

Open Hands

A Five-Day Devotional on Grace and Generosity

DAY 1: Whose Hands Are You Standing In?

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 2:8-9

Reflection:

Before you think about giving anything away, sit with what you've already been given. "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." You didn't out-earn anyone else for your salvation. You didn't bring the right resume. Even the faith that reached out and received the gift was itself a gift.

Think about the last time you received something you didn't earn, a gift, an act of kindness, a moment of grace from someone who owed you nothing. Notice what it felt like to simply receive it without needing to prove you deserved it. That feeling, multiplied far beyond anything you can measure, is what it means to stand in the grace of God. Every good thing in your life, down to the breath you just took, arrived in your hands the same way. Given, not earned.

Reflection Questions:

1. Where in your life are you still quietly trying to earn something God has already given you for free?
2. Can you recall a specific moment you received grace you didn't deserve, from God or from another person? What did it feel like?

DAY 2: What Your Wallet Knows

Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 5:10, Matthew 6:24

Reflection:

"He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity." Solomon chased down every form of wealth available to a king and came back with the same verdict every time. It doesn't fill the hole it promises to fill.

Jesus put it even more plainly. You cannot serve both God and money. Not because money is evil, but because money has a gravitational pull, and it wants the throne. Left unchecked, it will take it. Your calendar and your bank statement are two of the most honest witnesses you have. They testify to what you actually love, whether or not your mouth agrees with them.

Reflection Questions:

1. If someone looked only at your bank statement and your calendar this month, what would they conclude you hold most dear?
2. What is one specific fear about money that tends to surface in your thoughts, and what does that fear reveal about where your security rests?

DAY 3: Borrowed, Not Owned

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 9:8, Psalm 24:1

Reflection:

"The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein." Everything you call yours was on loan long before you signed anything. Your ability to earn, your health, the years you've had, the mind you think with, none of it originated with you.

An owner protects what's his and measures himself against everyone else's owning. A steward manages something valuable that was never his to begin with, and something in a steward relaxes that an owner never can. Paul tells the Corinthians that God is able to make all grace abound to them so that, having all sufficiency in all things at all times, they may abound in every good work. That is not a promise you'll never run low. It's a promise that the God who owns everything does not run out of resources to care for the people who belong to Him.

Reflection Questions:

1. What's one thing you're gripping tightly today that might loosen if you truly believed it was never yours to grip in the first place?
2. Where have you experienced God's provision, however small, in a way that reminded you He is the actual owner of your life?

DAY 4: Free Hands

Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 2:10-11

Reflection:

When you actually believe you're a steward and not an owner, something in you starts to relax that has probably been tense your entire adult life. Ownership, real or imagined, comes with an exhausting job attached to it. Owners have to protect what's theirs. Owners compare their portfolio, their kitchen, their kid's college list, against everyone else's, and the comparison never resolves, because there is always someone one rung higher on a ladder that never actually ends.

Solomon spent an entire book chasing down wealth, pleasure, achievement, and legacy, and concluded that all of it, gripped as an owner, ends up meaningless. Gripped as a steward, the exact same house and job and portfolio become something else entirely. They become tools handed to you for a purpose bigger than your own comfort, and tools don't need to make you feel important. They just need to work.

Reflection Questions:

1. Does your car, your home, your job title, or your appearance ever make you feel smaller or bigger than someone else's? Name one specific comparison that tends to sting.
2. What would it look like this week to hold one of those things a little more loosely?

DAY 5: Open Hands

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, 2 Corinthians 8:9

Reflection:

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Cheerful giving was never a technique to learn. It's a symptom, one that shows up only after grace has already done its deeper work in you.

And here is where it all lands. "Though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." Jesus emptied His hands completely so that yours could be filled. Every movement of this week's devotional has been building toward this one truth. Generosity isn't a rule for Christians to follow. It's the reflex of people who have already been on the receiving end of a gift too large to repay.

Reflection Questions:

1. What would it look like this week to open your hands, just slightly, in response to a gift you didn't earn?
2. Is there a specific need in front of you right now, someone close to home, that your open hands could meet?