worrying about. This is **negative** energy spent on things over which we have no control.

The Holy Spirit gives us the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:19-25) To follow the example of Christ, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 6:25-34, we are told to seek the kingdom, not to worry about tomorrow because God knows our needs and cares for us. Each day will have its own problems and we are to have faith in the Lord. Put all your worry on Him and trust Him to care for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

We can follow the example of Christ by filling our hearts with trust and faith in Him. The focus is on Him not on us. We can clothe ourselves with love because Christ generously clothed us with His love. Be content in all situations, trusting the Holy Spirit to teach and lead. (Luke 12:11-12) We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength...we are to love our neighbor, as ourselves. (Mark 12:30-31) Be patient, kind and forgiving just as Christ has been to us. Choose to clothe yourself with Christ and you will also be clothed in love.

The World Changes, Christ Does Not (Hebrews 13:1-8)

Some days make me think of a ride on a merry-go-round. You go up and down, around and around. Our world is much like that. Some days we are up when life is good and things are going as we would like. Other days we are down when problems come

into our life. We hang on tight to things, but life is not about having a good time and getting possessions for our comfort and fun.

The Christian life is about relationships. We are to love each other as family. Christians need to have a strong love and an attitude of care and concern, supporting and encouraging one another in any situation. Christians are often abused by unbelievers. It was true in the early church and is still true today.

We are to be kind to strangers, opening our homes to them. We can share a meal or perhaps give them a place to lay their head for the night. Some strangers could be angels! The Lord is full of surprises!

Those who are in prison or are not treated well by others are to be thought of with compassion, as though it were we ourselves who were in prison or abused. Take a Bible to someone in prison so they will personally hear about the love of Christ for them.

Our marriages are to be respected. The world would have us believe that respecting marriage is an old idea. Living with someone before marriage or having a

sexual relationship with someone who is not your spouse is normal and expected by many today. It is on TV and at the movies without shame. But marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman with God as the witness. We as believers can stand against the world view because the Lord Himself stands with us. The world changes but God's plan for marriage does not.

We are to remember and behave as our faithful leaders did. They will always be an example of how to live in the faith of Christ. Hold onto the promises of God for God's promises will be with us forever. Hang on tight and don't ever let go!

Generous Sharing and Praise (Hebrew 13:14-16)

It is important for us to praise God and give him thanks. Giving thanks to God is like giving Him a gift. We should do this all the time. We should always be ready to thank God with our words and in our hearts.

Be generous in doing good things and sharing with others even if it means sacrifice. A generous life is something God wants for us not from us because He is generous in relationships with His children.

Colossians 3:12-14

12 God has chosen you. You are holy and loved by Him. Because of this, your new life should be full of loving-pity. You should be kind to others and have no pride. Be gentle and be willing to wait for others.

13 Try to understand other people. Forgive each other. If you have something against someone, forgive him. That is the way the Lord forgave you.

14 And to all these things, you must add love. Love holds everything and everybody together and makes all these good things perfect.

Hebrews 13:1-8, 14-16

1 Keep on loving each other as Christian brothers.

2 Do not forget to be kind to strangers and let them stay in your home. Some people have had angels in their homes without knowing it.

3 Remember those in prison. Think of them as if you were in prison with them.

Remember those who are suffering because of what others have done to them. You may suffer in the same way.

4 Marriage should be respected by everyone. God will punish those who do sex sins and are not faithful in marriage.

5 Keep your lives free from the love of money. Be happy with what you have. God has said, "I will never leave you or let you be alone."

6 So we can say for sure, "The Lord is my Helper. I am not afraid of anything man can do to me."

7 Remember your leaders who first spoke God's Word to you. Think of how they lived, and trust God as they did.

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

...14 For there is no city here on earth that will last forever. We are looking for the one that is coming.

15 Let us give thanks all the time to God through Jesus Christ. Our gift to Him is to give thanks. Our lips should always give thanks to His name.

