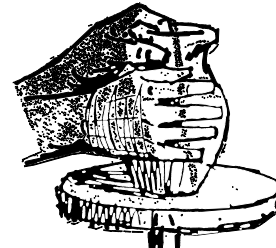


His Workmanship at Westside

*"For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



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Isaiah 64:8

Giving Generously or Living Generously? *by E. G. "Jay" Link*

"Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy," Mt 5:7.

Recently I watched a video about a couple in our local church whose wife's friend needed a kidney transplant. Both B.J. and his wife immediately said to themselves, "Maybe we could give her one of our kidneys." Well, it seemed reasonable to me that B.J.'s wife might want to give her good friend one of her kidneys, but as it turned out B.J.'s kidney was the perfect match. So without hesitation he donated one of his kidneys to his wife's high school friend. They said that it just seemed like the right thing to do. B.J. had an extra kidney and this girl had none. I was stunned. I wouldn't give one of my kidneys to one of my wife's friends. I would not even consider it. Of course, I would give one to my wife or one of my children if they needed it, but to one of my wife's friends? Don't get me wrong, I am all about giving of my time, talent, and treasure, but giving my body parts? That was a level of giving that entirely surpassed my current concept of generosity. It reminded me of Rm 5:6-8.

Just a few days later, I was ready to board a plane to return home from a

business trip. I was first in line and was looking forward to getting comfortable in my first class seat and then "zoning out" on the flight home (I often get upgraded for free). Just prior to our boarding, a very heavy crippled man had been escorted down the jetway in his wheelchair to board the plane. I waited patiently for the call for first class to board. However, just as they began to announce the first class boarding, another guy cut right in front of me and handed the attendant his boarding pass. His rude manner and obviously arrogant attitude irritated me. As we got to the bottom of the jetway, four airline staff were having difficulty getting the heavy crippled man out of his wheelchair and into the airline wheelchair required to get him on the plane. This delay was causing a back up in the jetway. So there I was standing and stewing over the rude guy who cut in front of me. I impatiently watched the airline employees working futilely to get the crippled man into the airline wheelchair.

Then, the bomb fell. The guy who cut in front of me called out to the flight crew, "Hey, let me help you." He dropped his bags, hurried over to

them, and helped get the man into the plane wheelchair. I was ashamed.

The thought had never even crossed my mind to offer any help. Of all the people standing there watching this happen, the guy who I was convinced was selfish and full of himself was the one who volunteered to help.

But my humiliation wasn't over. When they finally got the man in the wheelchair and through the plane door, Mr. Helpful then said to the airline staff, "Let me go back and get his bag for you." He got off the plane, grabbed the man's bag, which, by the way, was right at my feet, and took it into the plane. Yet another missed opportunity for me to live generously.

By this point I was feeling very convicted about my lack of generosity. It turned out that the line-cutter sat right across the aisle from me in first class. I told him I appreciated his willingness to help the crippled man. He smiled and said, "It was nothing." To him it was nothing, but to me it proved that of the two of us I was the one who was selfish and full of myself, not him, Jas 3:14; 1 Cor 10:24.

However, God still wasn't finished rocking my generosity world. As I continued on p. 2

"He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give willingly as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly (reluctantly) or of necessity (by force, compulsion); for God loves a cheerful giver. " —2 Cor 9:6-7

was finally relaxing in my first class aisle seat, the passengers in economy filed past me. I heard a woman immediately behind me ask a soldier who was standing right next to me, 'Soldier, what seat are you in?' He said, "21B." I thought, "One of the dreaded middle seats in the back." She then said to him, "Would you like to sit here?" The soldier hesitated, but the woman insisted that he take her first class seat. Humbled again! Now, I deeply appreciate what our military does for us as a country and for me as a citizen. I have often thanked soldiers for their service. But the thought of offering this soldier my first class seat and taking a middle seat in economy on a packed plane was another indicator of how limited my generosity really is.

I have been mulling these experiences over in my mind for a few weeks and learned a lesson from God: *I can be generous in how I give without being generous in how I live.* Conversely, I have also learned that a *person who lives generously always gives generously.* In other words, we may be willing to be extremely generous in giving what we want to give where we want to give it. But with what we don't want to give we can actually find ourselves being just as selfish and tight-fisted as Ebenezer Scrooge. *Living generously, not giving generously needs to be our goal.*

I have identified three characteristics of people who model generous living:

1. Generous Living is Open-Hearted. Those who live generously have hearts open and alert to find people who are struggling, hurting, or in pain. They are accepting of others, see 2 Cor 6:11-13, 7:2. They empathize with those whose world is difficult, and they enjoy trying to make it

better. *"The merciful man does good for his own soul...The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself,"* Pr 11:17, 25; 28:20. Jesus Himself said, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive,"* Acts 20:35.

