

## #15: Reasons to Worship: Our God Is Generous

Written by Bob Stone

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What can we learn by looking at our hands? (Stop for a moment and do just that.) What do we learn about God when we look at His hands?

What is the difference between the hands of God and our hands?

The main difference between God's hand and ours, as the Bible tells us, is that in creation, God forms, fashions and then releases His gifts and blessings with open hands—He is an opened-handed God, a generous God.

When Jesus came to meet the needs of people, He opened His hands to teach, to heal, to love, to feed, to free. When people doubted his resurrection, he opened his hands —John 20:27 . Jesus put it this way in John 6:37b, "...whoever comes to me I will never drive away."

I want us to focus here on the open hands of God, particularly as it is expressed in God's generosity. I hope the result of this understanding is that we can't help but respond by giving our lives to Him and offering praise and thanksgiving for how generous our God is. Remember, "our worship is small because our concept of God is small." And more specifically, "our worship is often small, because our awareness of God's generosity and gifts is small." I pray we will all say:

**"What a God! What an outlandishly generous God!"**

What does Scripture say about God's generosity?

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James 1:5 says: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." If we lack wisdom, God will give it to us. Look how He is going to give it:

**generously**, without finding fault. He is generous and enjoys giving to all people.

In fact, Matthew 7 reminds us, God's generosity is the basis for prayer. We have a Father in heaven who is more generous than any human father, and loves to give to His kids—v. 11.

In Ephesians 1:3-8 we see this generosity in a very striking and far-reaching fashion:

- "every spiritual blessing"—v. 3.
- "His grace given freely to us"—v. 6.
- "Lavish redemption through His blood, forgiveness of sin and riches of grace"—v. 8.

In Psalm 145:16,19 the Psalmist uses the imagery of generous open hands, too. Lamentations 3:22 says His love and compassions are not fading. His resources are not drying up; in fact, they are new every morning. He offers great and never-failing generosity!

In Matthew 20:1-16 Jesus tells a story about God's generosity—a story that offended people.

Matthew 20 1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. 2 He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. 3 "About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. 4 He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' 5 So they went. "He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing.

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6 About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?' 7 "Because no one has hired us," they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

8 "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.' 9 "The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. 10 So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius.

11 When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 12 'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.' 13 "But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? 14 Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. 15 Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? **Or are you envious because I am generous?**' 16 "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

What is the problem, then? It's not that the 6 a.m. workers were treated unfairly. The problem is that other people (the latecomers) were treated generously. What is the lesson Jesus is teaching in this story? God is generous—see v. 15. Are you thankful He is more than fair?

Now, obviously this isn't a call to be lazy and try to wait until the last minute to make things right with God—we are not all assured we will all have a long life and many opportunities. But what does God give to us, whether a 6 a.m. saint or 5 p.m. latecomer? Wisdom, peace, love, joy, grace, calling, authority, victory, hope—the list goes on and on.

Two things God did, because of their magnitude, are lavish and staggering in size and scope—and awesome in their application.

**First, God generously gives us His son.**

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John 3:16—"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Please don't think that God the Father made this choice and the son had no say in the matter. Galatians 2:20 says: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Paul says it again in Ephesians 5:2b—"...Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." God the Father gave His Son, a generosity we can't imagine, and Jesus willingly participated in that sacrifice and offered His own life, because He loved us too.

### **Second, He gives us the gift of eternal life.**

1 John 5:11—"...this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." This is the ultimate of the gift that keeps on giving—a gift that never ends.

But eternal life is more than a quantity of life that goes on forever, it is also a *quality* of life—the Bible describes it as full, and rich, and abundant (John 10:10). First John 5:11 that it says,

"God has already given us eternal life."

Eternal life is a quantity of life that goes on forever, the best possible life. Eternal life is present life, a quality of life that starts now—not when we die.

John 3:1-8 reminds us physical life starts when we are born physically., but eternal life starts when we are born spiritually. The Bible describes that as being born again. The Holy Spirit gives birth to our Spirit, helping us to become alive spiritually. When that happens, as Jesus describes it, we are born again. Jesus made it very clear, we're not going to see the kingdom of God unless we're born again.

### **Conclusion**

Let's look at our hands again. Are our hands like God's? Are they open or still grasping? In order to receive what God has, we first have to let go of our lives—the things we hold so tightly to—and then receive the gifts our God wants to pour into our lives! Have you experienced a spiritual rebirth—a new kind of life—a quantity and quality of life? God will not give us His son or eternal life unless we ask Him for it and are willing to live with the

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joys and responsibilities of these gifts. "Jesus I open up my hands and heart to you.  
Please come in and give me eternal life."