16 Remember to do good and help each other. Gifts like this please God.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 12:4-31a;
Ephesians 4:11-16;
1 Peter 4:10-11

Memory Verse

"There are different kinds of gifts. But it is the same Holy Spirit Who gives them. There are different kinds of work to be done for Him. But the work is for the same Lord."

(1 Corinthians 12:4-5)

Word List

counsel: to give advice, opinion or instruction to help the behavior of someone.

credit: honor or pride for some special action or ability

fellowship: friendly relationships shared in a community

outcome: a result, the way something comes to an end

rivalries: a struggle or conflict against one another such as in jealousy or pridefulness

Be Generous with Your Gifts

The Holy Spirit generously gives us gifts. We choose to use them or not use them. Paul and Peter both tell us to take those gifts and use them in God's plan. They paint a picture of believers arm wrestling with each other as pride and jealousy get in the way of serving the Lord. They suggest a picture of holding hands to give strength in unity and use of many different gifts in many ways for the good of each other, and others to come.

Spiritual Gifts Generously and Freely Given (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

The Holy Spirit lives in us as our helper (John 14:16) our guide (John 16:13) and to **counsel** us in our lives (Isaiah 11:2). The Holy Spirit works together with God the Father and Jesus the Son to bring sinners to confess their sin, to have faith and a changed heart. The Holy Spirit makes new believers (John 3:5-6), works in and through them for the good of others (1 Corinthians 12:7), and gives and teaches how to use their spiritual gifts.

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to each believer. These gifts are abilities that are given to be used for the good of all believers. Some may have more than one spiritual gift. There are many different kinds of work to be done for the Lord. This means that different gifts are needed for the work of the church.

Paul in this letter to the members of the Corinthian church said that some gifts are not more important than other gifts (1 Corinthians 13:1-2). Paul gives examples of gifts given by the Spirit such as faith and healing. There are other passages where gifts are mentioned that are different, (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:10-11) but they are all from the Holy Spirit to be used as He wills.

Some in the church thought that certain spiritual gifts meant that they had more spiritual power than others, causing **rivalries** in the church. Just as God the Father and Jesus the Son

Things to Think About

1. If you are a Christian, in what way has the Holy Spirit been your helper, guide and counsel?
2. Name your spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit. What are you good at?
3. Tell how you have used these gifts for the good of yourself, your family, others and the church.
4. Have you seen jealousy and rivalries cause gifts and abilities not to be used for the good of all? How about in your home or church? Tell how this could have a different outcome.
5. How does the example of arm wrestling vs holding hands help us know when we are in God's will or serving self?
6. Will you submit to God's will in using spiritual gifts or is your need to be right greater? Name ways you can move closer to God's will in using your spiritual gifts.

and the Holy Spirit work together to build up the church so should those with spiritual gifts never use them as they choose or without concern for the feelings of others. We are never to take **credit** for what God has freely given to each of us. The **outcome** of using the gifts is controlled by our generous God. We are not to take personal pride in or be jealous over them. These behaviors lead to rivalries between believers and don't build up the church.

The Same in Christ

(1Corinthians 12:12-31a; Ephesians 4:11-16)

A while ago I fell and broke my right leg and my ankle. Before the fall I enjoyed good balance, could move around freely and had strength to do most anything. My body parts worked well together in meeting my daily personal needs. After the fall I spent months in a wheel chair, with casts, on walkers and doing therapy. Nothing felt right or worked together as I tried to do what I needed to each day. There was a lot of pain and no comfort. That's what happens when some part of our body does not work with the rest of the body. Every part of our body from the smallest finger to the wonderful brain must work together so the whole body works in a healthy way. That's God's plan.

Paul used the human body as an example of the church body. Each "body" has different members which work in different ways to do the job God planned for it. Some gifts are for the good of the believers themselves and others to build up the church. All members are needed and must work together for the good of the body of Christ.

