



# Hope in the Dark In God We Trust

#nphopeinthedark

Week 4

4 of 5

May 10, 2020

**Bottom Line:** Everything is a gift from God, so we're giving back from His gifts.

**Icebreaker:** What is a very generous thing that someone else has done for you? Or, for a lighter question, what body part would you consider donating while still living? What criteria would you use to select the person eligible to receive it?

**Key Verse:** *Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the LORD! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!* Habakkuk 3:17-18 NLT

Habakkuk is going through an extremely tough time, but his message to individuals and groups in other difficult situations is that it is possible to have sustaining joy in your life, even when everything is going wrong. The economy is a disaster—the verses today are essentially describing a stock portfolio that has crashed. His response is that even then he can rejoice in the God of his salvation. Habakkuk's giving was according to the first fruits of the harvest as God had instructed Moses. Now there was no harvest. What does giving look like in a time of crisis and scarcity? God had already dealt with that when He told the Israelites how essential giving was to their health.

**Give sacrificially, not just out of surplus (Deut. 26:2).** You don't wait until after you pay the bills, and then determine what you can afford to give. God said you give from the first fruits, illustrating your dependence on your Source. Surplus giving is what I give after I do everything else I feel I need or want to do. I only give from my leftovers.

**Give joyfully, not just out of duty (Deut. 26:4-5).** Joy comes from recognizing God's grace—that everything I have is a grace gift.

**Give graciously, not grudgingly (Hab. 3:16-17).** In the midst of any struggle we have here, we have something Habakkuk didn't have yet. We have Jesus, the resurrected Lamb of God, the God of our salvation, with us in everything! When He truly becomes your treasure (Matthew 16:19-20), you understand what He has done for you and all that is "yours" becomes His. You will want to give for the One who gave all for you. Your giving liberates you and others. Joyful, sacrificial giving will turn your money into more than money—it will be grace!

## THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

Most of us want to consider ourselves generous givers, even though we are careful to make sure our giving does not negatively impact our lifestyle. Reflect and discuss.

If you are not giving until it hurts, until it changes the way you live, you aren't giving the way you need to give. How do you feel about that? Why?

This standard doesn't mean that it's wrong to be wealthy—it means that our money was given to us for more than us. The more we have, the more of a challenge it is to let go of what seems to be large amounts. Why do you think that is so?

Where do you most struggle with remembering that everything you have is a gift? How do you fight that attitude?

Giving flows from an understanding and appreciation of grace.

## LOOK IT OVER <<<

Whatever your heart most treasures is where your money will go most effortlessly. Whatever you love, you have to be careful to not spend too much. How do you see that true in your own life?

When you think, "I know I need to give," you have just indicated that your relationship with God is an impersonal transactional relationship. That's an ouchy statement. We all have had that thought. How do we get our hearts in the right place? How do we deepen our appreciation of God's grace and give from that perspective?

It's a well-known fact in the international community that the most consistently joyful Christians are in the most impoverished countries. Why do you think so?

How have you experienced "costly grace"? Have you ever experienced costly grace from someone besides Jesus? How did it impact you?

Giving in scarcity liberates. Who and how?

# NEXT STEPS

1. Evaluate your giving. What will it take for you to become a truly generous person from God's perspective?
2. Thank God for the grace He has extended to you through Jesus and the people who have invested in you. Thank Him and thank someone who has been a giver to you.

## EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

**Bottom Line:** Everything is a gift from God, so we're giving back from His gifts.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

## PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

## DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at [newpointe.org/daily](http://newpointe.org/daily):

Monday: Luke 21:1-4

Tuesday: Genesis 45:12-15

Wednesday: Luke 7:1-5

Thursday: Luke 19:8-9

Friday: Philippians 4:15-17

***Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.***

*(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)*