

# IN PURSUIT OF GRACE COMMITMENTS

A Commitment to Generous Living

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*We have seen his Glory...full of Grace and Truth.*

**JOHN 1:14**



# 1

## UNIT ONE

# GENEROUS LIVING IS AN EVIDENCE OF: YOUR LEVEL OF CONTENTMENT

**UNIT ASSIGNMENTS** Find your assignments here: [PERIMETER.org/b2-1](https://PERIMETER.org/b2-1)

### CONTINUE

- ☐ 21 Days of Personal Worship

### COMPLETE

- ☐ Begin memorizing the books of the New Testament  
(see *Learning the Books of The Bible* on page 391)

### PRAYER

- ☐ Create a prayer list of people to whom you would like to make the gospel known

# TRUTH

## ► BY MEMORY

*"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:12 (NIV)**

## ► IN BIBLE

The next four units of *The Journey* will address the important subject of stewardship. A steward is essentially a manager. The term *stewardship* is used to refer to the responsibility God has given His people to manage all the resources He gives. This material will focus on financial stewardship, though the principles of stewardship apply to more than just your management of money.

This week, you will study three passages beginning with a well-known parable told by Jesus that will introduce you to the biblical

concept of stewardship. The other two passages deal with *contentment*, a related topic that has important implications for how you manage the resources God has given you.

Before you begin, you may want to remind yourself of the **PRAISE** approach to personal worship and the **5 Targets of Prayer**. If you have trouble filling in the blanks below, review Unit 2 of Gospel Living or refer to the **21 Day Personal Worship Journal**.

P ..... R ..... A ..... I ..... S ..... E .....

1. GOD'S

2. GOD'S

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**MATTHEW 25:14-30** – In this parable about the Kingdom of God, Jesus tell a story about a fictitious master and his three servants to illustrate the basic principles of stewardship. [Note: The word “*talent*” refers to a specific unit of weight. The talent was a common unit of measurement for money, e.g. a talent of gold, or a talent of silver. The exact modern equivalent of a talent of gold is uncertain. Estimates range from 60 to 100 U.S. pounds. In any case, one talent of gold is a *lot* of money.]

What is the main point of this parable? Try to summarize the main point in one or two sentences.

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**PHILIPPIANS 4:10-20** – Paul wrote this letter to Philippi while in prison. In this passage, he is thanking the Philippian Church for their support and reveals his attitude toward money and possessions.

Summarize Paul’s attitude toward money.

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**1 TIMOTHY 6:3-19** – Paul wrote this letter to Timothy to advise him on discharging his pastoral duties. This passage from chapter 6 contains Paul’s advice about the pursuit of wealth.

In verses 5-10, Paul contrasts financial contentment with the pursuit of wealth. What does Paul say is the consequence of each of these attitudes toward money?

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Summarize Paul's financial advice to the wealthy in verses 17-19.

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### ▶ TO SUMMARIZE

These four units of *The Journey* deal with the *grace commitment* of generous living. The term grace commitment may be new to you so you should know that it is a discipline or commitment that is *motivated by God's grace*. The opposite of a grace commitment is what we have called *performance*. Performance is motivated by a desire to earn God's favor.

The grace commitment of generous living is founded on the biblical concept of *stewardship*. A *steward* is someone who is responsible for managing and developing property and resources for the advancement of the owner. A modern example of a steward is a retail store manager. S/he will have access to and responsibility for inventory, revenue, costs, and staff. Their first responsibility is to manage these so that the store owner makes a profit. Note that the manager owns nothing – not the store, the revenue, nor the inventory. S/he simply manages what is entrusted to him or her. As a demonstration of trust, a wise owner may reward a good manager with a larger salary and more responsibility, but the manager still is not the owner.

As you studied the parable in Matthew 25, you should have noticed that the three servants were not owners; they were essentially an ancient version of managers. The owner entrusted them with his property, held them accountable to increase his worth, and rewarded (or punished) them according to their faithfulness. Perhaps you have already seen how this parable applies to your life. *You own nothing*. Regardless of your net worth, you are only a manager, a steward of God's resources. In fact, all the intangibles that make up your life – skills, gifts, opportunities, intelligence, relationships – are entrusted to you, lent out for the benefit of the owner. Everything in your life is a trust to you so that you can participate with God in the growth of His Kingdom on earth.

Let the impact of this sink in. This may be a radically new and challenging idea for you. Your pulse might be increasing as you ponder the implications of owning *nothing*. You may have to wrestle with this, but if so, wrestle with all your might. For you will find that getting your attitude toward the resources God has entrusted to you (especially the financial resources) in sync with His Kingdom priorities will be a critical component of your spiritual progress. Stewardship is perhaps the most revealing spiritual assessment issue that there is. It is a domino effect. If you are willing to follow Christ in the arena of money management, then other lesser issues fall into place. But, if there is a lack of surrender regarding stewardship, it becomes a significant obstacle to your spiritual growth.

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The goal of these four units is to help you develop a grace-motivated spiritual commitment to generous living. But how will you know if you are progressing in this area? By focusing on the development of four specific factors that relate to stewardship. The first is the foundational issue of your *level of contentment with what God has provided*.

Can you say that you are content with what you have? You may think that depends on how things are going at the moment. How do you think Paul would answer that question? Was his level of contentment subject to the ups and downs of his financial condition? From your reading you learned that this was not the case.

In Philippians 4, Paul was thanking the Philippian Church for their generous support during his imprisonment. At that time, the Roman prison system required families and friends to provide for the necessities of prisoners. Thus, Paul was completely dependent on the generosity of others. Yet, his motivation for thanking them was not to keep the support coming. He focused instead on two things: first, the benefit they would receive by giving (v. 17); and second, his contentment with God's provision, whether much or little (v. 11–12). Paul recognized that God was his ultimate provider and, knowing God's

love and wisdom, he was content; that is, *he was satisfied that God had already provided him everything he needed for his present happiness*.

Interestingly, Paul said he had *learned* to be content (v. 11). At another time in his life, perhaps Paul was only content with abundance, always wanting more. But the cumulative effect of his life experiences as a Christian had taught him that God always met his basic needs, and with this he was content. What happened? How did he learn contentment? The passage from 1 Timothy 6 gives us a helpful answer. Here, Paul wrote something of a proverbial truth: *"For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it"* (v. 7). What Paul is teaching is that no one is ever an owner of anything. Everything is a gift. And if that is the case, then as far as Paul is concerned, the basic necessities of life like food and clothing (v. 8) are great enough gifts to give reason for contentment.

