

All right. Hey, everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. We are so glad you are here with us. And I don't know about you, but I am so proud, Bill. For the last three weeks, we've been watching Bill's journey and he has come a long way. He used to be lost, lonely, and broken without hope, without God in this world, an enemy of God. And yet God through his goodness and his grace, reached into Bill's life through the grace of God, the spirit of God, the word of God, and the people of God. And he captured Bill's heart, and he changed his life, and he turned everything upside down. And Bill started taking one next step at a time on this journey. And through things like the weekend experience, and circles, and serve teams, and spiritual practices, and transformational experiences. Bill has been growing and changing.

He's learning what it looks like to live in God's kingdom, how to live a spirit-filled life, how to be a disciple of Jesus. And so Bill is becoming a hope carrier. A disciple of Jesus living on mission to change his world because Bill has a vision to be a disciple of Jesus. So he has intent to move his life in that direction. So he's taking advantage of all the means that are available to him. He's arranging and rearranging his life around Jesus and the way Jesus lived his life. And he's experiencing spiritual formation, the process of being formed into the image of Christ to become a person of love. And Bill loves what we're doing. Bill loves where we're going. And Bill loves how it's going in him. And the story of Bill is really, I hope, your story. Because see, you used to be lost, lonely, and broken. Without God, without hope in this world, you were actually an enemy of God, the Bible tells us.

But through the spirit of God, and the grace of God, and the power of God, and the people of God, God reached into your life, and changed your heart, and captured your life, and turned you towards him, and you're on a journey. A journey of next steps, one step at a time, and through things like weekend experiences and circles and serve teams and spiritual practices and transformational experiences you're growing. And you're learning how to be a disciple of Jesus, a learner, a student, a follower. You're learning what it looks like to live in God's kingdom. You're learning what it looks like to live a Spirit-filled life, and you're arranging and rearranging your life around Jesus, ordering and reordering your life around Jesus. And you have this vision, at least I hope you do, to become a disciple of Jesus, a person of love. And therefore you have intent. You're willing to do whatever it takes to become that person that you feel like God has shown you, you can become. So you take advantage of the means that are available, and I hope you love where we're going, and I hope you love what we're doing. And I sure hope, you got a big old green heart, and you love how it's going in you because you're a hope carrier, a disciple of Jesus living on mission to change your world.

You see, our vision as a church is to be a movement of hope for the city and beyond. And our main strategy to do that is to raise up generations of hope carriers, disciples of Jesus who live on mission to change their world. So if you haven't pieced it all together yet, this year-long different way series that we're in isn't just the series and a good idea for all my strategic people. This is one of the most strategic things we've ever done because we took a year to help you grow as a disciple so you can actually live on mission to change your world. Oh, my gosh! They actually think about what they're doing at this church. Yes, they do. This is helping you become a hope carrier in Jesus' name. And what a great opportunity you have this week to be a hope carrier.

See, I don't know if you know this or not, but there's an election coming up. I don't know that you've heard that anywhere else in the world, but let me just make you aware that there's an election coming up this week, and you have a great opportunity to live a different way. We've been talking a whole year about doing the things that Jesus did behind the scenes so we could do the things Jesus did on the spot. So what a great week to do the things that Jesus did on the spot because you've been spending a year doing the things that he did behind the scenes. So what if this week you just engaged with the people you disagree with the way Jesus would? And what if this week you just put your hope in the things that Jesus would? And what if just this week you just used your words and actions and social media the way that Jesus would? Because our hope is not in a person or in a party or in politics. Our hope is in Jesus and his kingdom, right?

The kingdom of God is a movement of hope. And we want to see the kingdom of God in the area of government. We want to see the rule and reign of God in government. The problem is, is so often the people of God think the kingdom of God comes into government when the candidate they vote for gets into party. But if you notice the lines on the area of life, they're actually very important. The kingdom of God flows through the church. You, the people of God, set apart by God, for the purposes of God. And when the church engages as disciples of Jesus living on mission to change their world, that's when the kingdom of God comes into the areas of life in the world around us. You see, we live in a country that has a government by the people, for the people, of the people. And yet for some reason, we put all our hope into this external election as if the right person gets elected, then the kingdom of God will come into government. No, no, no. The kingdom of God comes into government when the people of God live as hope carriers.

