

Practice

Exercise: Begin listening to God about money and generosity.

- Find a quiet, distraction free place and put away your phone and devices.
- Center yourself in God: take a few deep, slow breaths, ground yourself in the moment, and become aware of God's presence all around you.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to come and guide your mind into his will for your finances and future.
- Then journal through the prompts on the next pages.

Practice

Imagine living a generous life:

Take a moment to imagine living without financial anxiety or discontentment. What would it feel like? What would your experience be when you open your banking app? Or when an opportunity to meet a need comes along?

Name the financial worries that stand between you and that peaceful place ...

Name any unsated desires that are driving you away from generosity (and are causing greed, discontentment, etc.)

Name whatever practical obstacles that keep you from living a more generous life (debt, a car payment, unemployment, etc.)

Practice

Identify the lies that keep you from living a generous life:

What lies do I believe about God's ability or willingness to provide for my needs?

Where did that lie come from (a childhood experience, word from an authority figure, etc.)?

What is the truth? (Consider Philippians 4v19 or 2 Corinthians 9v11)

How would my financial life change if I started living into the truth over the lie?

You may want to pause here and slowly read Psalm 23, replacing your name for every "I" and "me." Such as, "The LORD is Sarah's shepherd. Sarah shall not want ..." Read it prayerfully and meditate on God as your shepherd and yourself being led and cared for perfectly.

Practice

Imagine a new future:

Some things that God gives into our life are for us. Some of us may accidentally dishonor God's generosity by not receiving the gifts he wants to give us. If a father gives a bike to his son for Christmas, he'd be a bit dismayed to see him pawning it, misusing it, or even giving it away.

The problem is that most of us just assume that whatever we have is for our consumption. The key question of formation that we must learn to ask is: "God, what's for me to enjoy? And what's for me to share?"

Jesus called the evil one a "thief," meaning, he wants to steal God's gifts away from us and others. "The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy."

What's the opposite of stealing? Giving. What's the opposite of killing? Living. And what's the opposite of destroying? Building.

Give, live, and build. These are three healthy outlets for our finances. Some of our finances are for us to give away; some are to live on, and even to deeply enjoy our lives before God; and some are to build for the future God has put in our heart and his calling upon our life.

Take a moment to think about your finances through this threefold rubric of give/live/build.

What do you give (write out what you give to others, the church, the poor)?

What do you live on (shelter, food, healthcare, transportation, etc.)?

What do you build with (savings, investments, retirement, your business, debt reduction, etc.)?

Practice

Now, begin to listen to God ...

Take a few deep breaths, and invite the Holy Spirit to fill your mind and heart. Just quietly wait after each prompt for the Spirit to bring to your imagination any thoughts or feelings or desires he has for you.

God, is there anything about my current stewardship (giving, living, or building) that you want me to change?

Do you want me to give differently?

Do you want me to live differently?

Do you want me to build differently?

If you've genuinely asked the Spirit to speak over your life, and you sense peace over the way things are, enjoy your life with joy and contentment. But if you sense the Spirit moving you to change your budget or to give in a new way, move quickly to obey, and watch what happens in your heart and life.

As we follow Jesus, "surely [his] goodness and mercy will follow us."

Practice

Reach Exercise: Enjoy something good in your life and share it with another.

The goal for this Reach Exercise is to pair sacrificial giving with deep enjoyment and celebration of the gift of life. In one of the Apostle Paul's hallmark passages on money and generosity, he both commands the rich "to be generous and willing to share," and he reminds them (and us) that God "richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment."

The responsibility of generosity is designed to function best when held in tandem with the discipline of celebration.

Here are a few ideas to spark your imagination:

- Take someone out to a nice dinner.
- Open that bottle of wine you've been saving with a good friend.
- Watch a sunset with your family and give thanks for your life.
- Take a kid from your community who doesn't have a healthy family situation out for ice cream.
- Cook a really good dinner and savor it with your family or friends.
- Throw a party to celebrate a milestone in your life or someone in your community.
- Go take in an art museum or public park with someone you love, and pay close, unhurried attention to beauty and goodness.

Go Deeper

Read

Giving Is the Good Life by Randy Alcorn

Chapters 9-12 (pages 111-166)

Listen

Rule of Life Podcast on Generosity

Episode 03

Reflect

Before your next time together with the group for Session 04, take five to ten minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions.

- 01 Where did I feel resistance?
- 02 Which emotions did I expect to experience? Which was I surprised by?
- 03 In what ways did I encounter God in this exercise?