

Summer Giving: The Joy of Open Hands

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father,

You are the giver of every good and perfect gift. Open my heart to recognize Your generosity in our lives. Teach me to hold earthly resources loosely while embracing eternal opportunities tightly. Grant me wisdom to steward what You have entrusted to me, courage to give sacrificially, and faith to trust that You remain my ultimate provider.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



Scripture Reading

2 Corinthians 9:7 (KJV)

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Teaching & Insight

Summer often brings thoughts of vacations, family gatherings, and a welcome change of pace. Yet it also presents another opportunity—one that extends far beyond recreation. It becomes a season to examine how we invest in the work of God.

In this week's *Mondays With Mark*, Mark reflects on the many ministry appeals that arrive during the summer months. With countless worthy organizations seeking support, determining where and how to give can feel overwhelming. What comes through wisdom is that generosity is less about finding a perfect formula and more about seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The challenge of giving has existed since the earliest days. Throughout Scripture, the Lord consistently directs His followers toward generosity, not because He needs our resources, but because giving transforms the heart of the giver.

The miracle of generosity rarely begins in the bank account; it begins in the soul. When believers release their grip on possessions, they affirm a truth: God is the source, not the taker of finances. This perspective changes everything. Rather than viewing giving as a loss, view giving as participation in God's kingdom work.

Mark shares a remarkable observation familiar to many faithful givers: the more they gave to God's work, the more God expanded their capacity to continue giving. While Scripture never promises material wealth in exchange for generosity, it repeatedly demonstrates God's faithfulness toward those who trust Him with what they possess.

Jesus illustrated this principle through the feeding of the five thousand. A small offering—five loaves and two fish—became more than enough when placed in His hands. God specializes in multiplying surrendered resources. What seems insignificant to us becomes powerful when entrusted to Him.

The question, therefore, is not simply, "How much should I give?" The deeper question is, "What is God asking me to trust Him with?"

Hebrew Insight

נָדִיב (Nadiv)

Pronunciation: nah-DEEV

Meaning: Willing, generous, noble-hearted.

This Hebrew word describes a person whose generosity flows from a willing spirit rather than obligation. Biblical generosity is never merely transactional; it is an expression of a transformed heart.

Greek Insight

ἡλάρος (Hilaros)

Pronunciation: hee-lah-ROS

Meaning: Cheerful, joyful, gladly willing.

This is the word Paul uses in 2 Corinthians 9:7. It conveys delight rather than duty. God values the attitude behind the gift as much as the gift itself.

Pause & Reflect

Do I approach giving as an obligation, or as an opportunity to participate in God's work?

Do I pay back God after what I think are my obligations (mortgage, car payment, credit card payment)?

Where have I witnessed God's faithfulness after stepping out in generosity?

Is there a ministry, missionary, church, or person God may be prompting me to support more intentionally?

DEED

This week, prayerfully review your giving.

Ask the Lord to place one specific ministry, missionary, church initiative, or individual on your heart. Seek His guidance regarding how you might encourage or support that work financially, practically, or through prayer. Act on what He reveals.

Final Charge

Generosity has never been measured by the size of the gift. Heaven measures generosity by the size of the faith behind it. The widow's two coins outweighed the treasury's abundance because she trusted God completely. The boy's lunch fed thousands because he placed it in Jesus' hands. Your offering can become part of God's work when surrendered back to Him.

Give thoughtfully, prayerfully and joyfully.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

Thank You for every blessing You have entrusted to me. Forgive me when fear causes me to cling too tightly to what belongs to You. Develop within, cheerful hearts and open hands. Guide decisions regarding giving and stewardship in each of my days and may every resource I offer

advance Your kingdom and bring glory to Your name. Multiply what I surrendered to You, just as You multiplied the loaves and fishes. Use me as a faithful steward of Your grace.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Sources

- Holy Bible, King James Version
- Holy Bible, New International Version
- Strong's Hebrew and Greek Lexicons
- LifeMark Ministries, *Mondays With Mark* Video Series