2. Generous Living is Open-Minded.

"A generous man devises generous things, and by generosity he shall stand," Is 32:8. The minds of those who live generously are always thinking about creative ways to bless and encourage others in both great and small ways. They consciously engage in their world and the lives of those around them, poised to show generosity to anyone whenever the opportunity is there. Paul told us, *"steal no longer, but rather labor, working with our hands what is good, that we may have something to give him who has need,"* Eph 4:28. Even our motives are changed when we are *"renewed in the spirit of our minds,"* and *"put on the new man which was created according to God,"* Eph 4:23-24.

3. Generous Living is Open-Handed.

God commands us to be open-handed: *"If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. [If] your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, he may cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you. You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all*

your works and in all to which you put your hand. For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, "You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land," Deut 15:7-11. The resources of those who live generously, *all of them* (time, talent, treasure [and torso]), are gladly ready to be given whenever a need or an opportunity is discovered. *"He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor,"* Pr 22:9. When it is within the power of generous people to respond, they relish the privilege to make a difference and bless the life of another—friend or stranger. They live out the extreme attitude, *"What is mine is yours, and you can have it."*

In my recent experiences God has demonstrated to me that the key to living a generous life is easy to understand. It is, however, excruciatingly difficult to live because of what it requires of us—a radical change in our self-assessment and in our actions. Paul told us, *"...but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself,"* Phil 2:3. There it is—in just one part of one verse—*"regard one another as more important than himself."* If we can wholly embrace this radical change in our view of ourselves and truly come to believe that others are more important than we are, we will be completely transformed not just into people who are *giving* generously, but into people who are *living* generously, who reflect an open-hearted, open-minded, and open-handed life. If we really want to achieve maximum impact in our lives, we must expand our hearts, minds, and hands with generosity.



Psalm 133:1



Fill your can-teen in 2013

“May you be filled with all the fullness of God.”

—Ephesians 3:19

Spending, Exchange by Gary Henry
“...when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it,” Mt 13:46. One measure of how valuable something is to us is what we would give up in order to have it. If we wouldn’t sell all we have for God’s kingdom, we probably don’t know a precious *pearl* when we see one, cf. **Mt 16:26; Mk 8:37.**

Most societies operate on the principle of exchange. No one can do all that needs to be done or provide all that needs to be provided for himself. So we exchange things. If you have something I need, then I trade something I have for what you have—cash for goods, or goods for goods/service. Some resource is always expended

This principle operates in the spiritual realm, also. Paul said that his sacrifices for his brethren were an expenditure of himself: “I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls,” 2 Cor 12:15. Sometimes, we aren’t that willing to spend. We hoard what we have and hold on to things we must let go. The truth is, every earthly thing we’ve been given right now is expendable—it’s all for the purpose of being spent. To go to heaven with a large “reserve” is not what life on earth is about! As we count our present blessings, let us realize we can’t have future blessings without trading in some now. We should grow a clearer view of what we can relinquish in order to gain what we don’t yet have. Frankly,

6 Reasons for Debt, from p. 4 point, cause a financial heart attack. “Jesus said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses,’ ” Lk 12:15; see the parable of a “stuff” addict in Lk 12:16-21.
5. They don’t know how. Most people have good intentions—they want to kick debt to the curb—but they don’t know how. They’ve been in debt so long that getting out from under \$50,000 in credit card bills seems impossible. But it isn’t. It’s true that getting out of debt isn’t easy. It takes a lot of hard work and discipline. But it’s definitely not impossible. All you need is a plan. “For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope,” Jer 29:11. See Gen 6:5; 2 Sam 3:37; Deut 1:23; 1 Chr 28:11-12, 19; Ps 33:11; Pr 15:22; 16:9; 19:21; 21:5; 1 Pet 2:16.

6. They’re lazy. Some people know what to do to get out of debt. Maybe they know about the debt snowball and they sorta, kinda want to get out of debt. They know how debt can harm their marriage, their stress levels, their relationships, and their future, but they just aren’t motivated to make a change. How sad is that? You know that you’re ruining your future—and if you have kids, you’re ruining their future—but you still go into debt anyway? If you know how to get out of debt, but you’re just too lazy to do it? Well, that’s just embarrassing. See Pr 12:24; 13:4; 15:19; 20:4; 21:25; 22:13; 24:30-34.

