

Unit 4



Generous Living is an Evidence of:

Your Demonstration of Faith

TRUTH

by memory – Philippians 4:19 (ESV)

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

in Bible –

In this final unit on the grace commitment of generous living you will focus on the interplay of God's promises of provision and your faith that He will provide. You studied some of these passages already in recent weeks. Read them again looking specifically for a promise from God and a condition that qualifies you to receive that promise.

As you study and pray, don't cheat yourself by failing to think about specific, measurable applications to your life. Let the words of Jesus encourage you to apply God's Word to your life. *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."*(Matthew 7:24)

Deuteronomy 8:1-20 – This important passage serves to remind God's people that He is the source of all we have and promises to be the source of all we need.

1 Kings 17:1-24 – In this story you will see how God provided for both the prophet Elijah and a poor widow (who, interestingly, was not an Israelite) as they trusted God, taking Him at His word.

Proverbs 3:9-10

Malachi 3:10-12

Matthew 19:29

Matthew 6:25-34

Luke 6:38

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

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to summarize -

Here we are in the fourth and final unit of this series on the grace commitment of generous living. Hopefully by now you have a good grasp of what a grace commitment is – a discipline or commitment that is motivated by God’s grace rather than performance. A performance motivation will drive you to give in a vain attempt to earn God’s favor, but grace empowers you to live and give generously out of the very joy and assurance of having God’s favor.

In chapter 4 of Paul’s letter to the Philippians, you learned that generous living is an outward evidence of your contentment with God’s provision (vv 10-13), as well as your decision to invest in God’s kingdom (vv 14-17), and your motive to worship God with offerings that delight Him (v 18). In this unit you will see that generous living is also a demonstration of your faith in God’s promise to meet all of your needs. The memory verse from Philippians 4 is just such a promise. As you mull over this verse examine your heart. Ask yourself whether you truly believe it. If so, how does your life demonstrate your faith in God’s promise to provide for you?

Think about this: does it make any difference in the way you think about your finances that God has made a promise to provide for you? Compare your financial philosophy before and after becoming a follower of Christ. Has God’s promise to provide made a difference in the way you look at work, saving, spending, budgeting, investments, or insurance? We tend to think about being responsible to provide for ourselves. But, while it is true that God has given us the responsibility (and gift) of work, it is not true that we are the source of our own financial security. Just as you discovered in Deuteronomy 8, God has made it clear throughout the Scriptures that He is the source of all we have and promises to be the source of all we need. Do you believe it?

"God will supply every need of yours..." is an example, repeated throughout the Bible, that God has given a *promissory note* guaranteeing that He will meet the needs of all Christians who qualify. A promissory note is a written guarantee of a specific payment if certain prescribed conditions are met. Note that the promise is *"God will supply..."*, not that He *can* or that He *might* supply. He *will* supply your need. So, what qualifies as a need? It could be any need – spiritual, emotional, physical, or financial. But, keep in mind what was discussed in the second unit of this series, that God often prospers one’s life, without prospering one’s lifestyle. So, the word *"need"* should be thought of as encompassing all the resources required to live faithfully and fruitfully for the kingdom of God.

You should also note that the word *"supply"* is qualified by an amazing standard of measurement: *"...according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus"*. Now, don’t misread this as *"out of His riches"*, as if His worth will be slowly diminished little by little as He supplies our needs. On the contrary, his supply will overflow *"according to His riches."* In other words, His promise is guaranteed by the infinite

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wealth of His glory invested in Christ. This is the collateral, so to speak, that secures His promise. It is according to this vast measure that He promises to meet your needs; not a meager, trickling supply.

Do you believe this promise? More than that, do you believe this promise is for *you*? Do you know if you qualify to receive the promise? There is a condition to be met.

Many of God's promises are unconditional, such as the promise that there would never be another worldwide flood or that Messiah would come to deliver the people of God from sin. However, wherever God promises financial supply and blessing, the promise is contingent upon certain conditions being met. This week you reviewed several examples where God's promise of provision is clearly conditional. From those passages you should rightly conclude that those believers who qualify to receive God's promise of abundant provision are those whose use of life and money reflect a theocentric (God-centered) perspective. They live with the understanding that God is the source of everything they have, and they are content with what He gives. They understand that they are stewards, investing God's resources for the benefit of His kingdom out of a motive of worship.

The Philippians certainly had a theocentric perspective. The context of the passage makes it clear that they had given repeatedly and generously (v 16) with right motives (v 18) so that Paul was amply supplied. Because of their investment in God's kingdom with the motive of worship, Paul could pronounce the promise, "*God will supply every need of yours,*" to them specifically. So, the promise that's given here, though intended for all believers, cannot be claimed by all believers.

