



October 11th, 2015

Turning To God's Generosity

1. Reject the FALSE NARRATIVE:

WE MUST EARN GODS FAVOR

For it is impossible to bring back to repentance those who were once enlightened—those who have experienced the good things of heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit,⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come—⁶ and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people back to repentance; by rejecting the Son of God, they themselves are nailing him to the cross once again and holding him up to public shame. - Hebrews 6:4-6 (NLT)

2. Embrace the JESUS NARRATIVE:

GOD IS A GENEROUS GOD

“For the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard.² He agreed to pay the normal daily wage and sent them out to work.³ “At nine o’clock ... At noon and again at three o’clock he did the same thing.⁶ “At five o’clock that afternoon he was in town again and saw some more people standing around. He asked them, ‘Why haven’t you been working today?’⁷ “They replied, ‘Because no one hired us.’ “The landowner told them, ‘Then go out and join the others in my vineyard.’ ...⁹ When those hired at five o’clock were paid, each received a full day’s wage.¹⁰ When those hired first came to get their pay, they assumed they would receive more. But they, too, were paid a day’s wage.¹¹ When they received their pay, they protested to the owner,¹² ‘Those people worked only one hour, and yet you’ve paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat.’¹³ “He answered one of them, ‘Friend, I haven’t been unfair! Didn’t you agree to work all day for the usual wage?’¹⁴ Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you.¹⁵ Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?’ - Matthew 20:1-15 (NLT)

A REAL PROBLEM: A SCARCITY MINDSET

The God of Mercy, Patience, & Grace

Definition: GENEROSITY FLOWS FROM A FEELING OF COMPASSION
AND A SENSE OF ABUNDANCE

Then the Lord came down in a cloud and stood there with him; and he called out his own name, Yahweh. ⁶ The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out, “Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. ⁷ I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.” - Exodus 34:5-7 (NLT) (see also: 2 Chr. 30:9; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13)

1. MERCY: GOD'S GENEROSITY TOWARD THOSE IN DISTRESS

God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. - 2 Corinthians 1:3 (NLT)

2. PATIENCE: GOD'S GENEROSITY IN WITHHOLDING PUNISHMENT

But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life. - 1 Timothy 1:16 (NLT)

3. GRACE: GOD'S GENEROSITY TOWARD THOSE UNDESERVING

Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name. - Psalm 119:132 (ESV)

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God freely and graciously declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, ²⁶ for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. – Romans 3:23-26 (NLT)

Delighting In The God Who Delights In You

This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. - 1 John 4:10-11 (NLT)

*What comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us. . . . Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question, “What comes into your mind when you think about God?” we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man. – A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, page 9*

I Will Turn To God by...

- Memorizing **Exodus 34:6-7**
- Embracing his generous heart for me.
- Delighting myself in His delight for me.
- Surrendering my life, for the first time, to Christ as my Savior.

WALK THE TALK A Growth Group Guide

1. What are some of the destructive images and ideas about God that you have wrestled with in your life?
2. How does our culture support the narrative of “earning our salvation”? Have you ever personally felt this kind of pressure?
3. How does knowing the God Jesus reveals in the parable of Matthew 20 (see notes above) help change your heart and behavior?
4. Why is it so important to compare Exodus 34:5-7 with Romans 3:23-26, and how does Jesus make the difference in the two? Do you see the significance of God’s generous mercy, grace, and patience trumping his judgment in both? Explain.
5. Read the Westminster Larger Catechism aloud to each other: *Q: What is the chief and highest end of man? A: Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully enjoy Him.* Now, do you find yourself enjoying God as it calls us to do? Do you believe he delights in you as well?
6. Re-read Tozer’s quote above: How do your beliefs about God explain how you live your life?

SOUL TRAINING – PRAYING PSALM 23

A Personal Transformation Exercise

The Principle:

Psalm 23 is a beautiful expression of the kingdom of God, in which God is with us, caring and providing for us, and blessing us, even in the worst circumstances. The God of Psalm 23 is most certainly generous. This God not only provides what we need, but he also gives us more than we need. When we walk with God as our shepherd, we see our entire life, even our trials and suffering, as goodness and mercy.

This Psalm contains a narrative about the exceedingly generous God. By letting the images wash over your mind, you embed this true narrative into your soul. Your mind and your body will begin to be shaped by these words. As you begin you will probably have to refocus your attention, but it soon turns into a prayer experience.

The Plan:

This week, recite this Psalm before you fall asleep each night, and again when you awake. Before your feet hit the ground, try to have slowly meditated on each word. Recite it so often this week that it becomes second nature to you, as natural as breathing. You will notice yourself beginning to pray it at odd times.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.