Have you learned to view life this way – that you can be content right now with what God has provided? People who learn that if they have the basic needs of life, they have all they truly need to be happy, are the people who grow up spiritually. Their level of contentment has a domino effect on other spiritual issues as they walk with Christ.



*But let's be clear, contentment is not just about being happy with a little. It is being happy with whatever God gives, whether great or small.*

THESE ARE THE MESSAGES

Notice in Philippians that Paul said he had learned the secret of contentment, whatever his circumstances, whether having a lot or a little (v. 12). Finding contentment with a lot is equally as challenging as finding contentment with a little. The writer of Proverbs 30 understood this challenge, and in fact prayed that God would give him neither poverty nor riches, but only meet his daily needs. He said, *"Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God"* (Proverbs 30:9). So, there is no spiritual advantage in having a little or a lot. Both circumstances offer their own unique challenges. The spiritual advantage is in learning contentment so that you can be happy with whatever God's plan is for your financial situation.

So, how will you learn contentment? Partly by understanding your role as a steward of God's resources. But ultimately, a state of contentment can only be realized through the strengthening

power of Christ. In regards to this Paul wrote, *"I can do everything through him who gives me strength"* (v. 13). In other words, Paul had confidence in the ability of Christ to match any situation that he faced. You will experience the power of Christ as you are filled with His Spirit. Remember, this means inviting His control as you acknowledge your union with Christ. Then, anything God calls you to be and do, you can do through Christ, even being content in every circumstance.

Are you complaining about your situations in life? You will find that without Christ's strength, with an attitude of ownership, contentment is virtually impossible, no matter how much you have. But if you see yourself as a steward who manages God's resources for His Kingdom, then with Christ's strength, you can learn contentment in any circumstance in which He places you. And your contentment will become manifested by your generous living.

# EQUIPPING

Remember to work on the equipping exercise, “Learning the Books of the New Testament” (see *Learning the Books of The Bible on page 391*). By the end of this four-week series you should be able to recite the books of the New Testament by memory in your group meeting.

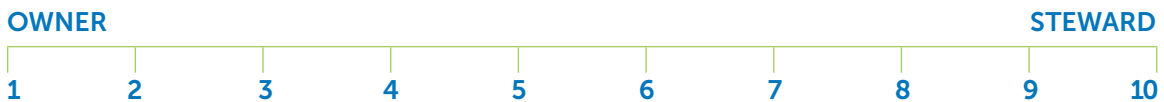
Think about the Bible passages you studied this week. What did you learn from them about stewardship and contentment? Summarize your thoughts in the space below.

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Knowing what you do now, do you view yourself as an owner or a steward?  
On the scale below, place a mark where you see yourself. Then write two or three sentences that describe why you placed yourself there.



Now, imagine that your view of resources (money, time, skills, etc.) was much closer to the “Steward” end of the scale. How would your life be different? How would your management of finances and time change? How would contentment grow in your life? Be specific.

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# ACCOUNTABILITY

Before your Journey Group meeting, use the questions below to examine your life in light of the truth you explored this week.

Have you found yourself wanting to embrace Jesus' teaching on stewardship?

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How do you plan to respond to the truth you learned this week?

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Describe your level of contentment.

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How are you doing in developing a personal worship habit?

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Have you been abusing your freedom in Christ as a license to pursue sinful habits?

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Have you found yourself growing in your desire to embrace the call to be an ambassador?

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# MISSION

## ▶ PRAYING

During the Gospel Living series, you explored the what, why, how, and where of missional living:

- **What is it?** Sharing in Jesus' mission to make the gospel known to all people
- **Why participate in it?** The love of God displayed in the gospel compels and empowers
- **How is it manifested?** By sharing in word and demonstrating by deeds
- **Where does it impact the world?** Across the street, track, and ocean

Now let's think about *who* missional living impacts. Who are the people that Christians make the gospel known to? They are those who are not believers, and those who may have other physical, economic, or spiritual needs. Sometimes Christians refer to these as *the least* and *the lost*. You may find the least and the lost across the street where you live, work, and play, or across the track in your community, or across the ocean.

One significant element of missional living is growing in the grace commitment of missional praying for the least and lost. And this is best done by specifically praying for individuals or groups rather than generally for all the least and lost. As you develop the grace commitment of praying regularly for specific people, God will begin leading you into opportunities to make the gospel known to them through word and deed.

Creating a short list of people to pray for is the first step in developing a regular habit of praying for specific people. Who will you put on your list? Ask yourself these questions:

- **Who are the people (individuals or groups) that I am concerned about?**
- **Who are the people that respect my influence?** (e.g. friends, children, spouse, neighbors and colleagues)
- **What are the needs in my community?** (refer to the list of needs you created in Unit 3 of Gospel Living)

Your Mission assignment this week is to create a list of people for whom you will regularly pray throughout this year of *The Journey*. You will want to pray specifically for each person or group on your list, but your general focus should be that God would meet their needs and give you opportunities to make the gospel known to them through word and deed. Create your prayer list on the next page following the example provided. Then begin praying daily for these people and be prepared to discuss your prayer list at your next Journey Group meeting.

**EXAMPLE:**

Name: *Tony*

Relationship *Friend, neighbor, and occasional tennis partner*

Situation/Need *Tony grew up in church but isn't a believer as far as I know. He is successful in his profession, but is divorced and sometimes feels bitter about it.*

Prayer Goal: *I want God to use me to help Tony see that hope and purpose are found in Christ alone and don't depend on his marital situation or professional success.*

**PRAYER LIST**

Person/Group: .....

Relationship: .....

Situation/Need: .....

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Prayer Goal: .....

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Person/Group: .....

Relationship: .....

Situation/Need: .....

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# SUPPLICATION

*"Two things I ask of you; deny them not from me before I die: <sup>8</sup>Remove from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty or riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, <sup>9</sup>lest I be full and deny you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God."*

## PROVERBS 30:7-9 (ESV)

Pray about being a good steward who manages God's resources for His Kingdom purposes.

Think about the impact His gifts could have in your life and those around you. Ask God to teach you contentment both with what He gives, and what He withholds.

