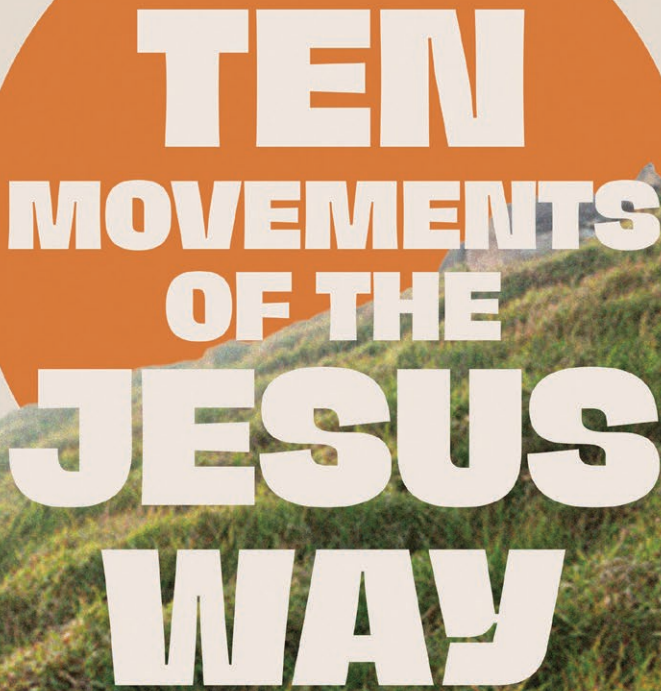


**SHIFTING FROM WORLDLY  
SELF-INTEREST TO  
RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP**



**TEN  
MOVEMENTS  
OF THE  
JESUS  
WAY**

**GRAHAM JOSEPH HILL**



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# 1

## **MOVING FROM MATERIAL SUCCESS TO SPIRITUAL RICHES**

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

MATTHEW 6:19-21

I GREW UP IN BLACKTOWN, in the working suburbs of Sydney, Australia. Our family wasn't wealthy. My father was a truck driver, and my mother worked retail and administrative jobs. My parents' hard manual labor and careful budgeting got us through difficult years when finances were tight and life was lean. But when I went to college in the wealthier northern suburbs of Sydney, I saw a different world. I wanted it badly.

Our secular age promises fulfillment through wealth, status, and accumulation. Jason for instance, worked sixty-hour weeks to climb the corporate ladder, telling himself that the next promotion, the next car, the bigger house would finally settle the ache inside. Yet when he achieved these goals, he felt even emptier, estranged from his family and himself. Jenny, meanwhile, poured her energy into



curating the perfect image online—holidays photographed, outfits displayed, every detail curated to impress. But late at night, scrolling through her own feed, she felt hollow, comparing herself to others and wondering why the applause never filled the silence.

Material success beckons, but the Spirit of Christ calls us to a profound pause. Jesus invites us to reflect deeply on our true values—not in possessions or platforms, but in the richness of our relationships with God, others, and our innermost selves.

In the teachings of Jesus, we find a radical challenge to redefine success. He teaches that true wealth isn't quantified by earthly treasures but is found in the love we give and receive:

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:37-39)

This commandment encapsulates the essence of spiritual richness. As we strive to live out this call, embracing simplicity and generosity, we experience liberation from the compulsive need to acquire. There's freedom in this simplicity.

## THE CULTURAL TEMPTATION

### Chasing Material Success as Life's Ultimate Goal

#### THE LURE OF PROSPERITY

It's easy to be seduced by the desire for more wealth and material success. Our society honors those who are “self-made” and “successful” and often measures this by what we've accumulated—properties, accolades, status, wealth, awards, and other material trappings. Because we frequently view ourselves through the feedback and praise of others, it's easy to measure our value by the esteem we receive when we acquire these exterior status symbols.



Yet this pursuit can lead to profound disquietude in the soul. As we amass wealth and possessions, we risk becoming trapped in the comforts we seek, tethered to the temporal, numb to the eternal. In this state, our spirits hunger for something more profound and enduring than the fleeting satisfaction of material success.

