

STEWARDSHIP

Vol. 9 Edition 7 – November 2017



Generosity is a Lifestyle

For many people, giving is an action. It is an act you do every once in a while, like the moment you drop a check in the offering plate, or when you go online and contribute some money toward disaster relief. The only problem with viewing giving as an action is that it becomes something we do everyone once in a while instead of something we do constantly. Generosity should be an attitude—a lifestyle.

R. G. LeTourneau is a great example of someone who exemplified a lifestyle of generosity. LeTourneau came from humble origins. At the age of fourteen, he left school and took a job as an apprentice ironmonger. Over the years, he enrolled in classes from a correspondence school, but never completed assignments or graduated. He spent his time learning mechanics and engineering, mostly self-taught.

In the 1920's, LeTourneau got into the earthmoving business. Over the ensuing years, he put his practical engineering knowledge to work and

registered around 300 patents during his lifetime. He became so successful that his factories supplied seventy percent of the heavy earthmoving equipment used by Allied Forces during World War II. In the construction world, he became known as “The Dean of Earthmoving.”

As impressive as his business success is, LeTourneau’s greatest accomplishments might be in the arena of philanthropy. He was very active in the church and in Christian organizations, and believed wholeheartedly that his business was a ministry. He is quoted as saying, “Because I believe God wants business men as well as preachers, I believe a factory can be dedicated to His service as well as a church.”

To LeTourneau, generosity was a lifestyle. He approached business from a perspective of generosity. He approached his private life through a giving-focused lens. While most Christians today approach tithing from the angle of giving ten percent to God and keeping the rest, LeTourneau took a different approach. It is said that he chose to live on and operate his business using ten percent of his salary and company profits, while giving the remaining ninety percent to God. He said, “It’s not how much of my money I give to God, but how much of His money I keep for myself.” That is what a generous lifestyle looks like.

So, how does this philosophy of giving apply to us? The majority of us aren’t rich, successful businessmen. It would be nearly impossible for most of us to give away ninety percent of our money and survive on the remaining ten percent. But I don’t think the numbers are the important thing to focus on in this story. What LeTourneau shows us is a Biblical way to view generosity.

First, the focus is not on *our* money or possessions, but a basic understanding that those things *belong to God*. LeTourneau often referred to God as his “business partner.” Does this mean that God cared deeply about the world of earthmoving? Does it mean that God invested money into making the business successful. Of course not. What it means is that LeTourneau approached business from a Biblical perspective. When you live a lifestyle of generosity, it means you care about others. It means you are focused on doing good things with your business, instead of trying to cheat your way to the top. It means you treat your employees with dignity and respect, which encourages them to be more productive and happy. It means you care about the impact your business has on the world. A lifestyle of generosity makes those around you better.

Second, LeTourneau shows us the importance of approaching our work from a perspective of ministry. He was a firm believer that you didn’t have to be a preacher to minister to others on God’s behalf. He approached the business world from the perspective that he would be interacting with others on a daily basis, and therefore had unique opportunities to affect those people in a positive way. Colossians 3:23 says, “Whatever you do,

work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." This verse is often quoted, but many Christians fail to follow its instructions. The fact is, whatever you do to get your paycheck each week, if you approach that job from a perspective of ministry, it not only affects your attitude in a positive way, but also affects those around you.

When you live every aspect of your life with a perspective focused on generosity, it can profoundly change your world and the lives of your co-workers, business contacts and your work relationships.



Generosity is a Lifestyle

Stewardship Ministries is delighted to announce the 2017 Stewardship Resource Toolkit, "Gain Save Give," is now available for download in Spanish. In the 18th century, John Wesley coined this motto in his sermon, "The Use of Money." The stewardship toolkit, "Gain, Save, Give," explores the concept of gaining and saving all we can, in order to live more generously. [Click here](#) to download the resources.



Quote: Randy Alcorn

"God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving."