



## OPENNESS

*I have learned to hold all things loosely, so God will not have to pry them out of my hands.*

~Corrie ten Boom

**A CLENCHED FIST** could be a symbol of aggression, defiance, anger, or self-defense. But an open hand communicates welcome, giving, and acceptance.

A clenched fist shows tension, an open hand is relaxed. Our fists close around what we take; our hands open up when we give.

Moving from a clenched fist to an open hand can be a natural motion of relaxing, or a painful struggle, where one finger at a time is pried open. Consider your hand as an expression of your inner self. Are you closed or open? Part of Christian discipleship is to move towards openness. Our Ministry Investment campaign is a great opportunity to examine your own heart to see how open or closed it is. It's a perfect time to move toward openness and generosity. God's desire is that we are generous people, just as he has been generous towards us.

### **God Intends For Us To Give**

In the Old Testament a standard was set: "One tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD and must be set apart to him as holy. (Leviticus 27:30).

In the New Testament Jesus praised a widow for making a sacrificial gift of everything she had.

“Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on.” (Mark 12:43-44)

On another occasion Jesus said, “Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. (Luke 12: 33-34).

### **God Loves A Cheerful Giver**

In instructing the Corinthian church on how to give, Paul said, “Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

## **Giving Demonstrates Faith**

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul commended the Macedonian church for their generous giving. Although they were in “extreme poverty,” the Macedonians showed their faith by generous contributions: “For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more.” (2 Cor. 8:3). Giving like that can only happen through faith!

When Paul wrote to the church in Philippi to thank them for their giving, he spoke of their offerings and said: “They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God. And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:18-19)

God responds and miracles happen when we act in faith, with our hearts and hands open towards him.

**GROUNDING IN FAITH • GROWING TO SERVE**

Grace Bible Church • Helendale CA

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