Every day, people are making the decision to get out of debt and change their lives. They’re ready to sacrifice and get rid of their fear of change or their addiction to stuff. If you’ve yet to make that decision, what’s holding you back?

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose,”
—Jim Elliott, 20th Century martyr

if there is anything—even the best of the best—that we wouldn’t exchange for heaven, then our values are wrong, Is 55:2.

Discipleship

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Delmar Hice, Pat Campbell’s father—in hospital; **Pat** is in AR with him.

Mark Campbell—improving at Rocky Mtn Brain Injury Service in CO Springs

Megan Sangellino’s grandmother, **Norma Trump**—hip surgery, in rehab; depressed Remember **Megan Aki** and the girls; the **Andrew Tope** family; the **Reames** family; **Forrest Corray**, Jordan’s brother—addiction

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr;

Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma

Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis

Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain

Rod Green—thyroid trouble

Autumn Hadders—epilepsy

Jonathan Hadders—RA

Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome

Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house

Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak; **Virginia**, worsening rapid macular degeneration; high BP

Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes

Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia

Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; severe arthritis

Judy Sartin’s grandson **Tristen**—autism

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Pat Wilkes—hyper parathyroidism; A-fib

Job concerns **Lorenzo Gonzalez, Linda Szymanski, and Andrew Tope** are seeking jobs.

Expecting **Liz Kosik**, early April; blood platelets low; **Christina Adams’s** daughter **Kayla**, May

Rejoice **Megan Aki** has found a job!

Bereaved **Andrea Arvola** lost her brother **Steve** to pancreatic cancer suddenly last Tues. A memorial service will be held at this building tomorrow morning 11 am; gathering at Andrea’s house following, 7382 W. 3rd Ave, Lakewood
Caleb Howell’s boss, **Sean Frank**, lost his wife, age 44, suddenly last week.



Exposing current thoughts & trends

6 Reasons People Stay in Debt *from Dave Ramsey*

You might have gotten angry at being in debt. Eventually, the burden and the stress of the constant bills and piling debt broke you down. Something inside you “clicked,” and you decided it was time to make a fresh start. But what keeps people from getting out of debt? Why would someone want to stay in chains instead of living in freedom? Sadly, there are all sorts of reasons people choose MasterCard over being free from debt; see Jn 8:36; Rm 6:18-22; 8:2; Gal 5:1. Here are just a few:

1. They want to keep up appearances. This is the ungodly “keeping up with the Joneses” mentality. But little do you know, the Joneses have a leased BMW, an underwater mortgage, and an unwelcome visitor named Sallie Mae living in their basement. The Joneses are the most broke people in your neighborhood. And if you’re trying to follow their example, you’ll be following them into bankruptcy (and worse) if you’re not careful. *“They are exalted for a little while, then they are gone. They are brought low; they are taken out of the way like all others; they dry out like the heads of grain,”* Job 24:24; cf. 1 Sam 8:5-20; 2 Kg 17:11,15; 2 Cor 10:12

2. They are unwilling to sacrifice. How can you possibly give up eating out three nights a week? Or what would your life look like without cable? You’ll never know until you’re willing to give those things up in order to build a legacy for your future. If you’re in a lot of debt, something in your lifestyle has to change. **It’s about priorities.** Here’s the question: What are you willing to give up? See 2 Sam 24:20-25 (1 Chr 21:24).

3. They fear change. Debt can be comfortable, kind of like a frog slowly cooking in a pot of boiling water. If you’ve always used a credit card, and if you always had car loans, then you know what to expect. The unknown can be scary—except for the fact that millions of families get out of debt and change their lives. You have a lot more to fear if you stay in debt, rather than if you change and get out of debt. It is clear from the Bible that debt may be unavoidable, but failure to repay the debt is absolutely wrong, Pr 37:21; Deut 15:6; 28:12. Paul instructed us to repay what we borrow, Rm 13:8, and the Old Testament shares that the borrower is servant to the lender, Pr 22:7. In 2 Kg 4:1-7 we see the tough circumstances that a widow experienced due to debt.

4. They’re addicted to stuff. In other words, they’ve bought the myth that you are what you own, and they simply can’t get enough. The more they have, the more powerful and confident they feel. But it’s all a fraud, a lie of the devil and of the world. They can’t afford that stuff, and eventually it’s going to weigh them down. Their addiction to debt will, at some

continued on p. 3



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Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This morning: “Why Does God Want a People for Himself?”

by Jim Reingrover

This afternoon: “Will a Man Rob God?” by Jeff Wilkes