

## REVIEW

- This series is an extension of the “Ever Wonder Why?” sermon series. We’re looking at giving in the church; we do what we do because the early church did.
- The enemy lies about what the good life is all about.
- Jesus came to give us life to the full—better here, and perfect in eternity.

**Acts 2:45** (NLT) They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.

## THE GOOD LIFE IS...

- Relationship with Jesus that enables relationship with others
- Relationship requires more of the Son rather than living a life “under the sun.” (See Ecclesiastes)
- Relationship requires love, and love is generous.
- Pr-I-de creates greed that separates us from God and others.

**John 10:7–11** (NIV) <sup>7</sup>Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. <sup>11</sup>I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

**Acts 20:32–35** (NLT) <sup>32</sup>And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he has set apart for himself. <sup>33</sup>I have never coveted anyone’s silver or gold or fine clothes. <sup>34</sup>You know that these hands of mine have worked to supply my own needs and even the needs of those who were with me. <sup>35</sup>And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

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## BEHAVIORS WE MUST CULTIVATE IF WE ARE TO BECOME GENEROUS:

- o Behaviors create attitudes

### 1. CULTIVATE AN ABIDING TIME WITH JESUS THAT INCLUDES FOCUSING AND REFLECTING ON WHO JESUS IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR US.

- When we do this, we see what we deserved and what God gave us instead.
- We are reminded of eternity and what is coming for those who believe.
- We see the heart of the Father for His children.

### 2. CHOOSE TO BE THANKFUL; GENEROSITY COMES FROM AN OVERFLOWING HEART OF THANKFULNESS.

- We choose to look at what we deserved versus what we have in Christ.
- We choose to focus on eternity.

**1 Thessalonians 5:18** (NLT) Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

### 3. CHOOSE TO BE CONTENT.

- Contentment does not mean passivity.
- Contentment means I do my best with God’s help, and I accept that God can work in whatever comes of it.

**1 Timothy 6:6–10** (NLT) <sup>6</sup>Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. <sup>7</sup>After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. <sup>8</sup>So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. <sup>9</sup>But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup>For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

**Hebrews 13:5-6** (NLT) <sup>5</sup>Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." <sup>6</sup>So we can say with confidence, "The LORD is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?"

#### 4. CHOOSE TO TRUST THE LORD FOR OUR FUTURE.

**2 Corinthians 9:10-11** (NLT) <sup>10</sup>For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. <sup>11</sup>Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God.

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### THE SECRET OF GENEROSITY: CONTENTMENT

If I am content...

- I will do what God has asked in every situation.
- I will be grateful for what I have (plenty or little).
- I will serve the Lord with what I have.
- I know God will use me best for eternal purposes when I am obedient wherever I am.

**Philippians 4:10-13** (NLT) <sup>10</sup>How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. <sup>11</sup>Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. <sup>12</sup>I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. <sup>13</sup>For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

### STEPS TO TAKE

Learning to die to self is a choice to die to your own rebellion and pride and to obey whether you feel like it or not.

- Tithe the first tenth of what you have (obedient generosity).
  - Set aside a generosity account for individual opportunities.
  - Live within your means, and thank God.
  - Look for opportunities to be generous with what you have—it is enough, and it is good.
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### QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

**Passages to consider:** 1 Timothy 6:6-12,18; Psalms 37:21,26 & 112:5; Proverbs 11:25 & 22:9; Matthew 6:19-21

1. What was significant to you from the sermon? A) How will you respond to what you heard?
2. Share an experience you have had with either contentment or generosity. Or A) How have you personally experienced the generous heart of God?
3. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-12. What does this passage say about contentment? A) What, if any, questions or challenges does this passage raise for you?
4. Take a look at Psalms 37:21,26 & 112:5; Proverbs 11:25 & 22:9 and Acts 4:32-35. What do you discover about being generous in these passages?
5. How do you nurture and practice the good life of contentment and generosity in a) yourself, b) your family and close relationships, and c) your work setting or neighborhood/community?
6. How does/can your budget—your use of money—reflect *intentional* generosity? A) What is your next step in growing in this area?

**Passages to prepare for next week:** 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 and 9:6-15