



SESSION 2: THE GENEROUS WIDOW: WHOLEHEARTED GIVING

1—SPARE NO EXPENSE

Grab that Bible near you and read Proverbs 21:25-26.

Uh, oh, you think to yourself, Dorena is at it again! It seems like every day Dorena forgets to bring notebook paper to school and has to walk around before English class, asking if she can borrow some paper from someone. Of course, it's not actually *borrowing* because she never pays anyone back. As Dorena approaches you with her need, you respond by . . .

- ☐ Waving a piece of paper in her face and yelling, "No way!"
- ☐ Wadding up a piece of paper and throwing it at her head, knowing she won't be able to use it.
- ☐ Ignoring her.
- ☐ Pointing out how she could save a lot of trees by writing her notes on her arms.
- ☐ Giving her three pieces of paper, just in case she needs more later.

Proverbs 21:25-26 encourages us to give "without sparing," even when we don't want to. Today, try to find two people that you can give something to, anything from a candy bar to a dollar. You'll hardly miss it, and you'll be glad that you had the chance to share with someone. Spend a few minutes asking God to help you do this, because when you actually have the chance to give something away, it might be harder than you think!

2—NOT OPTIONAL

If you like gifts, race over to Romans 12:6-8.

Whew! Ronnie breathed a sigh of relief after he read Romans 12:6-8. He had felt bad because he wasn't giving money to the church or to people who needed it, but now he has a way out. He only has to give if he has the spiritual gift of giving, which he is absolutely sure he doesn't. He can keep *everything* to himself!

Ronnie comes to share his joyous discovery with you. What would you tell him? Hopefully, you would tell Ronnie that giving isn't only a spiritual gift; it's part of being obedient to Christ. Everyone is supposed to give, but some people who have the gift of giving are probably better at it and do more of it.

Are you giving your tithe (10 percent of all of your money) to God? If not, repent and ask God to help you start giving. If so, ask God if there is anything else He would like you to give—maybe even today.

3—NEED SOME REFRESHMENT?

What are you waiting for? Flip open to Proverbs 11:24-25.

Dominique just couldn't believe what she was seeing. She and 13 other junior-highers from her church were on a missions trip to Mexico, helping Amelia and Juan and their three kids build a new home. Their old house was about as big as Dominique's bedroom, and all five members of the family had been living in it. Amelia and Juan had no refrigerator, and each of them owned just a few outfits each. Dominique had felt sorry for them when she first met them.

But when Dominique saw their faces, she didn't feel sorry for them anymore. In fact, she was in awe as she realized that Amelia and Juan felt blessed to give what little they had. You see, they had decided to make fresh, homemade tamales for all 14 junior-highers. Dominique realized that, because Amelia and Juan only had a limited amount of food, feeding her and her friends would mean that their family would not have much to eat later in the week . . . but they didn't seem to care! They were all smiles and kept saying how happy they were to be eating together. Dominique knew that her own parents wouldn't be quite so happy if they had to feed so many people at such a great cost to themselves.

Dominique was seeing Proverbs 11:24-25 in action. Giving brings God's blessings, and although this at times *might* mean more money, more often it means joy and peace.

Is your giving refreshing you? If not, maybe you're not doing it enough or you're doing it with the wrong attitude.

Ask God to help you know what you need to give away this week.

4—PAY IT BACK

Stop reading this and start reading Romans 13:7.

You breathe a sigh of relief when Gilbert walks the other way. Last week you needed lunch money and he loaned you four dollars. Now every time you see him, you feel a little bit guilty about it. In fact, you actually have the money to pay him back in your pocket, but you're hoping that he'll forget about it and you'll get to keep the money.

Paul's words in Romans 13:7 should change your mind. We are to give back whatever we owe to people. Do you owe anybody money today? If so, search your pockets, backpack, wallet or purse and find the money, so you can pay them back.