



The Beauty of Generosity

“When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.” (Deut. 24:21-22)

Your Relationship with Stuff

You have a relationship with your stuff. As is the case with all relationships, it is either a healthy or unhealthy one. Though we were designed to be in authority over our material possessions, sadly many in our culture, and in the church, have placed themselves under the authority of money and are now enslaved by it (see I Tim. 6:10; Mt. 6:24). Deuteronomy 24 contains a principle, which, if you choose to live by it, will help you stay in right relationship with your possessions and live to reflect the heart of God more fully. The principle: **All you have is not all** _____. Living by this principle will unlock the generous Spirit inside you so you may do great good for those in need. Yet, living a generous life will not come easily or naturally. *Then he [Jesus] said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” (Lk. 12:15).*

From Greed to Generosity (Deut. 24:1-22)

24:1-4. Divorce. In this often-misunderstood text, Moses neither commands nor commends divorce. Rather, he presupposes divorce and regulates it for the protection of the woman and for the honor of God. (1) Divorce must not be done _____ -- hence the law requires some “indecency” to be found. (2) Divorce must not be done _____ – hence the legal process Moses requires. (3) Divorce must not create _____ – hence the woman must have the certificate of divorce in hand, giving her the right to remarry. The certificate also provides protection in the case of false accusations. Offering clarity on Deut. 24, Jesus teaches that except in the case of marital unfaithfulness, your commitment to your wife is a commitment for _____ (see Mt. 19:1-12).

24:5. Recently married. The closest scripture you will find for the sentiment, “Happy wife, happy life.” Building a solid foundation for your marriage is an act of _____. A “yes” to your spouse means “not yet” to everything else.

24:6. Milestones. Although interest could not be charged on a loan to an Israelite in need (see Deut. 23:19-20), a pledge could be taken as collateral to guarantee the repayment of the loan. Here Moses forbids taking a pledge that would take away a man’s ability to provide for his family and get himself out of debt. Greed leads to exercising personal rights even when it is clearly not _____.

24:7. Kidnapping. The practice of capturing and enslaving men reveals the condition of the human heart unaffected by the mercy of God. Greed leads to _____ people and _____ things. Generosity leads to _____ things to _____ people. Israel often lost the battle between greed and generosity and was punished for it (see Amos 2:6).

24:8-9. As the Levitical priests instruct. Certainly, God shows concern here for contagious diseases, but Moses’ greater point is likely about submission to God-appointed authority. Miriam was punished by God for speaking out against God’s appointed prophet, Moses (see Num. 12). What will come of those who speak against Christ? What will come of those who speak against Christ’s apostles?



Ruth in Boaz Field. Based on the drawings of Schnorr von Carolsfeld. bibleodyssey.com

24:12-13. Return their cloak by sunset. A money lender would certainly have the right to collateral (see vs. 6) but a poor man's cloak was used as a _____ to stay warm in the cold nights and thus was not to be kept overnight. **A righteous act in the sight of the LORD your God.** God's heart beats for the _____. If your heart does not beat for the poor, it does not yet beat with God's.

24:19-21. Leave what remains. By ushering Israel into the Promised Land, God was bringing his people out of scarcity and into abundance. Flourishing was possible for everyone, but only if Israel lived by the principle of generosity: All you have is not all for you. To see the application of this law, read Ruth 2.

24:22. Remember you were slaves. God reminds Israel of their 400-year enslavement in Egypt to make this point: There was a time when you needed God's mercy and you got it. Now, give freely to all who need mercy and generosity from you.

Once you remember God's generosity you will forget your _____.

A Generous Life

1. Mind: Accept the reality of your own _____.

"Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same." (Luke 3:11)

- Your abundance is found wherever you have more than you need.
Consider your closet, pantry, time, knowledge, skills.

2. Eyes: Take notice of others who live in _____.

"The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side." (Luke 16:22b-23, emphasis mine)

- Ask for eyes to see those you are currently overlooking.

3. Heart: Allow _____ to drive your decision.

"If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person?" (1 John 3:17, NLT)

- Anyone can think their way out of serving. Get out of your own way and hand the keys over to compassion. God gave you a heart; use it.

4. Hands: Open your _____ and give.

"If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need." (Deut. 15:7-8)

- An open hand gives freely to the needy.
- An open hand is also available to receive God's blessings.

A Beautiful Life

When you live generously you...

- travel the same road Jesus walked down (Phil 2:1-11)
- lay a firm foundation for the age to come (1 Tim. 6:19)
- remain in power over your money rather than your money having power over you (Ec. 5:10)
- refuse to treasure the temporal and instead store up treasures in the eternal (Mt. 6:19-21)
- choose that life which is truly life (1 Tim. 6:19)

Answers: for you; arbitrarily; hastily; vulnerability; life; worship; right; using; loving; using; love; blanket; poor; excuses; abundance; scarcity; compassion; grip