We are to counsel and encourage others to use their gifts. Even though we all have different gifts and abilities, we all have the Holy Spirit in us. We all belong to Christ. We work together to tell the Good News using our gifts from the Holy Spirit. The outcome is to be the healthy building up of the church body in Christ as others become believers. It is everyone's responsibility, not just the preachers', teachers' and ministry leaders' job to do.

Glory to God (1 Peter 4:10-11)

Peter also tells us that we are to find what our abilities are and use them. All Christians need to find out what gift or gifts God has given them. Make a list of those gifts and don't hide them. Don't keep them to yourself. Use them in the **fellowship** of other believers for their good. This is God's plan. Serve others in the strength of the Lord and give Him the credit!

My husband pushed me around in a wheel chair and helped me for months as my broken leg was very slow in healing. He cooked, cleaned the house, and lovingly cared for me. I know it was the strength of the Lord that allowed him to have such a servant's heart and loving attitude as those days turned into weeks and months. I am thankful to the Lord and grateful for my husband. God is good!

As believers we are to remember "the words of God". Be careful not to speak what we want others to believe but to speak truth from the Lord as He directs us. It is important that those who teach or preach do so with great care in what they say when speaking on behalf of the Lord. Pray for His words in your mouth and do not trust in your own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5)

When we use our gifts as God tells us to in the service of others, they see Christ in us and thank the Lord. Get self out of the way and let God work through you

for the good of others. To God be the glory and among believers let there be peace.

1 Corinthians 12:4-31a

4 There are different kinds of gifts. But it is the same Holy Spirit Who gives them. ⁵ There are different kinds of work to be done for Him. But the work is for the same Lord. ⁶ There are different ways of doing His work. But it is the same God who uses all these ways in all people. ⁷ The Holy Spirit works in each person in one way or another for the good of all. ⁸ One person is given the gift of teaching words of wisdom. Another person is given the gift of teaching what he has learned and knows. These gifts are by the same Holy Spirit. ⁹ One person receives the gift of faith. Another person receives the gifts of healing. These gifts are given by the same Holy Spirit. ¹⁰ One person is given the gift of doing powerful works. Another person is given the gift of speaking God's Word. Another person is given the gift of telling the difference between the Holy Spirit and false spirits. Another person is given the gift of speaking in special sounds. Another person is given the gift of telling what these special sounds mean. ¹¹ But it is the same Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, Who does all these things. He gives to each person as He wants to give.

¹² Our own body has many parts. When all these many parts are put together, they are only one body. The body of Christ is like this. ¹³ It is the same way with us. Jews or those who are not Jews, men who are owned by someone or men who are free to do what they want to do, have all been baptized into the one body by the same Holy Spirit. We have all received the one Spirit.

¹⁴ The body is not one part, but many parts.

¹⁵If the foot should say, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,” that would not stop it from being a part of the body. ¹⁶If the ear should say, “I am not a part of the body because I am not an eye,” that would not stop it from being a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye how would it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how would it smell? ¹⁸But God has put all the parts into the body just as He wants to have them. ¹⁹If all the parts were the same, it could not be a body. ²⁰But now there are many parts, but one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not need you.” Or the head cannot say to the feet, “I do not need you.” ²²Some of the parts we think are weak and not important are very important. ²³We take good care of and cover with clothes the parts of the body that look less important. The parts which do not look beautiful have an important work to do. ²⁴The parts that can be seen do not need as much care. God has made the body so more care is given to the parts that need it most. ²⁵This is so the body will not be divided into parts. All the parts care for each other. ²⁶If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it. If one part is given special care, the other parts are happy. ²⁷You are all a part of the body of Christ. ²⁸

God has chosen different ones in the church to do His work. First, there are missionaries. Second, there are preachers or those who speak for God. And third, there are teachers. He has also chosen those who do powerful works and those who have the gifts of healing. And He has chosen those who help others who are in need and those who are able to lead others in work and those who speak in special sounds. ²⁹Are they all missionaries? No. Are they all preachers or those who speak for God? No. Do they

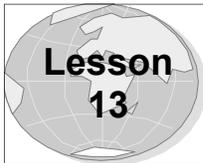
all do powerful works? No. ³⁰Do they all have the gifts of healing? No. Do they all speak in special sounds? No. Are they all able to tell what the special sounds mean? No. ³¹But from your heart you should want the best gifts.

