

THE GENEROUS HEART

· A BIBLE STUDY FEAST FOR ALL ·

Takeaway!

A psalm. For giving grateful **PRAISE**.

SHOUT for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

WORSHIP the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

KNOW that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

ENTER his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his **LOVE** endures for ever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

(Psalm 100: 1–5)

MOTIVATION

In the book *Boundaries*, Dr Henry Cloud and Dr John Townsend highlight the different ways we may have questionable motives when giving to others. Read Stan's story:

Stan was confused. He read in the Bible and was taught in church that it was more blessed to give than to receive, but he found that this often was not true. He frequently felt unappreciated for 'all he was doing'. He wished people would have more consideration for this time and energy. Yet, whenever someone wanted something from him, he would do it.

He thought this was loving, and he wanted to be a loving person.

Finally, when fatigue grew into depression, he came to see me.

When I asked what was wrong, Stan replied that he was 'loving too much'.

'How can you "love too much"?' I asked. 'I've never heard of such a thing.'

'Oh, it's very simple,' replied Stan. 'I do far more for people than I should. And that makes me very depressed.'

'I'm not quite sure what you're doing,' I said, 'but it certainly isn't love. The Bible says that true love leads to a blessed state and a state of cheer. Love brings happiness, not depression. If your loving is depressing you, it's probably not love.'

'I don't see how you can say that. I do so much for everyone. I give and give and give. How can you say I'm not loving?'

'I can say that because of the fruit of your actions.' (Cloud, H & Townsend, J, *Boundaries*, Michigan: Zondervan, 2017 2nd Ed)

- **How** do you feel Stan may have lost his way when it comes to serving others?
- **What** do you think his motivation for giving might be?
- **In what** ways do you relate to Stan's experience of giving?
- **How** can we ensure that we reflect the words of Psalm 100:2 and avoid giving with the wrong motivation?

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