KINGDOM PURSUIT: STRIVE / GIVE

LESSON 5: WHEN GIVING COSTS YOU SOMETHING

2 Sam. 24:18-25; Phil. 2:3-8

GIVING AND SACRIFICE

- Giving can require us to release something we value.
  - The cost may involve money, time, convenience, comfort, or personal preference.
  - Love should guide our willingness to give and serve – Eph. 5:1-2
- The size of a gift doesn't tell the full story of its sacrifice – 2 Cor. 8:1-4
  - Jesus recognized what the widow's offering cost her – Mark 12:41-44
  - What seems small to someone else may represent a significant sacrifice for you.

BACKGROUND OF THE TEXT

- David sinned by numbering the people, confessed his wrongdoing, and faced God's judgment upon Israel – 2 Sam. 24:1-17; 1 Chron. 21:7-8
  - Sin in focusing on how strong they were militarily – 2 Sam. 24:2,9
  - David wouldn't listen to sound advise from Joab – 1 Chron. 21:3
- Gad instructed David to build an altar at Araunah's threshing floor – 2 Sam. 24:18-19
- Araunah offered the location, oxen, and materials for the sacrifice without charge – 2 Sam. 24:20-23
- David insisted on paying: "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing" – 2 Sam. 24:24
  - To David, this was an act of worship and repentance.

DON'T LOOK FOR EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO AVOID THE COST

- David accepted responsibility for what he would offer.
  - Araunah's generosity didn't replace David's personal participation.
  - David purchased the threshingfloor and oxen before offering the sacrifice – 2 Sam. 24:24-25
- Consider what you're willing to release.
  - We can desire the results of ministry while resisting the time, effort, or resources it requires – 2 Cor. 9:6
  - Presenting ourselves to God includes making our lives available to Him – Rom. 12:1
  - What am I willing to give when honoring God requires something of me?
- Receiving help isn't wrong.
  - David's decision doesn't mean every gift must be purchased or every act of service must be difficult.
  - Believers are also called to receive and share support – Phil. 4:14-16; 2 Cor. 8:13-15

LOVE MOVES US BEYOND PERSONAL CONVENIENCE

- Pay attention to what helping someone may require of you.
  - Caring for others may mean changing your plans, sharing resources, or giving time you intended to keep for yourself – Phil. 2:4; Luke 10:33-35
  - Practical love responds when we have the ability to help – 1 John 3:17-18
- Let the humility of Christ shape your attitude. – Phil. 2:3-8
  - Jesus took the form of a servant and humbled Himself in obedience unto death – Phil. 2:6-8
  - His example calls us to put aside selfish ambition and consider others – Phil. 2:3-4
- Be willing to serve when it interrupts your comfort.
  - The Samaritan's compassion involved his time, resources, and continued care – Luke 10:33-35
  - Ask yourself whether convenience has become a condition of your willingness to help.

SACRIFICE DOESN'T REPLACE WISDOM

- Give willingly and responsibly.
  - Give according to what you have, without pressure or compulsion – 2 Cor. 8:12-15; 9:7
  - Don't confuse obedience with pressure when it comes to giving – Rom. 6:17
  - Remain faithful to your household responsibilities as you help others – 1 Tim. 5:8

DON'T LET A LACK OF RECOGNITION STOP YOUR GIVING

- Others may not recognize what your service costs you.
  - They may see the finished work without knowing the time, expense, or personal adjustments involved.
  - God remembers the love shown through serving – Heb. 6:10
- Don't make appreciation the condition of your sacrifice – Luke 6:35
  - Give to honor God rather than to secure public recognition – Matt. 6:1-4
  - Serve as unto the Lord, even when your effort receives little attention – Col. 3:23-24

Questions to Ponder

- What am I reluctant to give because it would inconvenience me?
- Am I willing to serve when others don't recognize the sacrifice?
- What comfort or personal preference might I need to release to help someone?
- What specific act of sacrificial giving or service will I undertake this week?