When we pursue wealth and material things, we often make them idols. We give them the focus due only to God. The desire for prosperity can lure us away from our passion for Jesus Christ and his kingdom.

The teachings of Jesus invite us to a radical reevaluation of our priorities. They call us into a relationship where wealth doesn't dominate but serves and doesn't isolate but connects. This liberation allows us to live fully, love freely, and respond to the needs of others with generosity and compassion.

In seeking spiritual richness over material success, we're invited to cultivate a heart that finds joy and fulfillment in the intangible, relational, and sacred. We're encouraged to embrace a life where our truest happiness doesn't depend on what we possess but on how deeply we're connected to God and each other. This path offers a sense of peace and contentment that the material world can never furnish, grounding us in a love that transcends all earthly boundaries.

## **MEDIA AND THE MESSAGE OF WEALTH**

In our modern society, the media is an influential storyteller, presenting narratives that shape our understanding of happiness and success. Traditional and new forms of media bombard us with images and stories that equate happiness with wealth, portraying a world where value is measured in material terms. Advertisements, television shows, and social media platforms constantly present us with visions of luxury and affluence, suggesting that such possessions aren't just desirable but essential for a fulfilling life.

Yet beneath this glossy surface lies a more profound question about the nature of our joy: Does true happiness stem from an



accumulation of goods, or is it found in moments and relationships that can't be quantified? The media's message is compelling because it taps into our deepest insecurities and desires, often obscuring the more challenging truths about joy and contentment.

As followers of Jesus, we're called to scrutinize these messages, to see beyond the glitter to the impermanent joy they offer. This calls for a radical shift in perspective, a turning inward to explore the riches of a life not defined by possessions but by the quality of our relationships and the depth of our inner life. In this contemplation we find a happiness that isn't dependent on the external but blossoms from within and spreads its warmth outward, touching others in genuine and lasting ways.

Resisting the messages and values sent by modern media is a core discipleship practice. When the world tells us to show our value and success through material gains and symbols, we choose contentment and simplicity. We fix our eyes firmly on Jesus and the values and treasures of his kingdom.

### **ECONOMIC SYSTEMS AND SPIRITUAL EMPTINESS**

Our age's economic systems and powers send us constant messages about what's important, who's successful, and where our value lies. But these are often hollow messages characterized by barrenness, superficiality, and hidden bondage. If we believe that material accumulation equals happiness, we'll prioritize possessions over relationships, spiritual growth, and meaningful contributions to the world, leaving us feeling unfulfilled. We sacrifice the opportunity to collaborate on humanizing endeavors, nurture our well-being and spirituality, and give ourselves away to see others flourish.

If we believe that productivity defines our worth, we enter vicious cycles of frenetic activity, unchecked ego and ambition, relationship breakdown, and stress and burnout, undermining our ability to rest and reflect on deeper spiritual values. When we succumb to a



scarcity mindset, perceiving resources as limited and hoarding them to ensure future security, we fall prey to anxiety, a lack of generosity, and a focus on self-preservation over community care. When we allow the markets to determine our lives, we often neglect our communities and inner lives, leaving little room for reflection, creativity, or spiritual practices. This stifles personal growth and the nurturing of deeper connections.

In this noise, the voice of the Spirit of Christ calls us to pause and listen for a different way. This loving voice reminds us that our worth isn't rooted in productivity or status but in the abiding love of God and the deep connections we nurture with others. There we will find the freedom to redefine success, embracing a life that values presence over possession, compassion over competition, and love over fear.

### **THE COST OF MATERIALISM**

We often overlook the profound spiritual, relational, and environmental costs of pursuing material wealth. This relentless chase erodes our inner peace and strains our relationships with others and the earth itself. As we gather more possessions, the soul of community—once tightly knit by shared values and mutual support—gradually unravels, replaced by an individualism that values acquisition over altruism. Relationships break down, inner peace is forfeited, and individualism replaces community.

