

The Generous Way

"Cultivating Corners"

Week 3 – March 13, 2022

Scripture: Leviticus 19:9-10; 19:18; 23:22; and Deuteronomy 24-19:22

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Much of the Bible was written from an agricultural perspective; we read about fields, crops, and harvests. Jesus told stories about farmers and made spiritual points using imagery from the field. What experiences do you have with farming? (A farm field trip or picking apples at the orchard counts!)

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

God called the Israelites to tithe and live a lifestyle of generosity through the process of gleaning. Gleaning is the act of leaving the corners of the field to be gathered by those who are foreigners, in the margins, poor, and desperate. In Leviticus 19 and in Deuteronomy 24, Moses is given a vision for cultivating a lifestyle of loving neighbors and one's community. God directs the Israelites to predetermine to be generous at the benefit of their neighbor through the process of gleaning. This law/vision was given before the Israelites had land to cultivate; they only had the promise of the future. God invited the people to create opportunity for others to experience God's generosity.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. We live in a culture that desires to extract every ounce for ourselves. Perhaps this is not how we are designed to live or what we truly desire. **Read Leviticus 19:9-10; 19:18; 23:22; and Deuteronomy 24-19:22.** What comes as a result of predetermining generosity? In addition to finances, in what other ways can we be generous?
2. Gleaning cultivates gratitude, as well as generosity. Intentionally looking for things in our lives that we are grateful for acknowledges the goodness of God in our lives. Why else is gratitude important? How can we practice cultivating gratitude in our lives?
3. When we live a margin-less life where everything from our time to our money is spoken for, we don't have anything left "just in case".
 - a. What does living a margin-less life say about our relationship with God? Do we believe that God is generous and will provide enough?
 - b. How can we move from "me" (cutting corners) to "others" (cultivating corners)? What is one adjustment you could make this week?
 - c. How does cultivating corners build a legacy or have a generational impact?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that He is generous. Thank God that He invites us to experience His generosity and the opportunity to be generous with our neighbors and community. Gleaning is more than the cultivating land; it is about cultivating a generous heart. Ask God to help us cultivate generous hearts.

The Generous Way

“First Things First”

Week 2 – March 6, 2022

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:9-10; Matthew 6:24, 6:31-33 and 10:38-39;
Colossians 3:17; and Proverbs 3:5-6

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Are you the type of person who works first and then plays? Do you set priorities, make a schedule, and follow a plan? Why or why not?

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

The Greek word for money is “mammon” and in biblical culture mammon often carried a negative connotation. It was sometimes used to describe all lusts and excesses: gluttony, greed, and dishonest worldly gain. Ultimately, mammon described an idol of materialism, which many trusted as a foundation for their world and philosophy. In Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, He explicitly told us that it is impossible to serve two masters. We will either serve God or money (i.e. mammon). The purpose of mammon is to convince us that money is not simply a resource, but a source of joy, security, freedom, and life, however, when we choose to place our trust in it, it ultimately leads to ruin and destruction (**1 Timothy 6:9**). Consequently, Jesus invites us to keep first things first (**1 Timothy 6:10**)- to pursue Him and His kingdom and He will take care of all our material needs.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. **Matthew 6:24** says: “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” If a master is anything that enslaves us what types of things in our lives can serve as masters? (A master can even be a good thing.) What specifically is a master in your own life?
2. Mammon promises us identity, security, significance, happiness, peace, and joy but it never delivers because these are things only God can give us. Opposing masters demand different things and lead us down different paths. How do we determine who to serve? Read **Matthew 6:31-33**. What does it mean to seek God first?
3. If God is to hold the highest priority in our hearts, we must prioritize Him. Read the following scriptures and discuss how the demands and distractions of life create tension with prioritizing God.
 - a. **Matthew 10:38-39** – trusting God for our provisions
 - b. **Colossians 3:17** – honoring God with what we do and say
 - c. **Proverbs 3:5-6** – acknowledging God in all our ways

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that He loves us so much He desires to give us an abundant life when we put Him in the right order of our priorities. Ask God to help identify the things that occupy our money, time, thoughts, and attention that take the place of Him. We desire to serve God with our whole hearts and make Him first; He invites us to pursue Him and His kingdom.

The Generous Way

“Put Your Money Where Your Heart Is”

Week 1 – February 27, 2022

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-21; Proverbs 4:23; 1 Kings 3:12; Luke 6:45; 1 John 2:15-17

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Did you ever own something that looked terrible on the outside, but you valued it greatly? Think first car, rusty and dented, or a beloved blanket, worn and frayed, etc.

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

Many of our devices, such as phones and watches, or exercise equipment, and even the steering wheel of some cars have the ability to tell us what our heart is doing – how fast it's beating, how slow it's beating, how steady it's beating, or how erratic it's beating. We even know that a certain amount of beats per minute puts you in the zone where you burn fat the most. The condition of our heart is an indication of our overall health. This is as true spiritually as it is physically, and the bible makes it clear that there's a healthier way to live that genuinely benefits our overall wellbeing and it's a way also measured by your heart. Our hearts determine what we treasure, and what we treasure determines how we live.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. Jesus draws a line connecting what he calls our hearts, and our treasures, and the behavior of “laying up treasures” on earth, and in heaven. Read **Matthew 6:19-21** from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Does what you treasure form your heart, or does your heart determine what you treasure?
2. Motives are the hidden forces within us, and they matter. Without a shift in motivation, behavior change is hard to maintain. Discuss the following scriptures about motivation:
 - a. **Proverbs 4:23:** The Bible reveals that as human beings we live from the inside out.
 - b. **1 Kings 3:12:** When Solomon was chosen as the second king of Israel, he asked God not for riches or fame, but wisdom so that he would rule well. God was pleased with this request.
 - c. **Matthew 6:19-21:** Jesus focuses on a shift from the external behaviors (the Pharisees righteousness seen before men) to the heart.
 - d. **Luke 6:45:** Our hearts determine what we treasure and what we treasure determines how we live.
3. If your heart is defined and formed by the values of this world (**1 John 2:15-17**), then what do you treasure? If treasure is the fruit of your labor, what do you treasure? What could your life look like if there was a shift in your heart towards treasuring what God treasures?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that He is in the heart business, that He seeks to renovate our hearts. Ask Him to do a heart check, and to reveal where we put our treasures. We are invited to the abundant life found in God and his Kingdom, and we are grateful. We desire to love God and others, to live a life laying up treasures in heaven, and to live heavenly minded rather than earthly minded.