KINGDOM PURSUIT: STRIVE / GIVE
LESSON 6: GRACEFUL GIVING

Gal. 6:9–10

GIVING SHAPED BY GOD'S GRACE

- Graceful giving means allowing the grace God has shown us to guide how we give to others.
  - We haven't earned everything God has done for us – Eph. 2:8–9
  - Before deciding somebody doesn't deserve your help, remember that you haven't deserved all the help God has given you.

BACKGROUND OF THE TEXT (Gal. 6:1-9)

- Paul teaches believers how to treat people while walking in the Spirit.
  - Restore those overtaken in a fault with meekness – Gal. 6:1
  - Help bear one another's burdens – Gal. 6:2
  - Don't think more of yourself than you should – Gal. 6:3
- He then encourages believers to keep doing good and take advantage of opportunities to help others – Gal. 6:9–10

DON'T GET TIRED OF DOING GOOD

- "And let us not be weary in well doing" – Gal. 6:9
  - Sometimes we're tired from helping. Other times, we're tired of the people asking – Num. 11:11-15
  - Disappointment can cause us to stop helping people who had nothing to do with what happened – Gal. 6:9-10
  - Don't let a bad experience determine how you respond to every need - 1 Thess. 5:15
- Keep doing good because you're seeking to honor God.
  - Everybody won't respond the way you think they should.
  - Their response doesn't have to change your obedience – Col. 3:23–24
  - God hasn't forgotten your faithfulness – Gal. 6:9; Heb. 6:10

DON'T MAKE THEIR WORTHINESS THE REQUIREMENT

- "Let us do good unto all men" – Gal. 6:10
  - We can spend so much time deciding whether somebody deserves help that we never consider how we can help – James 2:12-16
  - We have a special responsibility toward fellow believers, but our kindness shouldn't stop there.
- Remember how God has treated you.
  - He loved you while you were still in sin – Rom. 5:8
  - He's kind even to the unthankful and evil – Luke 6:35–36
  - If God only helped people who deserved it, where would that leave us?
  - Don't let appearance, status, or personal preference decide who receives your kindness – James 2:1–4

- Somebody's mistakes don't erase their need.
- Helping them doesn't mean you approve of everything they've done.

REMEMBER THAT YOU'VE NEEDED GRACE TOO

- God didn't save us because we had done everything right – Titus 3:1-5
  - We've made mistakes, needed another chance, and received mercy.
  - Remembering your own need for grace should affect how you treat somebody else.
- What God has extended to you should influence what you extend to others.
  - Jesus challenged the servant who received mercy but wouldn't show compassion – Matt. 18:27–33
  - Forgive as God has forgiven you – Eph. 4:32
  - How can you accept grace for yourself but refuse to extend it to others?

LOOK FOR HOW YOU CAN DO GOOD

- "As we have therefore opportunity" – Gal. 6:10
  - Pay attention to the needs God allows you to see.
  - Ask, "What can I do?" before listing all the reasons the person shouldn't need help.
  - Let your concern become action when you have the ability to help – 1 John 3:17–18
- Graceful giving still requires wisdom.
  - You don't have to say yes to every request to show compassion.
  - You may be able to provide food, transportation, encouragement, or help finding other resources.
  - Ask God for wisdom about what would actually help – James 1:5
- You can set limits without treating people poorly.
  - Sometimes the answer to a particular request is no, but your response can still show care.
  - Be patient while considering what the person needs – 1 Thess. 5:14–15

DON'T LET DISAPPOINTMENT HARDEN YOUR HEART

- Don't make appreciation the condition of your kindness.
  - Everybody won't say thank you or remember what you've done.
  - Jesus teaches us to do good without making what we get back the requirement – Luke 6:35
- Ask God to help you keep the right spirit.
  - Be honest about resentment, pride, or frustration.
  - Depend upon His grace to continue doing good – 2 Cor. 9:8
  - Don't let weariness become your reason for giving up – Gal. 6:9

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- Have I refused to help because I felt somebody didn't deserve it?
- What has God done for me that I didn't deserve?
- Can I use wisdom without losing compassion?
- Who might I normally overlook that I can do good to this week?