

Series: No Cents

Week 2: Living With An Open Hand

Introduction

We started a series last week titled “No Cents”

I started to think about that a little and started thinking about things in life that make no sense. Here are a few of them...

Why is phonetically not spelled phonetically?

Why is a man or woman who invests all of your money called a broker?

Why do you park in a driveway and drive on a parkway?

Why does Waffle House have locks on the door?

Why are there braille dots on a drive-thru ATM?

Why does a ship carry cargo and a car carry shipments?

Why do we buy hot dogs in packages of 10 and buns in packages of 8?

Why is it that by letting go instead of grabbing hold that you will ensure the blessed life is your life?

That is where we are going this week. The previous statement makes no sense, but as with almost everything in God’s kingdom, it is the things that make no sense that often release the blessings of God.

A year ago at this time, I made a decision that made no sense (no cents) to leave a career of 10+ years and go as a full-time missionary with the West GA Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Review

Last week PT did a great job introducing our new series. He talked about generosity being a litmus test for our spiritual maturity. He also challenged us to make “stuff” a part of our worship. So many times we are willing to give of our time and our talents but the treasure part is where we tend to hold on tight and clench our fists as hard as we can!

That it is where we are going today...we are talking about living **life with an open hand**. The reality is that an open hand will always lead to an open heart.

Have you noticed that we have become a “fist bump” culture. I blame it on Howie Mandel and the show Deal or No Deal. We have become a culture that has become more comfortable with a fist bump instead of a good, old fashion handshake. We’ve become more comfortable sitting on the back porch instead of the front porch, having a conversation via text message and emoji’s instead of a face-to-face conversation. In other words, we have become more comfortable with closing our hands and hearts to relationships and generosity.

This is not how God intended it to be and that is what we are going to talk about today. Please understand that when I talk about living life with an open hand, I’m not just talking about being

generous with your financial resource. It also means living life of generosity with love, forgiveness, time, talents, honor, respect, and so much more.

Deuteronomy 15:11 HCSB “For there will never cease to be poor people in the land; that is why I am commanding you, “You must willingly open your hand to your afflicted and poor brother in your land.”

Bring attention to three words specifically:

Commanding: this is a commandment, a demand, a charge to action. It doesn't say “this is why I am suggesting to you”

Willingly: God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7) That means He wants us to have an open hand while full of joy and a smile. It's not willingly if your hand is open but your face is grimacing.

Your: To me, this is an ownership word. A word that suggests it is your heart and hand that must be open, it's your poor and afflicted brother, and it's your land. That means God doesn't want us to pass the buck on generosity.

I want to go over three points today if I can...

Point #1

Without an open hand...**you cannot reach as far!**

Illustration: Take yourself to the grocery store. There is something on the top shelf that you really want and you sure don't want to ask for help. So you stretch, and in some instances you climb, but you don't do this with a closed fist. It would do you no good to stretch to your tippy toes but keep you fist closed the entire time. Here's another example for you men...what's one of the first things we do if you put us around a basketball goal. We try to touch the rim (or the net in my case), right? If you have the vertical that I do, you need every bit of your legs making you jump and you need every bit of your finger tips to get to the net. It wouldn't make sense to jump with a closed hand.

God has called us to reach the lost. He has called us to be the hands and feet on this Earth, in our land.

Philemon 1:6 NLT “And I am praying that you will put into action (be the hands and feet) the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ.”

We can't reach our neighbors, our communities, and our world if we don't reach with an open hand. An open, outstretched hand will lead to an open, outpouring heart that generously reaches out with love, forgiveness, times, talent, and treasures.

Point #2

Without an open hand...**you cannot receive all the God has for you!**

The fist is an international sign of anger or of a closed spirit. The open hand is a gesture of invitation and acceptance.

Psalms 143:6a NLT “I spread out my hands to You...”

Open your hands to your bank account...when you do this, you will allow the dollars to leave and receive freedom.

Open your hands and heart and receive redemption (Deuteronomy 15:15 – Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord Your God redeemed you; that is why I am giving you this command today.)

Open your hands and heart and receive blessings (Proverbs 22:9 – He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor)

“Nothing sets us up for God’s provision like sacrificial giving (open hand giving). If you want God to bless you beyond your ability, try giving beyond your means.” – Mark Batterson Chase The Lion

Open your hands and heart and stand tall (Isaiah 32:8 – But a generous man devises generous things, and by generosity he shall stand.)

Open your hands and heart and receive joy (2 Corinthians 8:2b – but they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.)

Point #3

Without an open hand...**you cannot resemble the Father!**

It is our purpose to be more Christ-like. To look like Christ. We can never look more Christ-like than when we walk through life being obedient to the Holy Spirit and with open and outstretched hands.

Psalms 18:16 “He reached down from Heaven and took hold of me; He pulled me out of the deep waters.”

Illustration: pulling someone up on the platform. God always has an outstretched hand but it’s a two-way street. If we want to be rescued from the deep waters, we must also open our hands.

Once we are pulled out of the deep waters, it is our job through generosity to turn around and help pull others out.

Closing

Fulfilling our “design” will always precede fulfilling our “destiny”

Illustration: South Indian Monkey Trap

God has designed us to love, to worship, to forgive, to be obedient, to trust, to be generous with our time, talents, and treasures, to live with an open hand and open heart.

When we live the way He designed us, we will walk into our purpose and destiny without even realizing it.

Psalms 145:16 HCSB “You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing”

