

The Giving Series Week 4: The Giving Heart Daily Devotions

Day 1

Behold, I am a servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word (Luke 1:38, ESV).

What do you think of when you hear the word surrender? For me it's "Come out with your hands up!" Maybe you picture waving a white flag.

But the biggest battle we face is not a military one. The real war goes on inside people where it comes to giving up our will in favor of God's will. If there's anything that we can learn from the woman God chose to be Jesus' mother, it's certainly in this matter of surrender.

You know the familiar scene from Luke 1:26–38. An angel appeared to Mary and announced God's incredible plan to her. I think the best verse in that whole passage is Luke 1:38 because it summarizes what God is teaching us through Mary's life. Her first and only response to the angel was one of surrender. "And Mary said, 'Behold, I am a servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word.'" That's a phenomenal thing. It shows a life of complete and utter submission to God.

Mary surrendered to God's will even though it was difficult. How tempting it could have been for her to focus on the hard thing God was asking her to do. All the false accusations and misunderstandings were just the beginning of the hardship she'd face. But she said, "Let it be done to me according to your word." Mary, do you understand this? You're going to have some really dark days. Your heart will break as you watch your Son suffer and die. "Behold, I am a servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word."

Day 2

It all comes down to the heart. That's what God looks at in every single situation. Is your heart in to the offering you are giving? Have you submitted to God's will when it comes to giving and are you doing it unto him? Would he be pleased with the way you are giving an offering or time towards something.

"I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve."
Jeremiah 17:10

It's all about your heart, your attitude towards giving that makes all the difference. Cain and Abel were both sending in offerings to the Lord, but God was pleased with Abel because Abel showed total surrender and love the Lord. Whereas, Cain just does the offering.

Ask yourself, each time you're about to give... If you are giving for all the right reasons.

Day 3

Mary surrendered to God's will without knowing all the details. That is my issue right there. If you had been Mary, wouldn't you have wanted someone to fill in the big picture? Like, "When is He going to know that He is God's Son?" "How is Joseph going to handle this?" "Is He going to be God's Son right off the bat?" "What about miracles?" "What's my role in this going to be?" "Where is all this headed?" I could think of a thousand questions, but here's the thing: God wouldn't have told her anyway because she couldn't have handled it. God doesn't work like that. God doesn't say, "Here is everything you're going to go through for the rest of your life." God loves us. He would never reveal all of that to us—it would be too hard to take. If you have been saying, "I'm going to surrender to God when I have all of the information," give it up to God and get in partnership with Him now.

Prayer

Thank you Lord for your love and for continuously choosing me. Lord, I pray that you help me to be able to surrender my all to you. To trust that with what I give, you will see me through. That I don't need to know exactly what will be happening in my future. But to trust that you will always provide for me, and I will never lack in anything. For you promise to give us a good life, and a good life in abundance.

In Jesus name
AMEN.

Day 4

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. "Bring them here to me," he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.
Matthew 14:13-21 NIV

Day 5

In the verse above, we see Christ teaching the disciples how to have a heart of giving. He could have listened to his disciples and sent the people away to get their own food, but he shows us how important it is to give. In this situation, we see him getting 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. I mean, how can you feed the crowd with that. And this was the last of what the

disciples had –they were probably hungry and looking forward to eating and they had to give the last of what they had.

Christ takes the bread and fish, and surrenders it to the Lord. He blesses the food –and we see the bread multiplied and each disciple carried a basket of leftover food. Which means that, he took the food and he blessed it, and gave out more than he had gotten from the disciples. They might have not expected any returns, and the miracle that took place, but they get more than they gave away. Which is the heart of giving.

Give the last of what you have, because that's the most important thing to you –YET God wants to be first in your life.

Will you let him be?

Day 6

The way we find out if we have a giving heart is to check areas of our life that require giving but that may have nothing to do with money. Are you ready for a difficult heart evaluation? Here we go:

1. Do we gladly let someone else in the family use the bath /shower /sink first when we both wanted it at the same time?
2. Do we willingly give up the last piece of the dessert?
3. Do we give up watching our show for someone else to watch what they want? Do we try to get the best seat in the room to watch TV?
4. Will we skip a lunch break to help another student finish a project?
6. Do we clean up after others, offer to do dishes at home, or help clean up or put away chairs after youth?
7. Do we seek out younger women or men in the church to mentor or encourage?
8. Do we try to say yes if we are needed in the nursery, to help someone move, do a car repair or give someone a ride to the doctor?
9. Do we look for opportunities to have people over for a meal?
10. Do we willingly loan our vehicles or other valuable things to others?
11. Do we take interest in children?
12. Do we offer help to someone older or disabled – when no one sees.

13. Do we ask questions and listen attentively in conversation, or do we impatiently wish they'd quit talking so we could make our comment or tell our story?

No money is transacted in any of these acts. You see, stewardship of money comes from that same heart that is a steward of time and ability and plain old kindness – putting others first.

If we sense true guilt about some of these questions, then we have to start at the bottom and first recommit to giving ourselves daily to the Lord. And then God will teach us generosity on the heart level. Now how does God do that? Admonition, exhortation and trying harder, right? Guilt always does the trick, right! Wrong. We will “become poor” for the benefit of others only if we are motivated by the grace of Jesus Christ who “became poor for us so that we might be rich [spiritually]” (2 Corinthians 8:9-19).