



The Marks of Discipleship: Generosity

Day One: *History of Giving.* Giving is not something we created in our current time and place; it is something with a deep history. Read Deuteronomy 14:22-29 and James 1:17. Giving comes from the heart of our creator and we are called to give out of what God gives us. What is your history of giving? What is your current state of giving of your resources? What are some areas of giving in which you could grow? In your prayers today reflect on your current attitude of giving and where it came from. Ask one friend to share with you his/her history of giving.

Day Two: *The Tithe.* Looking back to verse 22 in Deuteronomy 14, God calls us to not only give, but to tithe. Tithing is giving 10% every year to God and God's people, a process introduced to God's people to help them learn what it means to be a giving people. Read Malachi 3:8-12 and 1 Corinthians 16:2. The people of the early church used their collection of money to support the ministry and spreading of the word of God throughout the world. Part of giving the tithe of our own resources is also a call to see it through – to have these resources make a difference in people's lives and in spreading the Gospel. In your prayer time, talk with God about what percentage of your resources you are giving away and how those resources are helping spread the good news of Christ.

Day Three: *The Celebration.* Deuteronomy also illustrates that these gifts are given within an assembly of God's people. This celebration is a time to give thanks to God and to join with brothers and sisters in a joyous event. How do you gather with others to celebrate your giving? The magi were some of the first people to see Jesus and they came bearing gifts, creating a time of celebration. Read Matthew 2:11. Work today on your sense of celebration in all you do; offer a smile to a stranger, extend a helping hand to a coworker, etc. The Psalms are filled with words for such times. In your prayers, read a psalm of celebration. (Psalm 138 or 150 are two ideas.)

Day Four: *Taking Care of Those in Need.* One practical role of the tithe was to provide for people in need. Read Matthew 6:1-4, Galatians 6:10 and Hebrews 13:16. As a community of believers, we have a responsibility to those around us. Identifying the needs of others is the first step. Tangibly reaching out to others is another. How are you using your resources to tangibly meet other's needs? No matter what our circumstances, God calls us to help care for those around us. Today, skip buying yourself a can of pop or eat at home rather than out and give the money you would use to someone in need. In your prayers, ask God to direct where that money should go.

Day Five: *Attitude of Gratitude.* Tangible giving helps all of us grow an attitude of gratitude. What does having an attitude of gratitude mean to you? Jesus challenged one man's attitude in the story of the rich young ruler. Read Mark 10:17-31. This man did all the "right " behaviors of a faithful man: attend church, read the Bible, pray, etc., yet his wealth was a block for him in growing an attitude of gratitude. Read Ephesians 5:20. Today, practice an attitude of gratitude by taking every opportunity you can to say thank you. In your prayer time, reflect on what difference that made in your day.

Day Six: *Behavior of Giving.* Read Deuteronomy 15:1-11 and 16:13-17. In addition to tithing, the people of the Old Testament had many different rituals to allow them to practice their attitude of gratitude. These rituals illustrate just a few ways they incorporated their giving hearts into their flow of life. What are the ways in which you blend into the rhythm of your life? Who joins you in those times? Are you discipling someone else to grow in giving as well? How could you create a festival of giving in your life? Make your prayers today behaviors of giving.

Day Seven: *Touching the Heart of God.* Why give? Giving serves others in our community and giving is inherent to who we were created to be, but most important, giving touches God's heart. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. We are created to be people of giving, because our God is a God of giving. Touching the heart of God is a benefit we experience every time we give. Think of sometimes you've given and touched God's heart. How has giving impacted your relationship with God? In your prayers today, thank God for the opportunity to both touch God's heart and others through giving.