And every time you are a hope carrier, and you engage, you interact with, you move around in the space of government, you literally just brought God's kingdom into that space in that moment. And what we do as the people of God is we just sit around often and wait for someone else to bring the kingdom over there. Instead of asking the question, has the kingdom of God come in here? Because the kingdom within me will become the kingdom around me. And so the question is, is are you as concerned with your levels of obedience as you are with who's going to get elected on Tuesday? Are you as concerned with your submission and surrender to the Word of God, the spirit of God, the kingdom of God, as you are with what's going to happen this week? That's when the kingdom of God comes into this space. See, God isn't waiting on an election. God is waiting on his people to become who he has created them to be. And so, regardless of what happens this week, here's two things that we do know.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted. And those who do so will bring judgment on himself. New Testament, real clean, real easy. God is not going to be surprised on Tuesday. You might be, but God won't be. Okay? His kingdom is unshakable. So if you feel shaky, that's okay. His kingdom is not shaken. And no one gets into authority without God. And whoever has been established in those authorities is, as the people of God, we submit, we come under, and we honor as the people of God,

because we're doing so as a way of submitting and honoring to God, who is not surprised about who is in positions of authority because they don't get there without Him. And the second thing we know is, is that I urge, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God, our savior.

Here's what we know. Regardless of what happens this week, we don't need to criticize, complain, or celebrate. We pray, we intercede, and we give thanks for those in authority because that is a life of godliness and holiness and pleases God and releases the kingdom into the world around us. It's a great opportunity to be a hope carrier in Jesus' name, which is really what this whole series has been about all year. We've been in a year-long series, if you're just joining us, called a different way, and we spent all year talking about doing the things that Jesus did so you can do the things that Jesus did. We've been talking about living like Jesus lived. So you can live like Jesus lived. You got to do what he did behind the scenes if you want to do what he did on the spot. So we've talked about his practices and habits and his disciplines. And we've said that we're coming to him with the premise of being a disciple, a learner, a student, a follower, saying, I believe that you know what is good and true and is right.

And so teach me how to live. Help me arrange and rearrange my life. Help me order and reorder my life that I might experience the life that you say is available to me as a man or woman made in the image and likeness of God invited to live deeply in your kingdom, and we've gone through uh 10 of 12 practices. And we're giving you these practices that Jesus said, we've gone through 10 of 12 and we're in season four, we broke it up into four different seasons. There's only two more practices yet. I know for some of you, that's sad. Some of you are like, praise the Lord. Either way, we've gone through 10 of 12, and we're in season four. And season four is the external practices. For most of the other seasons were you and God. This is now you, God, and others. They're external. They're outward. And if we're honest, these are probably some of the hardest ones to do because these ones in season four require this. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man? It's again the whole world and forfeit his soul. These practices that we're talking about in season four require you to deny yourself, give up your pride, your rights, your opinions, your preferences, and they cause you to take up your cross, to allow your flesh to be crucified, your flesh to be pierced so that you can live a spirit-filled life. They cause you to let go of your life that you might find it to give up the world so that you can get a healthy soul. And a great question for you to wrestle with on this verse for yourself is, when was the last time you know you denied yourself and took up your cross? When was the last time you gave your life away to find it? When was the last time you let go of the world so you could have a healthy soul in Jesus's name? And so as we get into the practice for today, today's practice is the practice of generosity. It's the practice of generosity.

And I've told you my great concern in season four is that the moment I say the name of the practice, a whole lot of us are going to check out because of the familiarity too. We're either going to say, yeah, yeah, yeah, I got that. I do it. I'm good. Or yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I've already decided I have no interest in that in my life. So I'm good. I've made that decision

already. And my prayer and my hope for you in season four is that you will just, at least, be open to that which God wants to see. So you can't deny that Jesus practiced generosity. You see it all through his life. You see it all through the people of God for thousands of years. And if we want to do the things that Jesus did on the spot, like be able to forgive those who hurt us, to be able to love not only our neighbor, but our enemy, to be able to bless not only our family, but those who persecute us, then we first have to do the things that Jesus did, like the practice of generosity.

I would define generosity to you as this. I would just say the practice of generosity is giving God's resources to others in a way that releases his kingdom in their life. The practice of generosity is giving God's resources to others in a way that releases God's kingdom in their life. It's giving God's resources away, in a way that's for the good of others and the glory of God. And I know some of you think I misspoke when I said giving God's resources away. It's God's resources because you don't have any. You don't have it. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who dwell among it. He is the Lord of all. Every good gift comes down from the father of heavenly lights. You and I don't have any resources. We've been entrusted with God's resources, and we've been entrusted to steward them. We've been entrusted to use them.

