DAY 4

Partnering With God

“They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.”

— 1 Timothy 6:18-19

Paul and Carolyn have been leaders in their congregation for years, and their generosity has grown steadily as they have matured in faith. They also have enjoyed personal financial success. When their church felt called to reach more people and younger generations by building a new sanctuary, Paul and Carolyn were challenged to give a major gift. They prayed about it for weeks, before deciding to give the largest gift they had ever given in their lives. “I felt like I was asked to partner with God for a great purpose,” Paul said. “Our gift became one of the great delights of our lives. We loved knowing that we could make a difference. We were deeply moved by the experience.” Carolyn adds, “If God gives you the capacity and the passion to do something, why in God’s name wouldn’t you do it?”

People give because generosity helps them achieve God’s purposes in themselves. By giving, we develop the inner qualities of generosity. Generosity is not a spiritual attribute someone acquires apart from the practice of giving. It becomes discernable only through visible behavior. We cannot become generous and cling to everything we have without letting go. The opposite of generosity is greediness, selfishness. These are not the qualities that lead to life, and so by our giving we cultivate a different nature inside ourselves.

God uses our practice of giving to reconfigure our interior life. By giving, we craft a different inner desire as the driving element of life. Our motivations change.

Giving moderates the powerful and sometimes destructively insatiable drive for acquisition. In the daily interior struggle fostered by a consumerist, materialist society that pressures us to pursue many things that do not lead to real happiness, the practice of giving aims us at what ultimately satisfies. Giving sanctifies and deepens the struggle, and constantly resets the internal compass in the right direction. Generosity becomes a tool God uses to draw us closer to God and to align us more closely with God’s desire for us.

- Have you ever given over and beyond your normal tithe or pattern of giving? If so, what was the experience like?
- Do you find that the more you give, the more likely you are to give? Why or why not?