The environmental degradation wrought by our consumerist desires can't be overstated. Our planet, burdened by excessive consumption, suffers from depleted resources and escalating pollution, urging us to reconsider our lifestyles. The earth groans under the weight of our environmental exploitation. We substitute the beauty of nature, biodiversity, and wilderness for material possessions and accumulate things we don't need.

This materialistic lifestyle exacts a significant psychological toll. Constant comparison and the endless pursuit of acquisition lead



to profound dissatisfaction. Luxury cars, the latest technological gadgets, desirable properties, designer clothing, and other material things never satisfy our inner yearnings for love, human connection, and spiritual communion with the divine. Despite accumulating wealth, many people find their lives marked not by contentment but by perpetual wanting.

This state of constant desire impacts our mental health, fostering anxiety and diminishing our overall life satisfaction. Mental health struggles proliferate in modern societies despite our financial prosperity and growing middle classes. In this chase, our financial stability often falters under the weight of debt, reflecting a broader societal trend toward more significant economic disparity.

Amid this, spiritual impoverishment is perhaps the most tragic cost. In neglecting the spiritual virtues of simplicity and contentment, we lose touch with the essence that offers true fulfillment. It's in this space, however, that hope resides. By embracing minimalism, generosity, contentment, and sustainability, we can forge a path that respects our deeper selves and the world around us, paving the way for a more harmonious existence.

Mitch was the kind of man who measured his worth in quarterly reports. His shelves bore trophies from business awards, and his calendar was packed with networking events. But when his marriage quietly collapsed and his children grew distant, the shine dulled. One evening, while alone in his apartment overlooking the city skyline, he realized he had everything he wanted yet nothing he needed. A colleague invited him to a small church community that practiced simplicity: shared meals, prayers, and serving those experiencing poverty together.

At first Mitch went as an observer. Slowly his identity shifted. He gave away suits he no longer wore, downsized to a smaller home, and began volunteering at a food bank. Instead of chasing applause, he listened to stories. Instead of climbing ladders, he washed dishes.



Mitch discovered a wealth deeper than possessions: peace in prayer, joy in generosity, and reconciliation with his children. Spiritual riches replaced material success, not by subtraction but by transformation.

## **REDEFINING SUCCESS**

In a world where achievement is measured by the accumulation of wealth, status, and influence, the invitation to redefine success is radical. It's an invitation to step off the treadmill of constant striving and embrace a simpler, deeper way. Jesus spoke of success that begins within, where humility finds its roots and compassion its wings. He invites us to find greatness in service.

Relationships were the cornerstone of Jesus' teachings. Christ gathered people of all backgrounds, valuing connection above social status or norms. In sharing meals and conversations with those rejected by society, he revealed that our greatest wealth lies not in possessions but in our capacity to love deeply. What matters is how we've loved and served others and God. Our most precious treasures are loving, self-giving, reciprocal relationships, which aren't ours to possess anyway; they're gifts, graces, and treasures of priceless value. Life isn't about accumulating wealth or status, it's about loving God and others, practicing compassion, and reaching out with generosity, inclusion, and honor to those we love and neighbors, strangers, and enemies.

Jesus urged us to let go of possessiveness, trust in God's provision, and release our hoarding toward earthly security. I've wrestled with this myself. For years I clung to financial safety nets and possessions as a shield against fear. Yet the more I held on, the less peace I knew. Slowly I began practicing simplicity: downsizing, giving away what I didn't need, and opening my home and wallet more freely. I found that as I released my grip, I discovered the joy of generosity. The world no longer looked scarce but full of God's abundance.

Jesus redefines success. He calls us to seek God's kingdom first, aligning our lives with divine purpose above all worldly pursuits. In



doing so we discover that the kingdom of God isn't a distant promise but a present reality, emerging wherever hospitality, compassion, reconciliation, and grace are practiced. To redefine success is to embrace a life where spiritual and relational depth replaces the anxious pursuit of wealth and where the heart finds joy in simplicity, service, and love.