Do you believe this promise is for you? Do you know if you qualify? And one more thing - does your life demonstrate your faith in God's promise?

This is the hard part. This is where the rubber meets the road for all of us, because God's promise will never be redeemed without a demonstration of our faith.

We can see God's past provision pretty easily by looking in our checkbooks, but what of God's future provision secured by the collateral of His riches in glory in Christ? You can't see that. So, what could possibly motivate someone to make an investment in God's kingdom without seeing the actual collateral? The only answer is *faith*. This shouldn't surprise us, since the Bible is full of the admonition, "*Don't be afraid. Take Me at my word. Trust Me.*" But, it isn't easy for us to trust or pursue what we can't see.

In 1943, Thomas Watson, the founder of IBM believed that there was a total world market for about five computers. As late as 1977, Ken Olsen, founder of Digital Equipment Corporation believed that personal computers would never be a viable, useful personal product. They were wrong. Even these visionary men couldn't see a future filled with millions of personal computers, so they didn't pursue it. So it is with our financial lives. We see the landscape of our income and expenses, and we think that's

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all there is to see. But, God calls us to look beyond our financial horizon with eyes of faith rooted in His promises, and then to take hold of those promises by stepping into the world of generous living.

In 1 Kings 17 you read about a widow from Zarephath who did just that. It was during a time of drought and famine that Elijah asked her for a bit of bread and water. She replied that she had only her last flour and oil, barely enough for a last meal for her and her son. Then, God's word came to her through Elijah. He prophesied that she should not fear, but trust that God would not let her flour and oil run out, if she would first give some bread to Elijah. Think how hard that must have been for her. That last small amount of flour and oil represented all the hope of life she had left. Yet, she believed God, shared generously according to Elijah's request, and received what God had promised. She was willing to give up resources she could touch and see in order to gain promised resources that she could neither touch nor see. That's called faith.

Do you believe in the promise of His provision? Is His promise for you? Do you qualify as a theocentric steward of what He provides? Then look beyond the horizon of your cash flow and net worth. Trust God to supply all you need to live generously, faithfully, and fruitfully for His kingdom and glory. Make it your faith goal to get your high school diploma in generous living soon. This is what we called *worshipful tithing* in the last unit, and defined it as investing 10% of your income in God's kingdom as you are motivated by a joyful love for Jesus. It may be that God would call you further, but He calls every Christian to worshipful tithing. You may not be there yet, and you may not see a way to get there. That's where faith and prayer come in. Ask God what steps He would have you take to make progress toward worshipful tithing. His grace will lead and empower you as you offer your pledge of intention to trust His promises. Then, watch what God does.

Here are some important points to remember as this portion of *The Journey* comes to a close: God is the source of everything you have. Nothing is yours. You are called to be a steward, content with what He gives, investing in His kingdom out of a motive of worship, and as a demonstration of your faith in His promise to meet all your needs. The issue of money management is a key, domino issue in your spiritual progress. If you are willing to follow Christ in the arena of stewardship, then many other lesser issues will tend to fall into place. But, a lack of surrender regarding stewardship can become a significant obstacle to your spiritual growth.

online –

Remember to visit <http://perimeter-adult.followers.net/Discipleship.Curriculum> for this week's downloadable audio, video, or print resources.

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EQUIPPING

Review the passages listed below and fill in the table, listing God's promise, the condition, and a personal life application for each verse.

Scripture	God's Promise	Condition	Life Application
Deuteronomy 8:1-20			
1 Kings 17:1-24			
Proverbs 3:9-10			
Malachi 3:10-12			
Matthew 19:29			
Matthew 6:25-34			
Luke 6:38			
2 Corinthians 9:6-8			

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MISSION

"And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:1-2 ESV)

"...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..." (1 Peter 3:15, NIV)

You should now have your 3 minute testimony completed and memorized. This week you have two tasks for your mission.

1. During Gospel Living (unit 5) you created a plan to reach someone on your target list for Christ. This week review your plan and revise it to include sharing your testimony with that person. Write your revised plan in the space below.

2. Commit to spend some extra time in prayer for that person. Ask God to give you an opportunity to share your testimony, and pray that that person would respond with interest in knowing more about the Gospel. Write your pledge of intention to pray for this person in the spaces below.

This week I will ask God to give me an opportunity to share my testimony with _____ name _____.

I will devote myself to pray at time on Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat.

If God gives you an opportunity to share this week, write about your experience in the space below.

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