1 Peter 4:10-11

¹⁰God has given each of you a gift. Use it to help each other. This will show God’s loving-favor. ¹¹If a man preaches, let him do it with God speaking through him. If a man helps others, let him do it with the strength God gives. So in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ. Shining-greatness and power belong to Him forever. Let it be so.

Ephesians 4:11-16

¹¹Christ gave gifts to men. He gave to some the gift to be missionaries, some to be preachers, others to be preachers who go from town to town. He gave others the gift to be church leaders and teachers. ¹²These gifts help His people work well for Him. And then the church which is the body of Christ will be made strong. ¹³All of us are to be as one in the faith and in knowing the Son of God. We are to be full-grown Christians standing as high and complete as Christ is Himself. ¹⁴Then we will not be as children any longer. Children are like boats thrown up and down on big waves. They are blown with the wind. False teaching is like the wind. False teachers try everything possible to make people believe a lie, ¹⁵but we are to hold to the truth with love in our hearts. We are to grow up and be more like Christ. He is the leader of the church. ¹⁶Christ has put each part of the church in its right place. Each part helps other parts. This is what is needed to keep the whole body together. In this way, the whole body grows strong in love.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 21:1-4;
1 Timothy 6:6-10,
17-19

Memory Verse

"Tell them to do good and be rich in good works. They should give much to those in need and be ready to share."

(1 Timothy 6:18)

Word List

content: to be at ease, satisfied, happy, fulfilled, at peace

especially: before all else, important, above all

shameful: full of shame, disgraceful, dishonorable, immoral, mean, wicked

temptations: something that attracts or makes someone want to do something wrong

vulnerable: not able to defend oneself, unprotected, open to attack, weak

Be Generous with Your Money

In the book of Luke we learn about the problems with loving money and earthly possessions. It teaches us how this passion for wealth can lead us into attitudes and behavior that drag us into sin. The religious leaders of Jesus time often had a problem with earthly riches and the desire for money. They used their leadership to make themselves wealthy. Jesus knew of the evil ways in which they did this and talked about it in the temple. His words to them are a warning to us about how we deal with money.

Paul, in his letter to Timothy, helps us see how to use our earthly riches for the good of others. He explains that it is important to keep our eyes on Christ at all times while we are storing our "riches" in heaven. This is possible, but how?

True Generosity Gives of Self (Luke 21:1-4)

As a child I remember my grandmother's sister who was married to a poor country preacher. Her name was Lida. I saw her at family events along with her husband. I heard the family talk of how difficult life was for them financially. It was during the "Great Depression" in America and life was hard nearly everywhere. They had a very small home with little furniture. The most important thing I remember about her was her face. It had a glow about it and her laugh was loud and seemed to come from deep inside her soul. I never saw her unhappy, depressed or even sad. She always wanted to know how each family member was doing and offered food or prayer for anyone in need of

Things to Think About

1. Have you ever known someone who stole from people who were poor, weak or vulnerable? Tell about this.

What can we do to help these people not become victims for the greedy?

2. If you give a man a fish you feed him for today. If you teach a man to fish you feed him for a lifetime.

What does this mean? Why is it important to help people help themselves?

3. How can we know when we are trusting in money and possessions more than trusting in God? What can we do to keep our desires for money and earthly possessions under control ?

4. Living for riches or living for God is a choice. What is the outcome of each?

How will you choose and why?

5. Tell how you will be responsible to be generous in doing good works.

either. I loved her generous attitude and smile.