### THE WISDOM OF JESUS

Where Your Treasure is, There Your Heart Will Be Also  
(Matthew 6:19-21)

### UNDERSTANDING TRUE PROFIT

Jesus' question in Mark 8:36—"What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"—pierces deeply into the core of our motivations. It invites us to consider the values governing our lives and ask ourselves whether the treasures we pursue are genuinely worth the sacrifice. In a world obsessed with accumulation and success, it's easy to get swept away by promises of wealth and influence, believing that more will satisfy our deepest longings.

Yet the Spirit of Christ calls us back to ourselves. To seek the whole world at the cost of one's soul is to lose the gift of joy and peace that emerges only from a life rooted in love—love of God and neighbor. It's to become a stranger to one's deepest self and the purpose for which God created us.

Jesus shows us the Way of the cross and discipleship: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34). This invitation to self-denial and cross-bearing is an invitation to a profound and transformative journey that reshapes the essence of our being. Jesus invites us into a radical form of selflessness that isn't self-destruction but discovering our true selves in the light of divine love. Taking up our cross is an embrace of suffering and a way of life that prioritizes love, sacrifice, and humility above comfort and self-preservation.



The call to “lose one’s life” for Jesus and the gospel is a paradox that reveals a profound truth: In giving up our clinging to earthly life, we gain eternal life. In giving we receive; in the dying to self we’re born to eternal life. This divine paradox is the heart of the Christian journey, where true freedom and joy are found not in accumulation and achievement but in surrender and service.

We find true wealth in our relationship with God; our service to humanity in giving ourselves away for the well-being of others and creation; and fostering humility, generosity, and kindness.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus contrasts earthly wealth with treasures in heaven, which are found in a life of faith, love, and righteousness (Matthew 6:19-21). In the parable of the rich fool, Jesus shows that true wealth involves cultivating a life of generosity and reliance on divine provision (Luke 12:13-21). Jesus instructs his disciples to seek first the kingdom of God, trusting that God will provide their needs if they prioritize spiritual growth and righteous living (Matthew 6:33). Following Jesus involves resisting the siren call of worldly success and instead leaning into the values and righteousness of the kingdom of God, loving God and neighbor, and nurturing generosity and contentment. This approach to kingdom living is where the Spirit of Christ reveals the true treasure of life. There we can embrace the beauty of simplicity and find ourselves enriched beyond measure.

### **THE SOUL’S VALUE**

In reflecting on the soul’s value (as Jesus challenges us to do in Mark 8:36), we’re drawn into the profound mystery of our intrinsic worth, a worth rooted in the very image of God. From the dawn of creation, humanity was fashioned with a divine imprint, a sacred reflection of the Creator’s essence. This sacred image, forged in our souls and our bodies, gives us value that transcends the fleeting allure of worldly pursuits and possessions. We’re loved, cherished, and of immeasurable worth in the heart and mind of our Creator.



It's easy for us to lose sight of the value of our souls. We allow our lives to get busy and our minds to be preoccupied. The world is noisy, calling us to focus on material goods. In this consumeristic, materialistic age, where the chase for material success often consumes our days, it's easy to overlook the quiet, persistent call of the Spirit, inviting us to nurture and value our souls. When Jesus says, "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" he pierces through our distractions, urging us to reconsider what we hold most dear.

How do we show we value our souls? We demonstrate this by prioritizing our spiritual lives and nurturing our spirituality through solitude, prayer, community, immersion in Scripture, and joining God in God's love for the world. In our hearts, we know that proper nourishment for the soul comes not from earthly possessions or accomplishments but from every loving, truthful, powerful word that proceeds from the mouth of God. The soul thrives on spiritual sustenance, seeking connection with the Lover of our souls through prayer, reflection, and acts of compassion.

