

**“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”**

John 15:5, NIV

  
**grow**  
deeper  
in Christ

## Becoming Generous...

IN THE HEART OF EVERY CHRISTIAN is a God-inspired desire for the generous life—a life that models God's example of selflessness and sacrifice. We are all on a spiritual journey and we are all on a giving journey. Both are filled with growth and movement. But as with any journey, we get caught in periods of stagnation and decline. The pull of culture and our own sinfulness prevent us from living a truly generous life. We need the power of God's word, the promise of God's love, and fellow believers to live the generous life God calls us to live.

As in all things Jesus is our model for a generous and sacrificial life. In the feeding of the multitude and turning water into wine Jesus demonstrated the reality that our God is a God of abundance. When we live in obedience we don't fall prey to the lie that there is not enough to go around. Jesus demonstrated a life of joyful, unrestrained and exuberant generosity. His attention to people and their needs, his ministry of healing

and transformation, his parables like the Prodigal Son and the workers who were paid a full days wage for an hour's work, all tell of a God who's giving is unlimited and extravagant. Jesus himself is the gift of God that liberates us to be joyful and sacrificial givers

The Apostle Paul's emphasis on the grace we find in Jesus, not only for salvation but for following Jesus in our everyday lives, tells us that it is grace that is the foundation of all of our obedience (Ephesians 2:89-10). Our serving and giving are an invitation to enter into the disciplines by which we will ever more fully enter into the joy of our salvation in Jesus. “Freely you have received, therefore freely give” (Matthew 10:8). The foundation of our serving and giving is not a desperate attempt to appease an angry tyrant who seeks to tax us into poverty, but to join in the great celebration of extravagant giving that has found its profound fulfillment in the birth, life, death and resurrection of our

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Lord. When we join in that giving of ourselves and our belongings, or when we serve others, we allow the Holy Spirit entrance into our lives to transform us into profoundly generous people who live as signs of the presence of God's kingdom in our world.

Some of the disciplines that release us to grow in our perception and experience of God's abundance are:

- Regular, proportional giving
- Serving others, especially the poor and marginalized
- Gratitude
- Worship
- Celebration

Jesus told us that that he came into this world that we might have life and have that life in abundance (John 10:10).

**Consider making this reflection a daily, weekly or monthly practice:**

- What actions might I take today to accept God's invitation into those behaviors through which I can more fully experience God's abundant life?
- What are some of the ways God has been extravagantly generous to me?
- What obstacles stand in the way of the giving God is calling me to do?

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable, I will meditate on the glorious splendor of your majesty."  
— Psalm 145:3, 5

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