We've been trusted to manage them for the good of others and the glory of God. But it's giving away that which belongs to God to release his kingdom in the world around us with no strings attached. And there's a huge difference between buying and giving. Buying is I give to get. Giving is I give so you get. And I know the moment I say generosity, a wall goes up in a lot of our hearts and in a lot of our minds because we live in a region where the prevailing power and principality that lives in the spiritual realm is the love of money. We literally live in a city where the demonic spirit that rules and reigns in this area is the love of money. The love of money is like a cancer that grips our heart. It's like a fog that clouds our vision. I mean, just look at how we engage money in this city, the greed, the hoarding, pride, the flashing it, the pursuing it, the making our life around about it.

See, I think a whole lot of us, whether we realize it or not, actually, arrange and rearrange our life around money more than we arrange and rearrange our life around Jesus. And so the only way you come against the power and principality is coming in the opposite spirit. So in a city of greed, you have to be a person who practices generosity, if you want to live free from that influence. And here's what I want to say to you. I don't think there's anything I can say to you to help you practice generosity. I literally don't think there's anything I can do, say, teach, inspire you today to move your heart or your mind in the direction of generosity. So I'm not even going to try to. You see, Jesus tells this fascinating story in Luke, Chapter 16. It's a story we don't talk a lot about, but it's profound.

He tells this story of a rich man and a beggar named Lazarus. He says there's this rich man who lives this life of luxury, has this massive estate and enjoys this life of wealth and prestige and power. And then there is this man named Lazarus who is a broken, sick beggar who lives at the man's gate, just hoping for the crumbs that fall from his table. And over the course of time, both of them die. The rich man dies and goes to hell. Lazarus, the poor beggar, dies and goes to heaven. And Jesus says, one day in the afterlife, the rich man looks up and he sees Father

Abraham with Lazarus. And so he cries out, Father Abraham, send Lazarus over here to just dip his finger in some water to just bring me one drop to relieve me from this agony. And Abraham looks at the man and says, I'm sorry, son. He says, there's a great chasm between you and I. So you can't come here and we can't go there. And in your life, you had good things, and in Lazarus's life, he had bad things. And your heart never turned to God, but Lazarus's heart did.

And so the rich man says, fine, then will you send Lazarus back from the dead to tell my five brothers about this reality so they don't come hear also. Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them." "No, Father Abraham," he said. But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent. He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." He says, "There are some things that if you don't listen to scripture, Moses and the Prophets, if you don't listen to the scriptures, even if someone rises from the dead, you will not be convinced. If we won't repent when the Word of God is spoken into our life," he says, "we will not repent even if someone comes back from the dead." She makes total sense.

Because if I don't value the Word of God, why do I think I will value the action of God? If I don't value the voice of God, why do I think I'll value the hand of God? If I don't value the wisdom of God, I'm not going to value the power of God. And so if I have no interest in repenting, because you say so, Lord, I will do it. I have heard it said, but you say to me, if I do not have the sense of tremble to the Word of God, and the sense of awe, and reverence and wonder the sense of fear of the Lord, the sense of this is the authority of my life. This is my king, whatever he says, I must align my life to it. If I will not repent, according to scripture, I will not repent even if something spectacular. And so I don't think today, even if we could have an angel from heaven show up, even if Lazarus himself rose from the grave to come and preach the message, if heaven was open, if there was a tear in the time and space continuum, if I could put together the most funny, relevant, practical, inspiring you've never heard it before, here's a passage in the Greek and the Hebrew language, Papa, I don't think it would change your heart. It's when I'm not going to try. In fact, as I prayed for you all week, I feel like this was the story that the Lord just kept bringing me back to.

And so here's what I want to do. I'm just going to read you 18 scriptures on generosity. I'm not going to teach them. I'm not going to give you commentary on them. I'm not highlighting anything about them. I'm just going to literally read you 18 scriptures, and give you the opportunity to hear the Word of God in your life and decide what you want to do with it. Because I don't think even if Lazarus himself showed up, it would make much difference, if I haven't said I tremble at the Word of God. Now, if you're here and you're like, hey, that's a lot. I know, but remember what I keep telling you, put it back in context. This right now is a message of context of 10 and a half months of journeying together, of learning to value God's Word. Because remember, the first practice was scripture. And so here's what I want to encourage you to do. Don't take notes. Don't write anything down. We'll post it all. I want to invite you to just sit there and maybe open up your heart, open up your mind.