Worldly pursuits, while shiny, tempting, and often praised, can cloud our vision, leading us away from the deep wellspring of our true identity. The Holy Spirit's indwelling marks our souls as sacred temples deserving of care and reverence. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross underscores this, revealing a profound love that seeks to restore and renew our innermost being. Jesus gave everything for the salvation and restoration of our bodies and souls and the healing of all creation. Why do we neglect our souls? Why do we so often feel unlovable, worthless, and unimportant? We're loved, valued, and precious to God—why give away our souls for treasures that rust, fade, and rot?

Our souls are precious and designed for intimate, loving relationship with others and God. Jesus calls us to live richly toward God, enjoy intimacy with our Creator, and embrace the spiritual over the material and the eternal over the temporal. Our souls are made



in the image of God for intimate communion with the divine and have immense value. As we find our value before God, we find rest, peace, and a profound sense of belonging.

### **JESUS' PATH OF SEEKING THE KINGDOM AND FINDING FULFILLMENT**

As we read the Gospels, we see Jesus beckoning us toward a path that diverges sharply from the world's crowded road of amassing material things. Jesus teaches us that the kingdom of God doesn't flourish in the abundance of possessions, the building of status and honors, or crafting an image before the world. Instead, Jesus invites us to pursue the riches of the kingdom of God in the soil of the spirit, where generosity, simplicity, and compassion take root. Our Lord's Way isn't adorned with earthly wealth, yet it overflows with the riches of spiritual abundance.

Jesus shows us that love of God and neighbor is at the heart of all genuine fulfillment. This means loving God as well as strangers, fellow believers, and enemies to find true meaning and fulfillment. Accumulating material goods or designing a personal brand will leave us empty; those things are temporal and subject to rot, rust, and our egos. Jesus' path of fulfillment is about following God's will, serving and honoring other people, and loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Jesus inverts status in the kingdom of God, showing us that a truly meaningful life is a life of service, one that images Christ Jesus and is animated by love of God and neighbor.

Jesus called to those burdened by possessions, urging them to let go and find their wealth not in gold or silver but in the joy of giving, loving, and serving. Christ's message was clear—store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, which are eternal and bring glory and honor to God. What we desire and gaze upon, whether money and material goods or the ways and glory of God, fills our hearts with either light or darkness. We must choose whether we will serve God



or money, ambitions, earthly desires, and honor. It's impossible to serve two masters (Matthew 6:19-24).

Jesus demonstrated caring for others and being rich toward God and neighbor through his compassionate embrace of the poor, the outcast, and the marginalized. This richness doesn't fade away or disappoint; it multiplies, bringing fulfillment that the finite bounds of material wealth could never contain. Walking the path of Jesus involves discovering that life's deepest satisfaction arises not from what we acquire but from what we give—not from what we store but from what we share—revealing the face of God in loving relationships.

Jesus invites us to let go of anxiety about food, clothing, property, and status. Instead, Jesus calls us to “seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness” and trust that God will give us what we need (Matthew 6:25-34). We find our true peace and fulfillment by giving these things to God and trusting and resting in him.

## **PRACTICING THE JESUS WAY**

### **Living with Simplicity, Generosity, and Contentment**

#### **THE VIRTUE OF SIMPLICITY**

In the four Gospels, Jesus presents a profound invitation to simplicity. The simplicity of Jesus Christ's lifestyle and spirituality beckons us away from the urge to accumulate and toward a spiritually anchored existence. Jesus didn't clutter his life with possessions or outward efforts to display status, success, image, or wealth. His life speaks eloquently of the freedom of living simply. Jesus showed us how to live, trust in the care and provision of God, and follow the will of the Creator regardless of the sacrifice or cost.

We often look around at other people's property, clothing, technological gadgets, and other possessions and feel jealous. Our hearts and minds can be caught up in envy and a desire to consume, impress, accumulate, and get ahead. Jesus taught us to consider the lilies



of the field, how they grow in serene splendor, unburdened by toil or spinning. In this meditation, Jesus pointed out the restless heart of humanity: The pursuit of material abundance is a heavy yoke under which the soul wearies and the spirit falters. Jesus urges us to seek the kingdom of God instead, assuring us that all necessary things would follow, provided we prioritize spiritual wealth over worldly riches (Matthew 6:28-33).

