

Giving WORDshop
Originally taught on October 11, 2006

Welcome and Prayer

So What's a WORDshop?

- An opportunity to add to specific tools to your Toolbox for a Life of Faith

Equipping Your Toolbox for a Life of Faith

◆ **Stewards of God's Gifts**

- ▶ “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”
- *1 Corinthians 12:4-7*
- ▶ “God has provided us with everything we have, with who we are, and with what we are able to accomplish and acquire.”
- *Real Faith for Real Life*, Mike Foss, p. 111
- ▶ *What does it mean to you to be a steward of God's gifts to you?*

◆ **God Gives Generously**

- ▶ “And I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessings.”
- *Ezekiel 34:26*
- ▶ God generously blesses our lives. Advertising and culture often help us to focus on scarcity. As Christians, it is helpful to stop and focus on the gifts that we have been given.
- ▶ Intentionally Focus on God's generosity
 - ▶ *Take 3 minutes and make a list of all the blessings in your life*
 - ▶ Post your list somewhere in your house and add to the list on a regular basis
 - ▶ Include a couple of those blessings in a prayer of thanksgiving
- ▶ *Join now in a prayer of thanksgiving for our blessings. Choose one thing from your list and add it to the group's prayer.*

◆ **Called to Give**

- ▶ “Life is giving. . . . People have a genuine spirit of generosity. Our nature is generosity because we are created in the image and likeness of God. Our generosity is not because of anything we have done. Our spirit of generosity is a gift from God. God's nature is amazing grace and generosity. When we live forward to our best true selves, we share life with grace and generosity.”
- *Twelve Keys for Living*, Kennon Callahan, p. 153
- ▶ “Giving is an essential aspect of the life of discipleship. When the followers of Jesus become miserly, we turn from the best of ourselves. We have not been created simply to watch out for our own needs. When we claim God's gifts and hoard them for ourselves, we deny the destiny God has planted within us. Things that clutter our lives and our hearts keep us from discovering the joy of giving.”
- *Real Faith for Real Life*, Mike Foss, p. 111

◆ **Being Generous Givers**

- ▶ “The biblical principle we grew to both understand and embrace is equal sacrifice . . . not equal gift. The point is that God has blessed some with more financial resources than other, but God has called all of us to experience the joy of sacrificial giving.”

- *Real Faith for Real Life*, Mike Foss, p. 115

- ▶ In response to God’s generous gifts to us, we give generously. Being a generous giver does not require lavish resources, but rather a rich understanding of God’s love and forgiveness in your life.

◆ **Ways to Give**

- ▶ *Time* - One of the most valuable gifts we have is time. Find something that you are passionate about, your grandchild’s education or a local helping ministry, and give some of your time in support of that ministry.
- ▶ *Talents* - Claim the gifts God has given you. If you are a talented woodworker, look for a project that lets you share your faith through woodworking. If you love gardening, teach others how to care for God’s creation. If you enjoy meeting new people, volunteer to greet new people in worship after each service. God has blessed you with talents. Use them to build up the community.
- ▶ *Financial Resources*
 - ▶ Take time each year to prayerfully consider your giving.
 - ▶ Give out of your blessings not your scarcity. Decide what you are going to give and give it before you pay bills or buy extras.
 - ▶ Proportionate Giving - Sometimes it is helpful to look at your giving in terms of a percentage of your income. Compare that percentage to the percentage you spend on other things in your life. Where does “giving in response to God’s love” rank in the overall way you spend your money? There is no perfect percentage of your income to give. Simply give as God has given to you.
 - ▶ Be open to spontaneous giving opportunities. If a need arises in the community or the world, make a gift to support that ministry.
 - ▶ Be open to the possibility of giving from accumulated resources or making an enduring gift. Special gifts in support of particular ministries can have a lasting effect.
 - ▶ Simply start giving. The amount given is less important than the act of giving. As Pastor Foss notes, “When Christians give, God takes our giving and places it alongside the giving of others. Soon what seemed a small thing becomes a world-changing generosity.” (*Real Faith*, p. 112)

◆ **Sent into the World**

Let us pray. Mission is stronger than money. We are the people of mission. Service is stronger than survival. We are the people of service. Sacrifice is stronger than striving. We are the people of sacrifice. Generosity is stronger than getting. We are the giving people. The cross of Calvary is stronger than the empires of the world. We are the people of the cross. The crucified Christ is stronger than the powers of this world. We are the people of the crucified Christ. The generosity of God is stronger than the strivings of humankind. We are the people of grace. We are the people of compassion. We are the people of generosity. Amen.

- *Twelve Keys for Living*, Kennon Callahan, p. 153

This WORDshop is based on “Real Faith for Real Life” by Michael Foss, Augsburg Fortress, 2004 and Twelve Keys for Living by Dr. Kennon Callahan, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998.