My prayer request regarding the truth for this week:

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My prayer request regarding a situation in my life:

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*"There are three conversions: the conversion of the heart, the mind, and the purse."*

**MARTIN LUTHER**

My prayer request regarding living a missional life:

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## 2

## UNIT TWO

# GENEROUS LIVING IS AN EVIDENCE OF: YOUR CHOICE OF INVESTMENT

**UNIT ASSIGNMENTS** Find your assignments here: [PERIMETER.org/b2-2](https://PERIMETER.org/b2-2)

**CONTINUE**

- ☐ 21 Days of Personal Worship

**COMPLETE**

- ☐ Memorize the books of the New Testament
- ☐ Have a conversation with someone on your prayer list; gain insight into their needs



# TRUTH

## ► BY MEMORY

*<sup>19</sup>"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup>but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."*

**MATTHEW 6:19-20 (ESV)**

## ► IN BIBLE

Last week, you were introduced to the subject of stewardship and learned the foundational principle of contentment – being satisfied with whatever God provides.

This week, you will read several short passages that deal with stewardship from the perspective of investing in the Kingdom of God and receiving a return. Why should you invest financially in the Kingdom of God? What sort of return can you expect? As you study the **IN BIBLE** passages you should be alert for concepts and words (depending on your translation) like *giving*, *treasure*, *reward*, *credit*, and *account*. You can use these passages for your personal worship. Remember to use **PRAISE** and be sure to think about specific, measurable applications to your life.

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**PHILIPPIANS 4:14-17** – You read these verses last week. Read them again, this time focusing on the way Paul uses financial terminology (partnership, account, credit, etc).

The Philippians' financial partnership with Paul had an impact on both Paul and the Philippians. What does Paul say are the impacts of their financial partnership with him?

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**PROVERBS 3:9-10** – These well-known verses on stewardship were written by King Solomon and reflect the agrarian-centered economy that prospered under his reign.

Try your hand at creative writing. Rewrite these verses to capture their meaning for a modern industrial and technological economy.

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**MATTHEW 6:19-24** – These verses from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount contrast the investments made in two different banks, and two different masters.

What is the result of making eternal versus temporal investments?

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What is main point of verse 24?

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**MATTHEW 19:16-30** – In this story, Jesus exposed the self-righteousness and spiritual poverty of a rich man and used this to teach His disciples the rewards they could expect for following Him.

What investment had the disciples made in Jesus? What rewards could they expect?

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## ► TO SUMMARIZE

Last week, you began a series of four units exploring the meaning of a grace commitment to *stewardship*. Remember, a *grace commitment* is a discipline or commitment that is motivated by the grace of God, rather than an effort to earn God's favor. The first unit dealt with what it means to be content with the portion of God's property that He has given you to manage for His Kingdom. This week, your study on stewardship deals with the idea of *investing* in God's Kingdom.

Everyone likes a good investment. In fact, people can be pretty enthusiastic about their investment opportunities. Perhaps you've been approached by an enthusiast of this or that stock who tells you, *"You just have to get in on the ground floor of this one!"* Well, maybe you were convinced, maybe not. But, what if there was a bank that paid a guaranteed rate of interest that no other investment could match? Would you be on board? Of course you would, *if it were guaranteed*. Is there such a bank? Metaphorically speaking, there is, and if you are a follower of Christ, you already have an account there in your name!

You will recall from your study in Philippians 4 that Paul wrote to thank the Philippian church for providing for his needs during his imprisonment. His motive for writing was not to encourage them to give more. Though his personal needs were certainly important to him, his greater concern was to ensure them that their giving was not lost or wasted. *"Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account"* (Philippians 4:17 NAS). In writing this, Paul used two words from the financial arena to describe how God would keep a record of their generosity: *profit*, which was used to mean results, produce, dividends, or interest; and *account*, which some versions translate as *credit*. So, Paul was telling the Philippians that God was keeping a record of their support for Paul and crediting their giving to their own eternal accounts.

Know this – if you are a follower of Christ, then the moment you became a Christian, an account was opened in your name (so to speak) in the First Bank of Heaven. Christians who understand the guaranteed return on investing in this account become very enthusiastic about giving to the Kingdom of God. Not that anyone ever earns their way into heaven with this account; entrance to heaven is a gift of grace. Rather, this account was opened for you as another benefit of the grace of God so that none of your good works as a Christian (including giving) would ever be lost.

Another important thing for you to remember is that deposits are made into your account every time you give to God's Kingdom with good motives. When are you giving to God's Kingdom? Anytime you give to that which puts Christ first and advances His reign on the earth. It could be the tithes and offerings you contribute to your own church, or the contributions you send to relief or outreach missions in your community and around the world, or even the gifts you share in the name of Christ with someone you know who is in need. When you give with the intent to advance God's Kingdom, to make His Glory and fame greater in the world, your investment will be secure for eternity. *"...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal"* (Matthew 6:20 ESV).

In fact, not only will you not lose your investment, but God will pay excessively high dividends on every deposit you make. The word *increase* in Philippians 4:17 *literally means to accrue excessively so as to reach overflowing proportions*.

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You read several other passages this week that also teach this truth. Here are some examples:

*"Honor the LORD with your wealth...then your barns will be filled with plenty."*

**PROVERBS 3:9-10 ESV**

*"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life."*

**MATTHEW 19:29 ESV**

*"Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap."*

**LUKE 6:38 ESV**

Unfortunately, verses like these have been wrongly interpreted in recent times so that many people believe if you give a \$100 bill to God, God promises you \$10,000 in return. But this teaching (called Prosperity Theology) is clearly contradictory to the whole of Scripture. It wrongly focuses on *lifestyle*, whereas God's promises focus on the prosperous *life* in Christ that Christians experience both now and in eternity (see John 10:10 and 3 John 1:2). As you follow Christ and develop the generous habits of a faithful steward of God's Kingdom, God will bless and prosper your life in many ways, but prosperity of lifestyle may or may not be included in His blessing. So, your focus should be on God's Kingdom, God's Glory, and your eternal investment.

Perhaps you haven't thought of giving to God's Kingdom as an investment before. Maybe you've thought of giving as a tax write-off at best or a waste of hard earned wages at worst. Not if God's Word is true and dependable. The verses

you studied this week describe supporting the Kingdom of God as an investment that is guaranteed to yield extraordinary eternal dividends in which not one penny is wasted. Your earthly needs will be met plentifully, your treasures will be secure for eternity, and you will receive extraordinary eternal return on your investment.

So, in regards to your choice of investment, the question is, do you believe God? Do you really believe that eternal rewards are of far greater worth than any temporal investment? If so, your faith will be evidenced by a grace commitment to enthusiastic, generous investment in His Kingdom. But, just as many are more content with abundance than with having little, so also, many are more enthusiastic about investing in this life than in the Kingdom of God. What about you? How will you respond to this truth? Will you reevaluate your financial priorities in light of your eternal investment opportunities?