This simplicity is about focusing our lives with such intention that every breath and step brings us closer to the divine heart of God. This approach isn't austerity and poverty for their own sake. Instead, Jesus invites us to pursue a simplicity of the spirit and heart, which naturally expresses itself in a lifestyle of prayer, loving God and neighbor, simple living, generosity, and contentment. Jesus' spirituality is at once simple and profound.

By living simply, Jesus was not constrained by the usual fears and desires that entrap the human heart. Instead he moved with freedom, touching lives with a presence fully attuned to the moment and fully responsive to the needs before him. Jesus invites us to imitate his simplicity and experience contentment and joy.

Embracing simplicity means leading a life where our most authentic selves can emerge without distraction. It's a discipline of the heart that requires a steadfast focus on what's spiritually essential. In simplicity we find a path cleared of clutter where the soul can journey closer to the sacred and where we lead lives in harmony with the divine will. Jesus offers us a richness of life that material abundance could never procure.

### **GENEROSITY AS A WAY OF LIFE**

It isn't easy to be generous in our modern age. We're stretched for time, resources, energy, and money, and our culture encourages us to acquire and hoard, resisting the call to give freely. Its emphasis on material wealth, individual achievement, and competitive success



steers us away from the simple, profound acts of sharing and showing compassion. When we're honest about these divergent paths and voices, we can reflect on the richness that emerges not from what we accumulate but from what we give freely, sacrificially, courageously, and lovingly. In doing so we nurture genuine connection, alternative values, communal well-being, and radical difference in our lives. When we embrace generosity and simplicity, we imitate and grow into Jesus' radical, untamed, strange, and countercultural Way—the values of the kingdom of God.

Jesus tells us that generosity involves trust and openness, transcending material exchange. When Jesus spoke of giving, he elevated it to a sacred act—a gesture that not only addresses the needs of others but also transforms the giver's heart. Jesus said, "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" (Luke 6:38). This principle reveals generosity as an interchange, enriching everyone involved. Our generosity pales when compared with the generosity of God in Jesus Christ, no matter how much we give. When we give, we imitate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and become more like our Creator.

In living out this generous spirit, God invites us to embody compassion and vulnerability, shaping a way of life that emulates the character of Jesus Christ. Each act of giving liberates us from the confines of self-interest, expanding our hearts through grace, sacrifice, and fellowship.

As we practice Jesus' teachings, extending our resources and ourselves, we build deeper relationships with others, experience fuller communion with God, and receive abundant spiritual returns—love, gratitude, and a more profound sense of community. When we give generously, we imitate and join the abundant generosity of the Trinity. We step into the immeasurable, eternal generosity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, keeping in step with the plentiful Spirit.



To live generously is to walk a path deeply aligned with Jesus' teachings. This path enriches those we help and leads us to a life brimming with spiritual vitality, fresh purpose and meaning, and relational connectedness.

### **PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARD SIMPLICITY AND GENEROSITY**

Practicing simplicity isn't easy. I live in Sydney, where everyone pushes and shoves for the most luxurious car, desirable property, and designer brands. I've felt that pull myself. For years I chased bigger houses and newer gadgets, convincing myself they were necessities. But I've since learned to choose differently. My wife and I now live in a modest place, share one car, and keep our wardrobes simple. We strive to give away a percentage of our income beyond the tithe, and when friends face financial hardship, we discreetly cover their bills or groceries. It's small, imperfect, and often costly, but these practices remind us that our worth is measured not by what we own but by the love we give and receive.

So how do we move toward simplicity? It begins in our hearts. What clutters your heart? What desires, worries, ambitions, longings, and fears crowd your heart, leaving less room for the Spirit of Christ and God's uncluttered peace and freedom? How are you retreating from the noise of your longings and anxieties for solitude, silence, and prayer? How are you inviting the Spirit to help you still, silence, and simplify your heart, soul, and mind?