And as I read these, if you don't like it, ask yourself why. If you're offended, ask yourself why. If you have a hard time focusing, ask yourself why. If you feel convicted, ask yourself why. If it bothers you, ask why. I've been trying, I try to teach you all the time to think, to think God gave

you a mind to think, to contemplate, to reflect. I want to think with him, not like the world. Faith comes by? Hearing. And hearing by the? Word of God.

So the greatest chance we have to combat the power and principality of our region is not me inspiring you or bringing out someone who rose from the dead. It's just literally to read the Word of God over your life. So Holy Spirit, we just invite you in. Thank you that your Word does not return void, but accomplishes its purpose. Thank you that your Word is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword and penetrates our soul and our spirit.

Thank you that all of your Word is God-breathed and useful for teaching, correcting, rebuking, and training in righteousness. Thank you that your Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Thank you that you show us your ways and teach us your path. So may we now humbly accept your Word as a practice that will set us free in Jesus's name.

The practice of generosity, according to scripture. For, you know, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes, he became poor so that you through his poverty might become rich. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and God blessed them humanity and said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it using all its vast resources in the service of God and man."

You may say to yourself, my power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me. But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth. If there is a poor man among you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your poor brother. Rather, be open-handed and freely lend him whatever he needs. Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart. Then because of this, the Lord, your God will bless you in all your work, and in everything you put your hand to.

There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be open-handed towards your brothers and towards the poor and needy in your land. But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this. Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. Oh, Lord, our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your holy name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.

I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent, and now, I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. The world of the generous gets larger and larger. The world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller. The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed. Those who help others are helped. I, the Lord, do not change. Ever since the time of your forefathers, you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. "Return to me and I will return to you", says the Lord Almighty. But you ask, how are we to return?

Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, how do we rob you? In tithes and offerings. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. "Test me in this", says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. So when you give to the

needy, do not announce it with trumpets as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets to be honored by men. I tell you the truth. They have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that your giving may be in secret. Then your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. Freely you have received. Freely give. Give and it will be given to you. A good measure pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap, for with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much. And whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?

And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Jesus himself said it is more blessed to give than to receive. And now my brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able and even beyond their ability, entirely on their own. They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. Remember this, whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. And whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. You'll be made rich and every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us, your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with it. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap, and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.

Some people eager for money have wandered from the faith, and pierced themselves with many griefs. Command those who are rich in this present world, not to be arrogant, nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich and good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. It's the Word of God. From Genesis to Revelation, the law, prophets, the gospels, the epistles,

scripture after scripture after scripture communicates to us that the way we live in God's kingdom is part of this set apart people on this earth is through this practice of generosity.

The only question you have to answer is, do you believe Jesus knows what he's talking about? Because the verses aren't confusing. They don't need commentary. They're not unclear. You don't get to say, I don't understand. They're very clear. They're very direct. They're very open. The question is, is do I believe that Jesus knows what he's talking about? Do I believe that Jesus knows what is good and true and right? Because Jesus can't be right about some things and wrong about others. He's either right about everything or he's wrong about everything. Jesus cannot be right about salvation, but wrong about money. Jesus cannot be right about eternal life, but wrong about generosity. Jesus cannot be right about the forgiveness of sins, but wrong about finances. So the question you and I have to answer is, does Jesus know what he's talking about? And I think sometimes, we think Jesus knows what he's talking about here, but not there. I would just say, do you really want to trust a guy that is 50% of the time wrong with your soul? It's a great question to ask. I trust Jesus with salvation, but not with the practice of generosity. Why? Because I think he's wrong in this.