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# EQUIPPING

Continue to work on the equipping exercise, "Learning the Books of the New Testament" included in last week's material. By the end of this four-week series, you should be able to recite the books of the New Testament from memory in your group meeting.

Review Matthew 6:19-24. Jesus is teaching on the financial implications of belonging to the Kingdom of God. Write a few sentences to answer this question: regardless of your income, assets, or debts, what is your financial responsibility as a steward of God's Kingdom? (Try to be more specific than "to put God first.")

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Take a few minutes to look through your financial records for the last month. Imagine you were an independent auditor researching the question, "What is this person investing in?" What would that independent auditor write in a report about you?

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Assuming you have a desire to be a steward who generously invests in God's Kingdom, what do you think is holding you back? Is it bad financial habits? A lack of faith? Poor planning? Overwhelming debt? Misguided values? Write a few sentences describing what holds you back and what you think God would need to do for you (or in you) in order to become the steward you want to be.

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# ACCOUNTABILITY

Before your Journey Group meeting, use the questions below to examine your life in light of the truth you explored this week.

What are you investing in? What do you truly value?

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How enthusiastic are you about investing in your heavenly bank account?

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What are your main motives when you give?

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Have you found yourself wanting to embrace Jesus' teaching on stewardship?

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How do you plan to respond to the truth you learned this week?

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Describe your level of contentment.

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How are you doing in developing a personal worship habit?

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Did you work on your Mission assignment this week?

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# MISSION

► **PRAYING** You have now explored the what, why, how, where, and who of missional living:

- **What is it?** Sharing in Jesus' mission to make the gospel known to all people
- **Why participate in it?** The love of God displayed in the gospel compels and empowers
- **How is it manifested?** By sharing in word and demonstrating by deeds
- **Where does it impact the world?** Across the street, track, and ocean
- **Who does it impact?** The least and the lost

Remember that our Christian mission is to intentionally share in Jesus' mission. Last week, you took a significant step toward developing a missional life by creating a list of people for whom you have committed yourself to pray. Remember to pray for each person or group that God will meet their specific needs and use you to make the gospel known to them through word and deed.

Your Mission assignment for this week is to spend some time in conversation with one person on your list in order to gain further insight into that person's needs. The conversation could be an

informal "water cooler" chat, or take place over lunch. Also, it doesn't have to be about spiritual things per se. Your goal is to better understand how you could be specifically praying for this person, and this insight can be gained through casual conversation. You needn't ask direct questions since that could be awkward unless you know the person well. But you can express concern for any needs this person shares in the course of conversation, and you might let them know that you will be praying about their need. Be prepared to discuss your conversation at your next Journey Group meeting.

Person/Group: .....

Conversation Summary: .....

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Insight into needs: .....

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How this conversation will change my prayers for this person: .....

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# SUPPLICATION

*"Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup>For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. <sup>33</sup>But seek you first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*

**MATTHEW 6:31-33 (ESV)**

Your heavenly Father knows every need you have, even before you ask Him. Ask Him to place in your heart the desire to seek his kingdom first. Pray for supernatural faith to know, trust, and believe that He will provide all of your needs.

My prayer request regarding the truth for this week:

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*"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."*

**JIM ELLIOT**

My prayer request regarding a situation in my life:

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My prayer request regarding living a missional life:

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Prayer requests from others in my group:

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*"The real measure of wealth is how much we would be worth if we lost all of our money."*

**J. H. JOWETT**

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## 3

## UNIT THREE

# GENEROUS LIVING IS AN EVIDENCE OF: YOUR MOTIVE OF WORSHIP

**UNIT ASSIGNMENTS** Find your assignments here: [PERIMETER.org/b2-3](https://PERIMETER.org/b2-3)

**CONTINUE**

- ☐ 21 Days of Personal Worship

**COMPLETE**

- ☐ Memorize the books of the New Testament
- ☐ Have a conversation with someone on your prayer list; gain insight into their needs

# TRUTH

## ► BY MEMORY

*"Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*

**2 CORINTHIANS 9:7 (ESV)**

## ► IN BIBLE

So far in this section of *The Journey*, you have explored the stewardship principles of contentment and investment. You found that contentment with God's provision and a priority on investing in the eternal are foundational to biblical stewardship.

This week, your focus will be on the *motive* for giving. What motive for giving delights the heart of God? You'll find out as you compare two Old Testament passages with a few verses from Paul's writings. As you connect the dots between Paul's teaching and these Old Testament stories of sacrifice, a picture will

emerge that will challenge the way you think about giving. Remember to bask in the glory of Christ by continuing in daily personal worship. Remember to follow **PRAISE** and the **5 Targets of Prayer**. It's especially important to remember the "S" of **PRAISE** so be sure to think about specific, measurable applications to your life.

**PRAY FIRST** : **READ THE TEXT** : **ASK QUESTIONS** : **INTERPRET IN CONTEXT** : **SUMMARIZE APPLICATIONS** : **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

**1. GOD'S HONOR** : **2. GOD'S KINGDOM** : **3. GOD'S PROVISION** : **4. GOD'S FORGIVENESS** : **5. GOD'S POWER**

**GENESIS 22:1-18** – This well-known story of ultimate sacrifice challenges us to examine who (or what) we truly love.

What did Abraham believe about God that enabled him to sacrifice his only son and heir?

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**2 SAMUEL 24:17-25** – In this passage, King David's true motives are revealed when he is given an opportunity to make an offering to God that would cost him nothing.

How would you describe David's motives for buying Araunah's property?

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**PHILIPPIANS 4:18** – This verse connects giving with worship by using the Old Testament language of sacrifice to describe the gift Paul received from the Philippians during his imprisonment.

From this verse, try to describe the relationship between stewardship, giving, worship, and sacrifice.

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**2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-11** – In this passage, Paul is encouraging the Corinthian church to follow through on their promise to collect a famine relief offering for suffering Christians in Judea.

What does this passage teach you about motives for giving? What does it teach about the Supplier of every need?

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## ► TO SUMMARIZE

You have been learning what it means to have a grace motivated commitment to generous living. Such living is an outward evidence of contentment with what God entrusts to you, and an evidence of your choice to invest in the kingdom of God. This week, you will explore how generous living is also an evidence of an inward motive of worship.

