



**Part 5: “Open-Handed vs. Tight-Fisted Living”
Deuteronomy 15:7-11**

Principles for Open-Handed vs. Tight-Fisted Living:

1. Open your eyes to see the _____ around you – Deut. 15:7a
2. Don't let your _____ and your _____ to the needy around you – Deut. 15:7b
3. _____ your heart and your hand to those in need – Deut. 15:8
4. Don't let _____ keep you from doing the right thing – Deut. 15:9a
5. Remember that you run the risk of being _____ when you entertain false motives and practice stinginess – Deut. 15:9b
6. Open-Handed living means being generous, not stingy toward the needy and comes with a promise: _____ you in every way possible – Deut. 15:10

Action Steps:

1. Commit to _____ the truths and principles about generosity in God's Word
2. Commit to _____ the truths and principles beginning with the first step of submitting yourself and all you have to God
3. Commit to _____ in biblical generosity in 2023

Growth Group Study Guide for February 5th – 12th

Getting Started

Group Discussion: Describe any situations where you were in a position of helping the needy, homeless, etc. What happened? What were you doing? How did it make you feel (both positive and negative)?

Digging Deeper

1. Read Deuteronomy 15:7-11.

Review the six principles we pulled from this passage on Sunday morning. Which one brought new insights to your mind about living an open-handed life? Why? _____

Which one is easiest for you to grab onto and do and which is the hardest? _____

2. Read together aloud the attached article, Bible Verses About Helping Those in Need, stopping after each one as time allows and letting anyone share their thoughts both about the verse and discussing it and the suggested practical tips that are included. What can we learn from what God has to say about the responsibility He's given us to open our hands and help those in need?

Close in Prayer

Ask God to help each of us to continue to grow in generosity and to grow the spirit of generosity in our church family.

Bible Verses About Helping Others In Need (With Practical Ideas On How To Live Them Out!)

What does the Bible say about helping others? Quite a lot, actually! Both the Old and New Testament are filled with Bible verses about helping others in need. Serving others is clearly important in the eyes of God, but finding ways to serve can often fall by the wayside in our busy day to day lives.

1. **HEBREWS 6:10** "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."

Continually serving others is a form of expressing our faith in and to God. When we start to grow weary in our serving, we can be reenergized in our commitment by knowing that he sees us and he will not forget.

2. **GALATIANS 5:13** "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love."

Jesus showed the ultimate selflessness in laying down his life to set us free. We must always seek to imitate his selfless love by serving others instead of simply serving ourselves. It could be as simple as letting that car in front of yours in a long line of traffic!

3. PROVERBS 19:17 “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.”

Sometimes we need a little extra incentive to remind ourselves to be generous. Knowing that God will reward our compassion and kindness towards the less fortunate can be just that!

4. GALATIANS 6:2 “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

We were never meant to do life alone. We need the love and care of others, as much as we are needed by others in the same ways. Next time you see someone struggling under the weight of a burden, be sure to offer your time, resources, and strength as a blessing to that person.

5. HEBREWS 13:16 “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

It must be an easy thing to forget to do good, since we are reminded not to forget to in this verse. A practical way to remember to do good is to make it a daily part of our prayers to ask God for specific ways throughout our day to serve and share with others.

6. JOHN 15:12-13 “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

Jesus’ love for people is extravagant. While we are not able to literally lay down our lives on a daily basis for others, we *can* choose to lay down our lives and love extravagantly in smaller practical ways. For instance, we can choose to go out of our way to help someone in need even though it may be personally inconvenient to us.

7. MATTHEW 5:42 “Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

This verse leaves little to discern! It’s as simple as it says. If you have it to share, do so with an open heart and an open hand. One way we could do this is by choosing to financially support missionaries or a ministry.

8. ROMANS 12:13 “Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”

Practicing hospitality can look a lot of different ways. Do you know a family that is struggling to make ends meet? Invite them over for meals and buy them groceries!

Do you know a single person who is in need of a place to live and you have a spare room? Offer your spare room to them while they get on their feet!

9. MATTHEW 5:16 “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

We may underestimate the power of simply living an honest and faithful life before God. By doing so, others notice and may actually end up seeing the beauty of God through our lives. Leading hearts to God is at the top of the list for *acts of service*. What an honor to inspire someone else to love God because of the way that we love him!

10. PROVERBS 3:27 “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act.”

Focusing on all of the world’s problems at once can be overwhelming and cause us to think we can’t make a difference. It is God’s job to place specific people in our lives that need help, and it is also his job to give us the resources to help those people. We just need to be faithful to act in those moments with what he’s given us, and we can let him take care of the rest!

11. PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4 “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

With everyone looking out for everyone else’s interests more than their own, no one would be in need. Here’s a familiar and recent example: when the current pandemic first broke out, people began buying as much toilet paper as possible and not leaving enough for others. What if in an instance like that, instead of only thinking of our own families, we thought of the other families also in need of toilet paper, and made sure that there was enough for everyone?

