

GLADNESS AND GENEROSITY: STUDY MATERIAL (1)

Gladness & Generosity

Developing **Gladness & Generosity** as a 'Holy Habit' brings us much JOY and blesses others; it is key – we do this by intentionally practising the habit by *reminding ourselves* of God's blessings, this gladness will give us thankful hearts **for the grace given to us through Jesus Christ; for His life poured out for us.**

We will be so full of ***Gladness in Him; that 'it' will overflow into Generosity.***

As leader you will need to try and draw the group into acknowledging **AFRESH** what **we have to be glad about in Christ...**the CROSS.

We are being invited on a JOURNEY into a deeper experience of **Jesus & Generosity**, greater freedom & joy will be experienced as we tap into the generous heart of God...and our communities will be blessed. **Practice remembering why we're GLAD, and letting this knowledge overflow into generosity to those around us.**

Being **Glad**, and intentionally being **Generous** changes us, and changes our community. The habit of generosity can be practiced in many ways as we pursue our happiness in Christ.

Although God does bless us in abundance so that we can give to others, we are specifically exploring the concept of 'being generous of oneself' ...i.e...showing generosity by our actions, attitude, and words; as well as finances 😊

Seek God first:

'Seek ye first the KINGDOM of GOD, and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.' (Matthew 6:33)

As we seek God's Kingdom first and commit ourselves to the Lord we entrust everything in our lives to Him; our relationships, families, jobs, possessions – to His control and guidance,...and let Him take care of our needs, which frees us up to share what He has given us with others.

'Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.' (Psalm 37:4)

To delight in someone means to experience great pleasure and joy in his or her presence. This happens only when we know that person well. Thus, to delight, to be glad in the Lord, we must KNOW HIM BETTER. Knowledge of Gods great love for us will give us such ***glad hearts that our gladness will overflow to others in generosity.***

Explore:

We can't overflow in generosity if we are not pursuing our happiness in Christ.

- Why?

God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him; (especially in seasons of suffering.)

- How can we express gladness?
- Does our **GLADNESS** need refreshing?

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- Can we remember the *gladness* we felt when we **first met Jesus, when we first accepted the truth of the CROSS; and realised the enormity of what Jesus has done for us?** (*Give some time to talk about this question.*)

If we don't have our gladness in God...we can't draw others into gladness with God either; otherwise being generous will just be a religious duty to be SEEN rather than a blessing to our community.

God loves a cheerful giver...

Jesus said, 'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' (Matthew 6:21)

As we remember afresh that our treasure is in Christ, our hearts grow more and more passionate for the things of God, our lives will be filled with gladness and generosity; we'll be joyful, free and purpose filled as the Macedonians were in **2 Corinthians 8:1-2**

Questions for discussion

- What are your treasures?
- What will happen to the treasures that we store here on earth?

God calls us to be generous, and He promises to bless us when we are, He has a lot to say about the connection between generous giving and blessings.

"Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice" (Psalm 112:5).

"A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" (Prov 11:25).

"A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor" (Prov 22:9, NIV).

"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" (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

"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 our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in 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" (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

God calls His children to generous living, no matter what we have, who we are, or where we live; even the poorest among us are called to live generously.

And let's not confuse the matter: it's not about our bank accounts...it's about our hearts, our time, our talents, *and* our treasures...we are to be generous, willing to share, and rich in good deeds **for the glory of God.**

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October 2018