A basic formula that will serve you well to remember is, “*Good deeds + bad motives = unfavorable results.*” Imagine a husband coming home, flowers in hand for his wife. “What’s the occasion?” she asks. “No occasion,” he says. “Just wanted you to know how much I love you.” His wife is delighted... until later during dinner he says, “Honey, you remember the picnic I promised you tomorrow afternoon? Something has come up and...” Well, he won’t even get to finish that sentence before his wife smells a rat in the motive behind those flowers, and he isn’t going to have a pleasant evening.

The formula holds true in the realm of your spiritual life as well. The Bible is clear that you can do good deeds prescribed by God, add to it a wrong motive (God *always* knows the motive), and the result from God is very unfavorable. He is not pleased at all. In fact, Jesus’ response to those who did bad things was actually more favorable than his interaction with those who did good things like praying, fasting, or giving with bad motives. On the other hand, as mentioned last week, God has promised an eternal reward when you invest in the kingdom of God with good motives. The question for you to consider is what motives God would consider good. Or, let’s ask, what is the best motive that delights the heart of God when you invest in His kingdom?

The answer is the motive of *worship* – exulting or glorying in God so as to magnify His worth. In Philippians 4:18, Paul describes the gift he received from the Philippian believers as “*a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.*” This manner of speaking may seem strange to modern ears, but Paul’s audience would have understood that he was using the language of Old Testament worship – referring to the system of animal sacrifices – to describe their gift. The phrase “*fragrant aroma*” refers to the smoke of the sacrifice rising to the heavens as it burned on the altar.

Often this rising smoke was called a *pleasing aroma* to God (see Exodus 29 for several examples). Paul wanted the Philippians to understand that their offering was not merely received gratefully by him; it was also an act of worship that delighted the heart of God.

If you wonder why God would be delighted by the Philippians’ gift or an Old Testament sacrifice, just consider the fact that sacrifice has always been a universal standard for the measurement of love. If you have young children, don’t you enjoy hearing those simple little words, “I love you, Mommy;” “I love you, Daddy?” But isn’t your pleasure increased when your child expresses their love with a hug or a kiss? Even more if your little one took the time get out the crayons and the paper to draw the expression of their love for you? That small sacrifice of time and effort causes those drawings to become very precious to you. No matter the language or culture, sacrifices (even on a childlike scale) are understood as an expression of love.

So, if you recognize the value of a sacrifice as an expression of love, shouldn’t you expect that God would, too? Yes, God has always delighted in the sacrifices of His people. Consider the story of Abraham’s ultimate sacrifice in Genesis 22. Remember that Abraham had no heir when God promised the birth of Isaac and the blessing that would come to the whole world through Abraham’s descendants. So, just imagine Abraham’s shock when God said, “*Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering*” (v. 2). What was going through Abraham’s mind as he raised the knife above his son? More importantly, what was going on in the mind of God as he beheld the sacrifice Abraham was so willing to make? God had to be delighted by the love, the trust, and the devotion that was demonstrated there on the mountain.

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Hundreds of years later, under the Old Covenant which God established with Abraham's descendants, God created a system to allow Israel to express their love and devotion to Him through sacrifices. Under this system there were several different kinds of sacrifices. Some dealt with the problem of sin and were a way of reminding God's people that they had to look beyond themselves and their own merits to receive forgiveness. Other sacrifices were meant to be an expression of thanksgiving or adoration. This is the kind of sacrifice King David offered in 2 Samuel 24. David had sinned, which brought judgment upon Israel. But God in His mercy stayed His hand, and David was told to offer a sacrifice on the property of a non-Israelite, named Araunah. Araunah offered to give David the land, the materials for the altar, and the animals for the sacrifice free of charge. But David replied, *"No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing"* (v. 24).

How do you think God would have responded if David had taken Araunah up on the deal? Would God have been pleased? You can bank on this, that God was much more pleased and thrilled that David wanted this sacrifice to cost him something personally. Such a sacrifice was a true offering of worship that delighted God because it magnified God's infinite worth by springing from a motive of love and thanksgiving.

Now, understand that the acceptable expressions of sacrifice have changed since the death and resurrection of Christ. God no longer requires offerings for sin because the cross was God's ultimate sacrifice that once and for all time satisfied the justice of God. You don't have to win God's favor with offerings.

If you belong to Jesus, you are free from the need to perform to earn God's acceptance. True, God is pleased by your obedience and worship with right motives, but His favor and acceptance have been won for you by Christ.

So, what acceptable forms of sacrifice remain for believers today? The New Testament mentions several *"spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"* (see 1 Peter 2:5). The first of these is described in Romans 12:2, the living sacrifice of your body. This is simply the surrender of your life and will to be an instrument of God's kingdom on earth. Another is the sacrifice of praise found in Hebrews 13:15. This is the verbal worship we offer to God in the name of Christ. Last, there is the sacrifice of our gifts and offerings depicted in Philippians 4:18. All of these are described as sacrifices that are pleasing to God.

As is the case with Old Testament sacrifices, the acceptability of these New Testament sacrifices is determined by the motive. When it comes to your gifts and offerings, your memory verse taught you that *"God loves [is pleased by] a cheerful giver"* (2 Corinthians 9:7). What this means is that God wants you to give for the very *joy and love* of giving. In Matthew 26 you will find a beautiful illustration of this in the story of the woman who poured a flask of costly perfume over Jesus' head. It was probably a family heirloom worth a year's wages, and a precious treasure to her. But when she met Jesus she took the best she had and let it overflow as an extravagant gift on the one she loved most. The disciples called it a waste, saying that it should have been sold and the money given to the poor. But Jesus rebuked them, and was pleased to receive the woman's gift as a sacrifice of love and worship.

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Is this the way you sacrifice to God – out of worship, with the sacrifice of your life, your praise, and your gifts? Do your sacrifices cost you something, as they did David? Is worship the motivator of your giving? Are you finding in your heart a longing to give your best to the one you love the most?