12. MATTHEW 25:44-45 “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’”

This verse is a wake-up call to remind us that God is in all places! Sometimes we get caught up in our own perceptions of where God is, and we may utterly miss him being right in front of us. Make sure to keep your heart open to him and how he wants you to share his love with everyone you encounter.

13. LUKE 3:10-11 “‘What should we do then?’ the crowd asked. John answered, ‘Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.’”

As believers, we need to remember that everything God blesses us with is also meant to bless others. It’s important not to hoard and store up things for ourselves when we know that others are in need. This verse itself gives all the practical tips we need: if you have two shirts, share one; and if you have food, share with one who does not.

14. JAMES 2:14-17 “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

The saying “talk is cheap” comes to mind! It does no good to wish a person well when you have the resources to help, yet choose not to. Good intentions only go so far. Be purposeful to take action and physically help a person who needs it when you are able to. For example, when you encounter a homeless person on the street, instead of saying you will pray for them, choose to go and physically buy them a meal as well.

15. MATTHEW 10:8 “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.”

Perhaps, we can't literally raise the dead, but we can certainly choose to give freely to others. Have you ever lent something to someone who desperately needed it? Instead of expecting them to pay it back, release them from that burden, and choose to give it freely! Everything we've received, we've received freely from God himself!

16. DEUTERONOMY 15:11 "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land."

It's a sad reality, but there *will* always be poor people in this fallen world. The moment we start seeing ourselves as part of God's solution is the moment we walk into a powerful reality with him. Let God use you to be a blessing to others. Try volunteering your time at a local homeless shelter or at a children's group home.

17. PROVERBS 11:25 "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."

What a promise! As we choose to refresh others, God will also refresh us. Do you know of a mom who is at her wits end and needs some help with the kids? Generously offer yourself for a day, or an evening, and give her a chance to practice some self care. The Lord will make sure to take care of you as well!

18. ISAIAH 58:10 "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday."

Helping others and speaking well of them is not only the right thing to do, it is also a form of blessing in our own lives. Choose to remove all spiteful and bitter talk of others from your life, and spend your energy on meeting the needs of others around you.

19. PROVERBS 22:9 "The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor."

Here's another short and sweet verse that does not take much explaining: Share your food with the poor and you will be blessed! Take it a step further and share your money, your resources, and your time with the poor. Choose to be generous. Maybe it's time to start giving to a child sponsorship program that helps children on a monthly basis in developing countries.

20. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

If we have learned anything in our country this past year, it's that it is too easy to discourage and tear one another down. The difficult thing to do is to encourage and build one another up! It takes a certain going against the grain to do this, but it is the right thing to do and it is what will point others to Jesus. Make the decision today to not be a part of divisive talk and action, but rather to always seek to be the light of Jesus in your day-to-day interactions and conversations.

21. MARK 10:21 "Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'"

To follow Jesus means to lay everything else down, including earthly possessions. If not for any other reason, we should choose to give to the poor out of a desire to follow him and to be his disciples. Next time you have the difficult chance to give something tangible away to someone in need, remember that all of your true treasures are in heaven.

22. LUKE 6:27-28 “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

It's easy to tangibly love someone in need who is kind to us, but God tells us to also love those who hate us, curse us, and mistreat us. We have no greater example of this than Jesus himself, surrendered on the cross in love, pleading with the Father to forgive his crucifiers *for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:34). We have the opportunity to do this on a smaller scale throughout our lives when we are slandered, ridiculed, and mocked for a number of reasons, including for our faith. These are our chances to truly love, bless, pray for, and do good towards our enemies.

23. LUKE 6:31 “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Also commonly thought of as the Golden Rule, this verse should cause us to truly reflect on how we treat others in our lives. Does the way we treat others reflect the way that we would personally want to be treated? It's as simple as being honest with that answer and then choosing to make whatever changes are necessary.

24. LUKE 12:33-34 “Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

If our treasure is placed in earthly, material things, then that is also where our heart's loyalty will be. I think we can agree that there is no greater treasure in heaven and on earth than that of knowing Jesus. This kind of treasure cannot be taken from us and it will never fail us. Freely and joyfully give away that favorite [you fill in the blank], knowing that you can't keep all the material stuff for eternity anyways! Your relationship with Jesus is all that truly matters.

25. ACTS 20:35 “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

If you have experienced this promise, then you know it to be true! Indeed, it *is* more blessed to give than to receive. Remember this next Christmas, when you are being asked by loved ones what you want for Christmas. What if you chose for your Christmas gifts to be a blessing for others? You could pick a charity or ministry that you want people to give to on your behalf as your Christmas present.

26. ISAIAH 1:17 “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”

The widow and the orphan are close to God's heart. It is apparent throughout Scripture. God cares immensely for the defenseless and he charges us to do right for them, and to seek justice for and defend them. What if we looked up foster care group homes in our different areas and found ways to pour into the lives of the *orphans* living in our own backyards, so to speak? Or what if we volunteered our time or gave financially to an organization working towards ending sex trafficking?