When her husband died she was very **vulnerable** because of the small amount of money she had and her elderly age. She always laughed and talked about trusting the Lord to provide for her needs. And He did. Aunt Lida and Uncle George gave of themselves in all they had: money, time, possessions and service to the Lord. I loved that about them and still do.

The widows in Jesus' time were even more vulnerable than my aunt. Jesus told the people in the temple about the religious leaders (20:45-47). He said they wore lavish clothing, loved praise and took the widow's inheritance when her husband died. This left the widows with very little making them very vulnerable and helpless. Jesus spoke out against this **shameful** practice.

It is important to know how the widows of Jesus' time were treated and how hard their life was. In knowing this we better understand how much of a sacrifice the widow made. Jesus saw the people putting their gifts in the treasury of the temple. The rich brought wealthy gifts but Jesus saw the poor widow's gift of two small copper coins of least value. She did not give what she didn't need to live on nor did she give a tithe of one tenth of her income. She gave to God all she had. She gave her last penny. Nothing was left. She trusted God with everything.

We should never gain for ourselves by taking from others, **especially** the weak, poor or vulnerable. Jesus spoke out against this in the temple. Rather than building up our own wealth from those who are vulnerable, we are to do what we can to provide opportunity and help so they will be able to care for themselves. That might mean giving rides to work, school, or a trip to the

store. It might mean providing a place to stay for those who have lost everything or making car repairs for a widow. We are to give what we have with true generosity in love towards others like the widow who gave all she had with sacrificial generosity.

Living in Contentment or Temptation (1 Timothy 6:6-10)

There are those who believe that money will bring happiness. As we look at our world does that really seem to be true? Think about people who are **content** with what God has provided them. My Aunt Lida comes to my mind. Her freedom from the desire for wealth and riches gave her contentment and joy in the Lord, and in her life.

There are many others that just can not make enough money. The passion for more wealth causes rivalries, abuse in relationships, and the desire to have more at all cost. The desire for more may lead to **temptations** that take us into sin and even destroy us. Most important a faith relationship with the Lord is often left behind for the love of money and things.

We need food, clothing and a place to live. The Lord provides opportunity for

this because He knows our needs. But not even the richest man takes anything he owns beyond the grave, "we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it." Living in contentment with a grateful heart for what the Lord provides, is a choice. Being trapped by our desire for more and more money and living in greed is also a choice we can make. All choices have outcomes in our life that we must live with.

Desire to Share (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

Having wealth brings great **responsibility**. If someone has a lot of money they are not to think of themselves as better than those who do not. They are to be careful not to put their trust and hope in their money, because riches on earth are not to be trusted! It can be gone as quickly as it came and God is our provider, not money.

We are to focus on storing up our "riches" in heaven by trusting in God. Rich people should do good works and have a generous heart. Everyone, no matter how much or how little they have in earthly riches, can be rich in good deeds. We all have something to share with others and a responsibility to do so. Live generously!

Luke 21:1-4

1 Jesus looked up and saw rich men putting their money into the money box in the house of God.

2 He saw a poor woman whose husband had died. She put in two very small pieces of money.

3 He said, “I tell you the truth, this poor woman has put in more than all of them.

4 For they have put in a little of the money they had no need for. She is very poor and has put in all she had. She has put in what she needed for her own living.”

1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

6 A God-like life gives us much when we are happy for what we have.

7 We came into this world with nothing. For sure, when we die, we will take nothing with us.

8 If we have food and clothing, let us be happy.

9 But men who want lots of money are tempted. They are trapped into doing all kinds of foolish things and things which hurt them. These things drag them into sin and will destroy them.

10 The love of money is the beginning of all kinds of sin. Some people have turned from the faith because of their love for money.

They have made much pain for themselves because of this.

...17 Tell those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money. Money cannot be trusted. They should put their trust in God. He gives us all we need for our happiness.

18 Tell them to do good and be rich in good works. They should give much to those in need and be ready to share.

19 Then they will be gathering together riches for themselves. These good things are what they will build on for the future. Then they will have the only true life!