As you think about these questions, you might find it instructive to evaluate your growth in giving in terms of your progress through school. There is:

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- **Kindergarten Giving:** The sporadic, impulsive giving of whatever happens to be in your pocket at the time the offering is received.
  - **Grade School Giving:** Reluctant tithing. It's giving because you feel you have to give God his 10% to keep Him "off your back." The tithing is good, but the motive is bad.
  - **High School Giving:** Worshipful tithing. It is giving out of joyful love for Jesus. It knows that He is worth the other 90% as well and can have it anytime He asks. In terms of giving, God's plan is that every true follower of Christ should "graduate" from High School. Make it your goal, not to earn the favor of God, but to experience the joy of giving.
  - **College Giving:** Sacrificial giving beyond the tithe. Like the woman with the flask of perfume, these Christians know they don't have to give more, but their earnest desire is to offer a sacrifice of love that goes beyond what He requires.
  - **Graduate School Giving:** Faith promise giving. This is trusting God for what you don't have yet. It is a pledge that if God will provide X dollars, you will return it to Him as an investment in His kingdom.
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As a final reminder, you need never give out of guilt in an effort to earn God's favor, no matter where you find yourself in the school of giving. Think of your giving, no matter how great or small, as a sacrifice of worship that is made acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). You may give out of raw obedience, but

then you should ask God to give you a heart of joyful worship in your giving. That is a prayer He will certainly honor. You will soon see yourself growing in contentment with God's provision. And as you invest in the kingdom of God, your motive of worship will express a love that greatly pleases your God.

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# EQUIPPING

You should continue to work on the equipping exercise, “Learning the Books of the New Testament.” By next week you should be able to recite the books of the New Testament from memory.

In 2 Samuel 24, you read that Araunah offered to give David everything he needed for the burnt offering. **So, he also was willing to bear the cost of this sacrifice. What do you think would have made his personal sacrifice acceptable to God? What would have made it unacceptable?**

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Perhaps you haven’t ever understood why preachers say that receiving the offering is a time of worship. **Has the offering been a worshipful moment for you? Will it be now? Explain.**

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Is worship the motivator of your giving? Are you finding in your heart a longing to give your best to the One you love the most?

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Think about your level of contentment, your choices of investment, and your motives in giving. **Then take another look at the school of giving and write a few sentences describing how you see your growth in the grace commitment to generous living.**

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# ACCOUNTABILITY

Before your Journey Group meeting, use the questions below to examine your life in light of the truth you explored this week.

Does the discussion about motives and giving make you feel defensive? If so, why?

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How enthusiastic are you about investing in your heavenly bank account?

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In the past, what have your motives been for giving?

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Does the truth about giving tempt you to live in the world of performance instead of grace?

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Is there any part of your life that you haven't been willing to surrender to the control of the Holy Spirit?

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Are people in your circle of influence aware that you are a follower of Christ? Why or why not?

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How are you doing in developing a personal worship habit?

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Have you been praying for the people on your prayer list?

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# MISSION

## ▶ PRAYING

Last week, you had a conversation with someone on your missional prayer list in order to gain further insight into their needs. This week, you will choose another person on your prayer list and do the same. Or, if you haven't completed your mission for last week, you have another opportunity this week. Remember that your mission is to intentionally share in Jesus' mission.

The conversation could be an informal "water cooler" chat, or take place over lunch. Also, it doesn't have to be about spiritual things per se. Your goal is to better understand how you could be praying for this person. You can express

concern for any needs this person shares in the course of conversation, and you might let them know that you will be praying about their need. Be prepared to discuss your conversation at your next Journey Group meeting.

Person/Group: .....

Conversation Summary: .....

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Insight into needs: .....

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How this conversation will change my prayers for this person: .....

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How could I be the answer to my prayers for this person? .....

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# SUPPLICATION

*"Through him let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of your lips that acknowledge his name. <sup>16</sup>Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."*

**HEBREWS 13:15-16 (ESV)**

Take time to praise and thank God for all that he has entrusted to you. Ask him to give you a heart for increased sacrificial giving to others and spiritual eyes to recognize the needs of others.

My prayer request regarding the truth for this week:

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My prayer request regarding a situation in my life:

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**C.H. SPURGEON**



# 4

## UNIT FOUR

# GENEROUS LIVING IS AN EVIDENCE OF: YOUR DEMONSTRATION OF FAITH

**UNIT ASSIGNMENTS** Find your assignments here: [PERIMETER.org/b2-4](https://PERIMETER.org/b2-4)

### CONTINUE

- ☐ 21 Days of Personal Worship

### COMPLETE

- ☐ Be ready to recite aloud the books of the New Testament in your group meeting

### PRAYER WALK

- ☐ Take a prayer walk and journal about your experience

# TRUTH

## ► BY MEMORY

*"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:19 (ESV)**

## ► IN BIBLE

Over the last three weeks, you have looked at these issues related to financial stewardship: contentment with God's provision, a priority on investing in God's eternal kingdom, and a motive of worship in your giving. In this final unit on the grace commitment of generous living, you will focus on the interplay between God's promised provision and your faith that He will provide for your needs.

In recent weeks, you have studied several portions of Scripture related to stewardship. This week, you'll explore a few more, plus in the

**EQUIPPING** section, you'll take another look at these same passages, looking specifically for God's promised provision and the conditions that qualify you to receive those promises.

As you study and pray, don't cheat yourself by failing to think about specific, measurable applications to your life. Let the words of Jesus encourage you to apply God's Word to your life. *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock"* (Matthew 7:24).

**PRAY FIRST**    **READ THE TEXT**    **ASK QUESTIONS**    **INTERPRET IN CONTEXT**    **SUMMARIZE APPLICATIONS**    **ENGAGE WITH GOD**

**DEUTERONOMY 8** – Before Israel entered the Promised Land, God spoke through Moses to remind them that He is the source of all they have and need, and to warn them not to forget their dependency on Him.

What was the purpose of Israel's testing in the wilderness? (verses 1-6)

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How would you describe the provision God had in store for Israel? (verses 7-10)

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Summarize the warning God gave to Israel (verses 11-20). What is the "danger" of a blessed life?

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**1 KINGS 17** – In this story, you will see how God provided for both the prophet Elijah and a poor widow (who, interestingly, was not an Israelite) because they trusted God and took Him at His word.

Describe how both Elijah and the widow demonstrated their faith in God's provision.

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**LUKE 6:37-38** – In his record of the Sermon on the Mount, Luke records several short statements Jesus made to teach that certain actions will result in specific blessings.

List the actions and resultant blessings Jesus mentioned in these two verses.

Action: ..... Result: .....

Action: ..... Result: .....

Action: ..... Result: .....

## ► TO SUMMARIZE

Here we are in the fourth and final unit of this series on the grace commitment of generous living. Hopefully by now you have a good grasp of what a grace commitment is – a discipline or commitment that is motivated by God’s grace rather than performance. A performance motivation will drive you to give in a vain attempt to earn God’s favor, but grace empowers you to live and give generously out of the very joy and assurance of having God’s favor.

