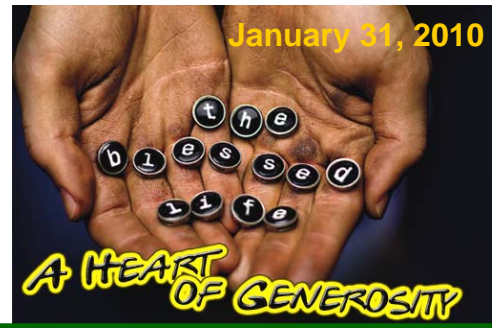


**The Blessed Life;  
A Heart of Generosity**

We can have three mindsets around life: the bag is never enough, the basket is more than enough, the barn is infinitely more than enough. How much can God bless you?



**Proverbs 11:24-25**

One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

**Reflections**

A number of years ago, during a stewardship emphasis at St. John, a member spoke who owned a successful company. He had not always tithed or even given intentionally. God convicted him about this, so he and his wife prayed and decided that, although it would be a strain on the budget they would give the top 5% of their income.

As time passed they noticed that not only did they not really miss that money, but that they had money to pay the bills and still more to save. After a while they decided to make the leap of faith to tithing – giving the first 10% of their income to the Lord's work. Again they noticed that they were not "strapped for cash" but instead were paying their bills with money left.

Over the course of years they actually increased their intentional giving beyond the 10% level – if I recall correctly they

were giving 25% at that point. Still they were able to meet their expenses and provide for their sons. They lived in a nice house and his business thrived.

At that time, Craig and I had two very young children and one income. We were living from paycheck to paycheck and praying it stretched. There was no "extra money". Yet God convicted us through that message that God required our first fruits. In our lives the "harvest" was our paycheck. So we prayed, committing our finances to God, and began to tithe. Not so that God would prosper us like this man and his family; rather because God said we should, and now we felt compelled to obey.

Have we been blessed over the years? Of course we have! Have we prospered – raked in lots of extra money so we can give 25% of our income and never worry about the bank balance? We have

not. God has always made sure that our family is clothed, housed and fed. We still watch what we spend, trusting that there will be enough to meet obligations.

Proverbs 11:24 says "One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty."

It is my belief that we would not have been richer by keeping the part of our income that we have given to God's ministry. It is also my belief that God has taken our gifts and added them to the gifts of other generous believers to do what none of us could do alone.

The barn has been filled. He has blessed our obedience to be generous.

—Wendy Woods

## Readings

### Sunday, January 31

#### 2 Corinthians 9:7

What kind of “giver” are you? Do you look for opportunities to be generous?

### Monday, February 1

#### Proverbs 11:25

Who benefits from the prosperity of the generous?

### Tuesday, February 2

#### Proverbs 11:24a

Can you think of a time when you have given something away and yet felt like you had received?

### Wednesday, February 3

#### Haggai 1:6

Do you ever feel like you are working and yet not getting anywhere financially?

### Thursday, February 4

#### Deuteronomy 28:8

You probably do not have crops and fields – what are the fruits of your labor?

### Friday, February 5

#### 2 Corinthians 9:11

What gifts do you have other than your financial gifts? How are you giving those to God’s work?

### Saturday, February 6

#### Proverbs 3:9-10

When you give to God’s ministries where does it come in your budget? Why?

***Don’t have a Bible? Access these scriptures at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com).***