

GENEROSITY

JOURNAL





We talk a lot at ThornCreek about how none of us have it all together and that God's grace to us in Christ can transform our lives. This Generosity Journal is an effort to allow the Holy Spirit to transform each of us. It's a tool we've developed to help you process through and "unpack" what it means to live a generous life. We won't ask you to give this journal back to us because we want you to keep it, to refer back to it, and ultimately, to reflect on the thoughts you've had and the notes you've made.

Some of the questions asked in this journal may be easy for you to answer. Others may take some time to really think through, or may not apply to you at this stage of your life. Our hope is that, as you spend time thinking about the impact that you can make in and through a prevailing church, this simple notebook will become a catalyst for meditation:

- On what God has provided for us in Christ
- On how the world in which we live tries to crowd that out of our lives
- On how God wants to work through you and your resources to replicate in others what you've experienced with Christ
- On next steps to take as your faith in Him expresses itself through love and generous living

Thanks for making time to read through this journal. We are praying that God will use this journal to encourage you and to equip you to lead our church as we prevail into this next phase of our time together at ThornCreek. It is a privilege to be on this journey together with you.

²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. – Ephesians 3:20

YOUR STORY

⁹ God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.

¹⁰ 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. ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

– 1 John 4:9-12

In what specific ways has God has been generous in demonstrating his love for me, personally?

Describe a time when God was generous with you in each of the following areas (whether you knew in advance of the need or not).

Spiritually –

Relationally –

Circumstantially -

Materially -

Are there specific ways that God has used the people at ThornCreek to be generous to you?

YOUR WORLD

¹⁴ The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others. ¹⁵ The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. ¹⁶ The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. ¹⁸ The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, ¹⁹ but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced. ²⁰ And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!" – Mark 4:14-20

How was the subject of money handled or discussed in my home growing up?

How is it handled or discussed in my home now, in my adult life?

Are there specific lies I'm being told by Satan, my society, or myself about how to handle wealth that are trying to choke out what God wants to do in my life?

What significant experiences, people, or teachings have influenced my thinking and attitudes about generosity?

What, if anything gets in the way of my having a generous heart?

YOUR HEART

⁸ "The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with the world around them than are the children of the light. ⁹ Here's the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home. – Luke 16:8-9

What are the potential dangers or pitfalls for me emotionally and spiritually of having material things and increased wealth? Do they activate any idols for me?

What giving experiences – time, talent, treasure – have brought me the most joy? Has one of these brought me more joy than the others? Why is that? What if anything does this suggest about God's purposes for me?

Have I been given much more than I really need? If so, what is God's purpose for my excess or abundance?

Have I asked God why He has provided me what He has—materially—and how He wants me to use it? Do I do this consistently?

Are there things in my life I need to let go of in order to prevail for others? For God?

YOUR LEGACY

¹⁹ After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! ²⁰ Yes, you are our pride and joy. – 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

Do I see my assets as a sacred trust from God?

Have I thought about His will for me when it comes to giving both spiritually and financially to others?

How intentional have I been developing strategies to leave behind not only a financial legacy to my loved ones but also a spiritual one? Is there a verbal expression of my spiritual testimony in my will?

What am I modeling—and to whom—on handling material resources well and living simply?

Do I feel that I have made or am making the spiritual impact on others that I really desire to?

YOUR HOPE

³ Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. ⁴ Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, ⁵ for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. ⁶ And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

⁷ So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. – Philippians 1:3-7

⁷ "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹ "You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? ¹⁰Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! ¹¹So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him. – Matthew 7:7-11

Are there things you need to ask God to begin to work into your heart through His Spirit?

Fears you need to be delivered from?

Lies you need to refute?

Sins you need to confess?

Spiritual fruits you want to grow in?

Good works you want to accomplish by faith?

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. – Ephesians 2:8-10