In chapter 4 of Paul’s letter to the Philippians, you learned that generous living is an outward evidence of your contentment with God’s provision (vv. 10-13), as well as your decision to invest in God’s kingdom (vv. 14-17), and your motive to worship God with offerings

that delight Him (v. 18). In this unit you will see that generous living is also a demonstration of your faith in God’s promise to meet all of your needs. The memory verse from Philippians 4 is just such a promise. As you mull over this verse, examine your heart.

**Ask yourself whether you truly believe it. If so, how does your life demonstrate your faith in God’s promise to provide for you?**

Think about this: does it make any difference in the way you think about your finances that God has made a promise to provide for you? Compare your financial philosophy before and after becoming a follower of Christ. Has God’s promise to provide made a difference in the way you look at work, saving, spending, budgeting, investments, or insurance? We tend to think about being responsible to provide for ourselves. But, while it is true that God has given us the responsibility (and gift) of work, it is not true that we are the source of our own financial security. Just as you discovered in Deuteronomy 8, God has made it clear throughout the Scriptures that He is the source of all we have and promises to be the source of all we need. **Do you believe it?**

*“God will supply every need of yours...”* is an example, repeated throughout the Bible, that God has given a promissory note guaranteeing that He will meet the needs of all Christians who qualify. A promissory note is a written guarantee of a specific payment if certain prescribed conditions are met. Note that the promise is

*“God will supply...,”* not that He *can* or that He *might* supply. He *will* supply your need. So, what qualifies as a need? It could be any need – spiritual, emotional, physical, or financial. But, keep in mind what was discussed in the second unit of this series, that God often prospers one’s life, without prospering one’s lifestyle. So, the word *“need”* should be thought of as encompassing all the resources required to live faithfully and fruitfully for the kingdom of God.

You should also note that the word *“supply”* is qualified by an amazing standard of measurement: *“...according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”* Now, don’t misread this as *“out of His riches,”* as if His worth will be slowly diminished little by little as He supplies our needs. On the contrary, his supply will overflow *“according to His riches.”* In other words, His promise is guaranteed by the infinite wealth of His glory invested in Christ. This is the collateral, so to speak, that secures His promise. It is according to this vast measure that He promises to meet your needs; not a meager, trickling supply.

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Do you believe this promise? More than that, do you believe this promise is for you? Do you know if you qualify to receive the promise? There is a condition to be met.

Many of God's promises are unconditional, such as the promise that there would never be another worldwide flood or that Messiah would come to deliver the people of God from sin. However, wherever God promises financial supply and blessing, the promise is contingent upon certain conditions being met. This week, you reviewed several examples where God's promise of provision is clearly conditional. From those passages, you should rightly conclude that those believers who qualify to receive God's promise of abundant provision are those whose use of life and money reflect a theocentric (God-centered) perspective. They live with the understanding that God is the source of everything they have, and they are content with what He

gives. They understand that they are stewards, investing God's resources for the benefit of His kingdom out of a motive of worship.

The Philippians certainly had a theocentric perspective. The context of the passage makes it clear that they had given repeatedly and generously (v. 16) with right motives (v. 18) so that Paul was amply supplied. Because of their investment in God's kingdom with the motive of worship, Paul could pronounce the promise, *"God will supply every need of yours,"* to them specifically. So, the promise that's given here, though intended for all believers, cannot be claimed by all believers.

Do you believe this promise is for you? Do you know if you qualify? And one more thing—does your life demonstrate your faith in God's promise?

This is the hard part. This is where the rubber meets the road for all of us, because God's promise will never be redeemed without a demonstration of our faith.

We can see God's past provision pretty easily by looking in our checkbooks, but what of God's future provision secured by the collateral of His riches in glory in Christ? You can't see that. So, what could possibly motivate someone to make an investment in God's kingdom without seeing the actual collateral? The only answer is *faith*. This shouldn't surprise us, since the Bible is full of the admonition, *"Don't be afraid. Take me at my word. Trust me."* But, it isn't easy for us to trust or pursue what we can't see.

In 1943, Thomas Watson, the founder of IBM believed that there was a total world market for about five computers. As late as 1977, Ken Olsen, founder of Digital Equipment Corporation believed that personal computers would never be a viable, useful personal product. They were wrong. Even these visionary men couldn't see a future filled with millions of personal computers, so they didn't pursue it. So it is with our financial lives. We see the landscape of our income and expenses, and we think that's all there is to see. But, God calls us to look beyond our financial horizon with eyes of faith rooted in His promises, and then to take hold of those promises by stepping into the world of generous living.

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In 1 Kings 17, you read about a widow from Zarephath who did just that. It was during a time of drought and famine that Elijah asked her for a bit of bread and water. She replied that she had only her last flour and oil, barely enough for a last meal for her and her son. Then, God's word came to her through Elijah. He prophesied that she should not fear, but trust that God would not let her flour and oil run out, if she would

first give some bread to Elijah. Think about how hard that must have been for her. That last small amount of flour and oil represented all the hope of life she had left. Yet, she believed God, shared generously according to Elijah's request, and received what God had promised. She was willing to give up resources she could touch and see in order to gain promised resources that she could neither touch nor see. That's called faith.

**Do you believe in the promise of His provision? Is His promise for you? Do you qualify as a theocentric steward of what He provides?**

Then look beyond the horizon of your cash flow and net worth. Trust God to supply all you need to live generously, faithfully, and fruitfully for His kingdom and glory. Make it your faith goal to get your high school diploma in generous living soon. This is what we called *worshipful tithing* in the last unit, and defined it as investing 10% of your income in God's kingdom as you are motivated by a joyful love for Jesus. It may

be that God would call you further, but He calls every Christian to worshipful tithing. You may not be there yet, and you may not see a way to get there. That's where faith and prayer come in. Ask God what steps He would have you take to make progress toward worshipful tithing. His grace will lead and empower you as you offer your pledge of intention to trust His promises. Then, watch what God does.

**Here are some important points to remember as this portion of *The Journey* comes to a close: God is the source of everything you have. Nothing is yours.**

You are called to be a steward, content with what He gives, investing in His kingdom out of a motive of worship, and as a demonstration of your faith in His promise to meet all your needs. The issue of money management is a key, domino issue in your spiritual progress. If you are willing to follow Christ in the arena of stewardship, then many other lesser issues will tend to fall into place. But, a lack of surrender regarding stewardship can become a significant obstacle to your spiritual growth.