Acting from the heart, seek to declutter your environment, stripping away the unused and unnecessary, making room for relationships and the sacred. Engage in mindful spending and pause to question each purchase—does this serve my spirit or fill a void? Reduce the noise of digital consumption, allowing silence to speak its profound truths. Take a break from social media, or at least reduce your time on these platforms. Examine your calendar.



Simplify your commitments, keeping only those necessary for employment, building relationships, contributing to your neighborhood and community, and nourishing your soul. Infuse regular spiritual practices into your daily life, anchoring every action to pursue spiritual depth over material gain.

Cultivating a generous heart is an act of profound spiritual discipline. Generous people are happy. Generosity and contentment are companions. Engage in small, regular acts of kindness, each one a step on the path to a life shaped by generosity. Who needs your time, financial support, love, energy, or attention? How can you be generous with these? Volunteer your time and resources in ways that echo your core beliefs, discovering the joy inherent in acts of service. Consider structured financial giving not as a duty but as a spiritual practice, reflecting on the transformative impact of generosity given and received.

One suburban church took pride in its glossy facilities and a full events calendar. Fundraisers focused on building projects, and success was measured by the number of attendees on Sundays. But when a financial downturn left many members unemployed, the culture shifted. Leaders realized their programs weren't meeting deeper needs. They canceled a multimillion-dollar expansion and redirected funds to practical compassion: groceries, counseling, debt relief, and support groups. Members pooled skills to repair each other's homes, shared cars, and planted a community garden. Over time the congregation became known not for its building but for its generosity. Formerly isolated neighbors joined because they felt embraced rather than impressed. The church still worshiped in the same space, but the spirit within had changed. The story of their shift spread across the city, inspiring other congregations to follow suit. They had moved from a posture of showcasing wealth to embodying God's abundance through generosity and care. Their treasure was no longer in bricks and mortar but in shared life.



Both simplicity and generosity begin in the heart. Pray earnestly for an open heart that delights in giving freely, guided by a divine compass that points toward generosity as a way of life, rich in connection, meaning, and spirituality.

### **LIVING RICHLY TOWARD GOD**

In Mark 10:17-31 a man kneels before Jesus, desperate for eternal life. Jesus sees both his yearning and his chains. He tells him to sell all he has, give to people experiencing poverty, and follow. The man walks away, bound by possessions he cannot release. It's a story that exposes how easily wealth can enslave us and how difficult it is to live freely in God's kingdom.

But what does this look like now? I think of a couple I know in Sydney who sold their investment property and used the proceeds to fund scholarships for young refugees. Or of a businessman who chose part-time work so he could spend more time mentoring teenagers in foster care. In my own life, it has meant driving an unpretentious car, living in a smaller home than my peers, and giving away a fixed portion of income each year to causes and people who stretch me beyond comfort. These choices don't feel glamorous; they often feel costly. But they taste like freedom. They remind me that eternal life begins not in accumulation but in the daily practices of release, generosity, and following Jesus into a life the world calls foolish but God calls rich.

What would Jesus have you relinquish? For many of us, it's not money. Instead, it's the seduction of power and control. Our culture would have us believe we can control people, wealth, politics, nature, and the future.

The radical invitation Jesus extends doesn't end in despair but in the promise that the first will be last and the last first. This inversion of worldly values is central to the gospel message. It invites us to find freedom through relinquishment and in embracing humility.



Jesus invites you and me to shed the layers of complexity and trappings of success that clutter our lives and distract us from the essence of our spiritual journey. In simplicity we find the space to focus on cultivating goodness.

This path transforms our relationships and lifestyles. As we give, whether it's our resources, time, money, or talents, we build bridges that connect us deeply with the community around us.

Simplicity and generosity express what's going on in our hearts and demonstrate whether we follow the Jesus Way.

*Pause here, and let your heart remember that true wealth is measured not by what fills your hands but by what frees your soul.*



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