



## **Bible Study and Journal**

### **JOINING WHAT GOD IS DOING THROUGH PRAYER, PERSONAL STUDY AND THE PURSUIT OF GENEROUS LIVING**

The NEXT Journal is a tool to help us understand what generosity looks like in our lives, to assist in processing some of the topics discussed in our sermon series and ultimately aid in unpacking what it looks like for us to live out of the generous grace God has given us in Christ.

This journal is your journal. We want you to keep it, refer to it and reflect on the thoughts you have as you study both personally and with your life group. Some questions in this journal may be easy to answer; others may take some time; still others may not apply to you at this stage of your life.

Our hope is that this study will become a catalyst for meditation on: what God has provided for us in Christ; how the world in which we live crowds that out of our lives; how God wants to work through you and your resources to reproduce in others what you've experienced with Christ; next steps to take as your faith in him expresses itself through love and generous living.

Thank you for all the ways you already participate in NorthCross. We pray that God uses your time in study to encourage and equip you to join with NorthCross in this NEXT phase of our life together.



## YOUR STORY AND YOUR WORLD

### YOUR STORY

*1 John 4:9-12*

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

\* How does John describe God's generosity to us?

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

\* Can you think of a time when God was generous with you in one or more of the following areas - Spiritually; Relationally; Circumstantially; Materially?

### YOUR WORLD

*2 Samuel 24:24*

But king David said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

Leading up to this story, David displays a trust in physical strength through his ordering of a census of his people, specifically asking how many fighting men he had (2 Sam. 24:1-10; 1 Chr. 21:1).

As a result, God punished David through a pestilence on the land, which killed 70,000 people; then the Lord had mercy and stopped the judgment.

David was advised to build an altar and sacrifice to the Lord for having mercy and removing the pestilence, and he did, but the section of land desired for the altar was owned by someone else.

The owner insisted on simply giving, or donating, the land to the king for the purpose of sacrificing to the Lord. Verse 24 (printed above) is David's answer.

*Mark 4:14-20*

The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

- \* How was the subject of money handled or discussed in your home growing up?  
How is it handled or discussed in your home now (in your adult life)?
  
- \* Are there specific things you're being told by Satan, by society or by yourself about how to handle wealth that seem to contradict what God says of wealth?  
Do these things tend to choke out or enhance what God wants to do in your life? How?
  
- \* In 2 Samuel 24:24, how does David's response relate to your normal attitude when giving something to God?
  
- \* What significant experiences, people or teachings have influenced my thinking and attitudes about generosity?
  
- \* Are there specific ways that God has used the people at NorthCross to be generous to you?
  
- \* What, if anything, gets in the way of me having a generous heart?



## YOUR FATHER

*Romans 8:31-32*

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

*Matthew 19:28-30*

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

- \* Discuss the idea of sacrifice in Romans 8:31-32.
  
- \* Based on our understanding of sacrifice (i.e. giving up something, loss that creates a void or gap for something greater, etc.), how was giving up Jesus a "sacrifice" for God?  
Can God feel the burden of sacrifice?
  
- \* Why would God undergo the burden of sacrifice?
  
- \* What does Matthew 19:28-30 say about the result of sacrifice for the sake of Jesus?
  
- \* To what extent have my thoughts and attitudes on generosity been guided by God's Word and the Holy Spirit?
  
- \* Do you believe your giving is a meaningful act of worship? Why or why not?
  
- \* What would it look like for me to live as God's adopted child who is one day going to inherit the entire earth?

## YOUR HEART

### *Matthew 18:21-35*

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?”

Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

### *2 Corinthians 8:9*

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

- \* What are the potential dangers or pitfalls for you and increased wealth? Do they activate any idols for you?
  
- \* What giving experiences – time, talent, treasure – have brought you 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?
  
- \* From 2 Corinthians 8:9, describe the work of Jesus and what it means for you.
  
- \* 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 create space for others? For God?



## YOUR AIM AND YOUR PART

### YOUR AIM

*1 Thessalonians 2:19-20*

For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

- \* In 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, what was Paul's primary investment during his life, what he referred to as his "crown?" Based on his expressed value in these things, what was Paul willing to give up in order to gain such a "crown?"
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- \* What do your spending habits point to concerning the priorities for your family?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- \* Have you thought about God's will for you when it comes to giving both spiritually and financially to others? Do you see your assets as a sacred trust from God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- \* What are you modeling concerning handling material resources and living simply? To whom are you modeling this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- \* How intentional have I been developing strategies to leave behind not only a financial legacy to my loved ones, but also a spiritual one?

## YOUR PART

### *Philippians 1:3-7*

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace.

### *Psalms 127:1*

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stay awake in vain.

### *Psalms 139:7-18*

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!  
If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.  
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.  
For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.  
How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!  
If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

- \* What in Philippians 1:3-7 shows us that Paul did not do his ministry on his own? How does the church's ministry function the same way Paul's does?
  
- \* Discuss the interaction of God's sovereignty with your influence/participation in decisions and choices in life.
  
- \* Are there things you need to ask God to begin to work in your heart through His Spirit: fears to overcome; lies to refute; sins to confess; spiritual fruit to grow in; good works to accomplish by faith?
  
- \* How can you take one step forward in your financial partnership with the church?