This leads us now to consider your spiritual responsibility to be filled with the Spirit. As mentioned earlier, Spirit-filled living means living under the control of the Holy Spirit. The person who is Spirit-filled understands the purpose of the Spirit's presence and lives in harmony with that purpose.

So, what is the purpose of the Spirit-filled life? In one sense, that has already been answered – it is to unite us spiritually with Christ. But in a practical sense, the Spirit's purpose is to draw us ever more into the faith, hope, love, obedience, and devotion which constitute our communion with Christ.

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### Now with this purpose in mind, how can we live under the Spirit's control?

We must start with recognition of the power of the cross in our lives. In Romans 6, Paul teaches that we should know, or understand (v. 3) that we are dead to sin and alive to God because of our union with the crucified and resurrected Christ. In addition, Paul wants us to consider, or chew on (v. 11) this fact so that we embrace it wholeheartedly, and then present, or surrender (v. 13) our lives to God to be tools of His righteousness. Paul expressed the same idea of daily surrender to God using different language when He taught the Galatian Christians to walk by [i.e. surrender to the control of] the Spirit, to avoid gratifying

their sinful desires (Galatians 5:16). Jesus taught a similar thought in John 15 with His illustration of a vine and branches. Just as a branch draws physical life from a central vine to bear fruit, so Christians must abide in Christ, drawing their spiritual life from Him to demonstrate the fruits of loving obedience to Him. From this you should learn that being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time experience, but rather a constant surrendering to the Holy Spirit's control. In fact, when Paul says to the Ephesian Church "*be filled with the Spirit*" (Ephesians 5:18), he means that he wants them to keep on being filled with the Spirit.

### What then, does it mean for you to live a Spirit-filled life – a life of surrender to God?

First, it means that you must regularly confess your inability to do anything good and your total dependence on His work in your life. Jesus said, "...apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). If you have an "I can do it" attitude of moral determination, you will fail. But, if you humbly admit your dependence on Him, His Spirit will fill you with the power you need to be who He wants you to be, and do what He wants you to do. Further, you must trust Christ completely with your life and offer it daily in service to Him. You must pray continually that God through His Spirit would use your heart, mind, hands, feet, eyes, and tongue as His instruments.

Certainly, sinful failures will come. When they do, confess your sin to Him, knowing that He forgives you without reservation because of the

cross. Then thank God for his forgiveness and for your union with Christ, and ask Him to fill you again with his Spirit. Some have called this exercise spiritual breathing; exhaling the impure by confessing your sin, and inhaling the pure by inviting the Spirit's control of your life again.

Finally, remember that a Spirit-filled life is totally dependent on the reality of your union with Christ, which is a gift of grace, won by the cross and put into effect by His Spirit. This is where the power for Spirit-filled living comes from. It is like a spiritual battery pack that you switch on by inviting the control of the Holy Spirit. If you are a follower of Christ, you have been made alive in Him by the Spirit. So, embrace the work of the cross in you by surrendering your life to the Spirit's control.

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# EQUIPPING

You should now be finished memorizing the books of the New Testament and ready to recite them in your next Journey Group meeting.

Review the passages listed below and fill in the table, listing God's promise, the condition, and a personal life application for each verse.

SCRIPTURE	GOD'S PROMISE	CONDITION	LIFE APPLICATION
Deuteronomy 8:1-20			
1 Kings 17:1-24			
Proverbs 3:9-10			
Malachi 3:10-12			
Matthew 19:29			
Matthew 6:25-34			
Luke 6:38			
2 Corinthians 9:6-8			

# ACCOUNTABILITY

Before your Journey Group meeting, use the questions below to examine your life in light of the truth you explored this week.

Does your life demonstrate your faith in God's promise to provide your needs?

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How do you plan to respond to the truth you learned this week?

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Have you been involved in any activity or relationship that is morally compromising?

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Does the truth about giving tempt you to live in the world of performance instead of grace?

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Describe your faithfulness in personal worship this week.

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Describe your faithfulness in living as an ambassador for Christ this week.

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# MISSION

## ▶ PRAYING

For several weeks now, you have been praying for people on your missional prayer list. Please continue building a daily habit of prayer for the least and lost that you are concerned about.

This week, your Mission assignment is to get out of your home and take a prayer walk. Prayer walking has been practiced by great Christians such as George Müller, whose missional life led to the establishment of orphanages that cared for thousands of children in 19th century Bristol, England. Think of prayer walking as praying on location. The idea is to go somewhere – your neighborhood, another neighborhood, a recreational park, a city block, a school or an office complex – to pray specifically for the people and families whom you meet and whose homes and businesses you pass as you walk. But, don't make the mistake of thinking that prayer walking is about getting God's attention on your prayers. It's about getting your attention on the needs around where you live, work,

and play to help you pray more specifically. As you walk, you may see, hear, smell, or touch a small portion of the lives around you, and this will aid your understanding of their needs.

Before your prayer walk, plan the place and time you want to go. When you arrive, ask God to open your eyes to the needs of the people there and to help you pray more specifically and earnestly for those needs. You may want to bring along a few verses of Scripture such as those below to help engage your heart and mind in prayer. As you walk, be sure to look around, listen closely, and pray. When you return home, journal about your experience in the space provided on the next page. Be prepared to discuss your prayer walk at your next Journey Group meeting.

*"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

**MICAH 6:8**

*"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."*

**MATTHEW 9:36**

*"Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest."*

**JOHN 4:35B**

*"If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?"*

**JAMES 2:15-16**

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# SUPPLICATION

*"Bring the full tithe to the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. <sup>11</sup>I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>12</sup>Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts."*

**MALACHI 3:10-12 (ESV)**

Prayerfully accept the challenge (test) given by the Lord of bringing your full tithe into the storehouse (the church). See if He will keep his word and bless you.  
Ask God to empower you to trust Him with your finances more fully.

My prayer request regarding the truth for this week:

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*"Money never stays with me. It would burn me if it did. I throw it out of my hands as soon as possible, lest it should find its way into my heart."*

**JOHN WESLEY**

My prayer request regarding a situation in my life:

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My prayer request regarding living a missional life:

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Prayer requests from others in my group:

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*"I do not believe  
one can settle  
how much we  
ought to give.  
I am afraid  
the only safe  
rule is to give  
more than we  
can spare."*

**C. S. LEWIS**

*"I have held  
many things  
in my hands,  
and I have lost  
them all; but  
whatever I have  
placed in God's  
hands, that I  
still possess."*

**MARTIN LUTHER**

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