I don't. Okay. But just think, do I really want to trust my soul to a guy that I don't think knows how to use money? It's a great question. Because Jesus himself says, "If you don't know how to handle money, you won't know how to handle true riches, spiritual revelation." So if he's wrong on money, he's already telling you, I'm wrong about revelation. I'm wrong about eternal life. I'm wrong about salvation. So it's a question we have to ask. And if you answer the question no, Jesus knows what he's talking about. Then I have to actually wrestle with the -- because you say so I will do it then. Yeah. Yeah. He knows what he's talking about, but ba-ba-ba-ba, but I don't get it, but I don't like it. And I have all these reasons. And this is why I can't. And this is why I don't. And da, da, da, da, da, da, da, da, or like Peter, because you say so. I don't like it. I don't appreciate it. I don't understand it. I don't feel like I can do it. I don't feel like you get where my life is at. I don't feel like all the things feel, feel, feel, get it? Feel, feel, feel. But because you say so, because if I won't repent to His Word, I won't repent according to his action. If I won't repent because of the scriptures, I won't repent even if someone does something spectacular and rises from the dead. I have heard it said, but Jesus says to me, you know, when he says that? You have heard it said, but I say to you, I have heard it said, but he says to me. I have heard it said, do you know I hear I said from? Myself, myself. Myself tells me, I don't need to do this. It applies to everyone else, but me. I have heard it said, but he says to me. So a disciple says, because you say so, because I can't live my life with a God that is wrong about money, but I believe is right about salvation, because I now have arranged my life in a way that is on shaky ground.

Now, when I live my life and when I take my last breath, I'm left wondering what on earth is life all about. And it's proven to you, in the fact, that you will say, I trust him with this, but not with this, because you trust somebody you believe is right, that is good and is trustworthy, faithful. This is why Jesus says, "To those who believe in him, if you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples. And if you know the truth, the truth will set you free." If we believe we will obey. If we obey, we're actually his disciple, learner, student, follower, becoming like him. I've given him the authority to decide what is good and true and right. And when I live as a disciple, I now live in truth. And when I live in truth, I actually am free. So if I want to live free, I have to know

what's true because to believe a lie is to live in bondage. So if I want to be free, I have to know what is true. And I can only experience truth if I follow the way, the truth and the life, and become his disciple.

And he says, "I'm only his disciple if I obey because you say so, I will. And I will only obey the things I actually believe." So it's a great reference point to just check your heart, check your life, check your mind, and your spiritual journey. Remember, like, Bill, we're all on a journey. We're all moving forward. We're all in different places. Nobody's telling you, you need to go from zero to a hundred. What I'm trying to bring to you is the Word of God, and let that change your soul because there ain't no message in the world. If somebody can't rise from the dead to convince you and me, there ain't no message in the world that can be preached. Only the Word of God has the authority to do that. So here's your practice plan for this week.

Give some actual money to God, and at least, one person this week. Every week at the end of the practice, we have a practice plan because, we as a church, are training to be godly right now. That's what we're doing. We're training to be godly. So we need a practice plan. And every week I give you a practice plan, and every week I tell you the same thing, you don't have to do it. You don't have to do it. If you're like, I'm not interested. Great. No problem. If you want to do it, we enter into these practices, not religious, not to get something from God, but with God to open ourselves up to his grace that changes us from the inside out. I'm doing the things that Jesus did behind the scenes, generosity. So I can do the things that Jesus did on the spot, like, become a person who can forgive those who hurt me, who can love his neighbor and his enemies, and who can bless not only his family but those who persecute me. That's the kind of person I want to be.

So I want to do the things that Jesus did to train to become like that person, which means, I actually have to put my faith in action and move. You don't have to do it, but if you want to train, here's how I'm training this week, and here's how thousands of people in our church will be training this week. Give some actual money to God, actual money. When we go through these notes on Thursday, the team laughed at me. They said, "Do you really need to say, like, actual money there? Like, yes, because we justify, and here's what we do. We give leftovers. We give hand-me-downs. We give junk that we don't want, and then, call ourselves generous. I'm going to give you my leftover clothes that I don't wear anyway. I'm not going to say that, but boy, I'm so generous. I'm going to give you furniture that's been in the garage that I want and the garbage man won't take, but I'm going to give it to this young family, and they got to pick it up, like, oh my gosh, I got rid of that thing. And then we call ourselves generous. So it's actual money because the love of money is the root of all evil. And it's -- you can't serve both God and money. So it's actually money, money, breaking the cycle in my life. And I'm not telling you how much, \$10, \$100, \$1,000, \$100,000, a million dollars. You process with God, give some actual money to God.

