



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “The Blessed Life: Matters of the Heart”

Ps James Lowe - January 10, 2016

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- Do you have a New Year's resolution or an important goal for this year?
- Who did you see that was especially blessed over the holidays? What blessed them?
- Who do you know that is especially generous?

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

##### **Sermons can be heard online**

This lesson is the first in our new series entitled "The Blessed Life." Our primary emphasis is on the godly quality of giving. This goes right to the heart of God, who gave his only Son as a sacrifice for our sins. Many people think that when the topic of giving is addressed in the church, it is about finances. But this is only one aspect of the biblical value of giving. God wants us to give our lives in service to others. Finances are just one part of this heart of generosity.

The fundamental issue with the virtue of giving is the human heart. Because of the influence of our sinful natures we are not as inclined to be as giving and generous as God is. In fact, we are often selfish.

Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Wherever we put our treasure, our heart will inevitably follow. We will be concerned for whatever we put our treasure into. If we want our hearts to be concerned about the kingdom of God, then we need to invest our treasure into it.

Today's text is Deuteronomy 15:1-18, which comes from the Mosaic Law. Deuteronomy 15 focuses on the Sabbatical Year, which absolved all debts every seven years.

Here are some lessons for our hearts on the godly virtue of giving.

##### **1. Deal with a selfish heart.**

Deuteronomy 15:7-9

"If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, 'The seventh year, the year of release is near,' and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the Lord against you, and you be guilty of sin."

The temptation one would face would be to turn away from helping a person in genuine need. After all, if the person couldn't pay you back, their debt would be cancelled in the Sabbatical Year. But God calls selfishness sin. God calls us to deny and crucify our selfish tendencies.

##### **2. Deal with a grieving heart.**

Deuteronomy 15:10

"You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake."

We have to deal with selfishness before we give, and sometimes with grief after we give. A primary reason we have a begrudging attitude or experience grief after we give is because we view what we have as ours. We don't view it as truly belonging to God. Yet everything we have belongs to God, even our very lives. God calls us to remember it all belongs to him and to surrender it all in our hearts to him.

### **3. Develop a generous heart.**

Deuteronomy 15:14 ESV

"You shall furnish him out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress. As the Lord your God has blessed you, you shall give to him."

When we help someone in need, we shouldn't help a little, but be willing to be generous. We shouldn't hold back, for God didn't help us a little. He helped us a lot. He didn't even withhold his very own Son from meeting our need.

### **4. Develop a grateful heart.**

Deuteronomy 15:15 ESV

"You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today."

God calls us to remember that we were slaves, too: slaves to sin. We were lost, without God and without hope. We were destined for wrath because of our sin. But God loved us in spite of ourselves, and he redeemed us through the sinless life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus was punished for our sins and became cursed in our place. Through him God has freed us and given us a future with hope, not only for this life but also for the life to come after death. For all of this we are to be grateful. A grateful heart will sustain a generous disposition. This is what God wants for us.

Next week we will continue on this theme. We will be challenged and inspired through what the Bible teaches on the virtue of giving.

### **DISCUSSION (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.**

- What do you find difficult to give to others? Your time, money, possessions, talents, or something else?
- Have you ever given something and then had remorse afterwards? Why? How did it turn out in the end?
- Talk about God's generosity toward us. How has he blessed you?

### **PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Pray that God will convict us of selfishness.
- Pray that God will open our hearts and minds to perceive the enormous generosity he has shown toward us.
- Pray that God will open our hearts and our eyes to see the needs around us, and give us ears to hear how he wants us to help meet those needs.