



Love, Learn, Live the Word 1 Peter 4:10

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).

Love the Word

Would those closest to you describe you as greedy or generous? We were designed to be generous with our gifts of time, talent, and treasure. God desires that we use them to serve, faithfully administering divine grace—his undeserved love—in its various forms. God wants us to use our gifts received vertically to serve those horizontally, so that they connect vertically with the grace of the Generous One. Unfortunately, we have a tendency to give the gifts to ourselves.

Learn the Word

The words *generous* and *generate* come from the same Latin word, *genus*, meaning “race or kind.” Generous means, “giving.” Generate means “multiply.” Consequently, generosity multiplies giving in the human race. God wants to multiply our gifts through us to generate generosity in others. The true test of our generosity comes when we use our time, talent, and treasure to serve others, rather than ourselves.

At the opposite end of the spectrum from generosity is greed (Colossians 3:5). Whereas, a generous heart is open and recognizes God as the Provider, a greedy heart remains closed. Jesus warned against greed: “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15).

Greed flows from a hard heart to a tight fist, but generosity flows from a soft heart to an open hand. God’s design aligns the heart with our three resources of life. Rather than being *hardhearted* and *tightfisted* with our resources, God’s desire is that we be *softhearted* and *openhanded* (Deuteronomy 15:7-11).

When we are generous, God renews our hearts with His in order to reflect the generosity of our Redeemer (Matthew 20:15).

Memorize Peter’s priceless wisdom (1 Peter 4:10) and recite it each day for the next month as you pray for God’s generous heart to fill your life.

Live the Word

Surrender your time. Take a moment and pull out your calendar. What appointments have you set for the next week? Is it all about busyness or relationships? Are you trusting in the gift of time for your own selfish benefit or are you trusting in the Giver?

Surrender your talent. Examine the use of your talent. Have you misused for greed what God intended for generosity? You don't have to be employed in full-time church or ministry to worship God with your work. Ask Him to make your career a ministry. Underneath the title of your business card, write, "Surrendered," and carry it with you as a reminder of your desire to be generous with your talent. Next, keep a journal of any Holy Spirit promptings that will use your talent to generously serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. Ask a wise and trusted friend to help you implement strategies to achieve your Spirit-prompted objectives.

Surrender your treasure. Consider the relationships on the other side of your expenses. Assemble a conservative estimate of your next year's revenue and expenses. Ask God and a wise friend what percentage you should attempt to give, whether calculated from the gross or net. At the same time, pursue wise counsel as to where you should direct those dollars for the highest and best use. Let every relationship—including customers, vendors, employees, competitors, family, friends, or those you may not know who are in need—reflect the heart of the Giver.

When we consider the three resources of life, we need to constantly evaluate our use of this generous inheritance. Perhaps we will align our time, talent, and treasure with one or two charities. Maybe we will create a foundation to serve others. Christ gave everything for us so that He can multiply His kingdom through us (2 Corinthians 8:9). When Christ dwells in us, then our three resources of life reflect His generosity.