How do you do that? Through his local church. You can do it in our church at the boxes at the doors or online, or if you're a part of another church, do it however they do it. I don't know, but give some actual money to God. You say, I've never done that. I know this is trying to break through that thing that's holding you back to say, I'm coming against the power and principality. I don't want to live like that. My hope is that this week there are hundreds of

families. They give for the first time to God as a step of faith. I'm not telling you what or how. I'm just saying train, man. And if you're sitting here and you're like, yeah, I give every week. I have the auto thing and I tithe and all that stuff. Okay, for you and me, when was the last time that we stopped to actually look at what we're giving to God and said, when was the last time I gave God an offering that cost me something? When was the last time I considered my financial reality and moved my heart towards God? I want to give to you because I love you.

So think about that this week and then give some money to one actual person, not your leftovers, not your hand-me-down, not your junk in your garage. Some actual money to one person. So you say, like, to who and to what? I don't know. A student that's trying to raise money to go on a mission trip this summer. A VCLA student that's working hard, that's paying for their training to be a hope carrier and to get their college education at the same time in VCLA. Help them. A young family who's struggling, and you just see an opportunity to bless them. A single mom, a widow, an orphan, an older couple that is later in their life, and you see an opportunity to bless them. Somebody that is wealthy that you love, that you just want to bless. Because what is generosity? It's not just meeting a need. It's releasing God's kingdom into people's lives. It's giving in a way that is no strings attached, good of others, the glory of God.

And like, I want to see God move in their life. I love what God's doing in their life, and actual money, not junk. And if I told you to give away junk, but called it nice stuff, you'd be like, I can do that practice this week, which shows you how much of a cancer it grips your heart. If you're offended, if you're frustrated, if you're annoyed, if you're already telling yourself why you're not going to do it, I'm proving my point to you. I'm just telling you, I'm not preaching against it. I'm just going to share with you the Word of God and let you decide. And you say, but I don't know a person. I know this is why these practices matter. If I practiced community and service, the last two, I would be surrounded by so many people that I could bless. I would be asking the question, which one is God asking me to do it to? Not I need to find someone, but if I don't do service, and I don't wash feet, and I don't practice community, I don't build relationships to see God, I'm probably looking around a little bit, like, okay, giving God, that might be easier than giving to a person because I don't know the person. So great.

So what an opportunity to ask God to speak, to move, to open up your heart. I want my heart to be open. I want my heart to be open because I want to be like Jesus. Like Bill, I have a vision to become a person of love. I have a vision to be a disciple of Jesus. I want to live deeply in God's kingdom. I don't want to not do practices because they're hard, or because I think I can't, or because of decisions in the past, or other things that other people have said, I don't care, because you say so, Lord. I want to be a kind of person that did what you did so I can do what you do. I want to do what you did so I can become who you are in my daily life. Yes, I am already that included in Christ, but I want to live like that. So I got to train in Jesus's name. You don't have to do it.

Practice 11 of 12. Next week, we'll hit 12. We'll pull it together. But if you're training, maybe it's just this week. Maybe you just even ask God, bring your struggle or your doubt or your rest. Maybe you read back through those 18 scriptures on your own, or maybe one jumped out at you and you meditate on it, memorize it. It's not that it's not clear. It's not that it's not available.

It's not that it's not right in front of us. It's just, do I want to want it? And do I believe Jesus knows what he's talking about? This is why I would hope you would trust this because where else are you going to go that I'm telling you? Like, if you don't trust what Jesus says here, don't trust him here. Go find a God who you believe in 100% of what he says. Why would I follow a God that I trust 50% of the time or believe is right 50% of, that's bad odds.

I'm flipping a coin, I'm alive. Some of you are like, I'll take those odds. Totally. That's okay. It's your choice. I'm just trying to say with Jesus, it's always heads. So I don't ever have to worry about – yeah, flip it, flip it. It's always heads. It's always heads. Why? Because he is the head of the body of Christ, and he is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. So he's always the head. He's never on the tail. He's never underneath. So Holy Spirit, would you speak? Would you move? No. Holy Spirit, you are speaking, and you did just speak, and you did just move. So would you breathe fresh wind into our soul? Places that we doubt, may we have the courage to trust. Places that we're afraid, would you give us the courage to have faith? Places that our mind and our heart and our soul are aligned with the world, would you break those free that we might be aligned with your kingdom? Thank you that we're on a journey. May we be people who tremble at your Word. And because we tremble at your Word, we see dead things come to life. We don't need dead things to come to life to tremble at your Word because we tremble at your Word. We see dead things come to life. May we practice generosity in a city of greed. In Jesus's name, we pray, Amen.