

THREADS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, LESSON 12: GENEROSITY

“Freely you have received; freely give.” (Matthew 10:8, NIV)

IDROPPED IN LAST WEEK AT A LITTLE PUBLIC COURSE not far from where my sons go to school. It’s actually the home course of 2014 LPGA winner Lizette Salas, whose father has worked at the facility for more than 30 years. He bartered his skills as a mechanic for golf lessons for his daughter as she was growing into the game.

This is no country club. You can drive right into the lot and park in a spot near the first tee. Of course, you have to look across the circle of golf cart charging stations to see the golfers in tee shirts and jeans making their opening swings. To play the course, you’ll cross the busy street several times. The putting greens are all right. Everything else is hit and miss.

The clubhouse, though, is full of people you’d recognize no matter where you play golf. They’re recharging with drinks and food and chattering about the events of the round. Golf’s reputation as a game for the wealthy doesn’t apply at places like Azusa Greens, but its reputation as a game where friendships are built is rock solid here. You don’t need much money for that.

Sometimes when we read Scripture’s calls to righteousness, we make poor assumptions about who can get the job done. *It’s easy for the happily married to stay sexually pure*, we think. *Or for the relaxed to keep patient*. And we’re also convinced it’s easy for the rich to be generous. The truth about righteousness, however, rests in Jesus’ words in the Parable of the Shrewd Manager: “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much” (Luke 16:10).

Generosity thrives on the understanding of how much we have. When you recognize that your birth was God-given, that your mentors were God-established, that your health is God’s gift, that your talents are a product of his dispensing and your experience the result of his sovereign design, you have the foundation not only for a generous spirit but for generous action. You give your time to those who need an hour of caring conversation, you give your talents to those who can’t complete the job on their own, and you give a portion of your treasure—be it big or small—to those whose hunger pangs would deepen without your dollar or whose life apart from Jesus would grow ever darker without your mission-minded giving. One hundred people giving a dollar is as good as one person giving a hundred; in this way, God’s answers to the crying heart are enacted through the generosity of us all.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2014 Links Players International. A 5-minute video accompanies today’s study at http://youtu.be/9y_5jobJ9bU

Opening questions Where have you witnessed an act of surprising generosity? How does the concept of “pay it forward” relate to the final paragraph of today’s devotion?

READING 1 Chronicles 29:10-18, Matthew 10:1-8

David’s understanding of blessing

David’s words in 1 Chronicles 29:10-17 were spoken after he and his workers had completed the funding and building of the temple. What perspective did David offer on the connection between God’s provision and the peoples’ giving? How do you see this same principle at work in your own life?

Where did David’s prayer turn in verse 18? In what ways do you see that God has honored David’s prayer into our time?

All kinds of giving

In what context did Jesus instruct his disciples to “freely give?” What kinds of things were they giving? Why do you think the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven was included among the work they were to do?
