

Values Matter Discovery Starters

We Are a Global Missions Movement

16. PRACTICE DEPENDENCE ON GOD

YWAM is a volunteer movement called to practice a life of dependence upon God for financial provision. For individuals and for any YWAM team or community, this comes primarily through His people. As God has been generous toward us, so we desire to be generous, giving ourselves, our time and talents to God with no expectation of remuneration.

[Gen 22:12-14](#); [Exo 36:2-7](#); [Num 18:25-29](#); [Mal 3:8-12](#); [Mat 6:25-33](#);
[Luk 19:8-9](#); [2Co 8:1-9:15](#); [Php 4:10-20](#); [Tit 3:14](#); [3Jn 5-8](#)

Value #16 – Practice Dependence on God: A Generosity Contest

Biblical Foundation:

"Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me!

"But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?'

"You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. "Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies (Mal 3:8-12).

Discovery Starter:

Test God? It seems inappropriate considering Jesus' response to Satan. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16, "You must not test the LORD your God" (Mat 4:7). But in Malachi the circumstances are different, and God urges the people, "Put me to the test!" He is challenging them to a generosity contest. People had not been giving the triennial tithe (Deu 14:28-29; 26:12-14), which was designed to create a "storehouse" fund to help the Levites, widows and orphans in times of economic distress. God challenged them to try to out-give God himself.

If you accept God's challenge, know that you are up against the most generous of givers! In Genesis, the three verbs that God uses most frequently to describe his actions are: *nathan* (gives: 26x), *barak* (blesses: 14x), and *'asah* (makes: 11x). Above all else, God wanted us to know that he is a generous God! He is a God who gives to people lavishly, frequently, unexpectedly, caringly, abundantly, personally, thoughtfully, consistently ... For this reason, even in the leanest of times, we can be generous givers as we accept his challenge and seek to imitate him! This is a (con-)test that God welcomes.

Because of this, I have come to love YWAM offerings! One of my favorites was during the Leadership Training School in South Africa in 1998. There were 124 students from 52 countries. While praying for finances to birth a new ministry one person felt led to give his guitar as a gift. It was an act of unexpected generous obedience that released a remarkable spirit of giving. As people prayed, one by one they slipped away to their rooms and came back, adding their gifts to the growing pile. For nearly two hours people laid their treasures – big and small – before the Lord. The one who first gave wrote:

*I gave my guitar, they gave their shoes.
I have much, they gave their last possessions.
I live a life of comfort with occasional faith, they live a life of daily provision.
I gave with great sorrow, they gave with joy.
I gave my most precious possession, they gave their last.
I know what tomorrow holds, they know God.*

Keep Going:

Take time today to consider how you can accept God's challenge to a generosity contest. Determine to give something to someone you've never given to before, someone who would not be expecting anything from you. Your expression of generosity might involve money or an object, or it might simply consist in an action or a word which brings unexpected blessing. Make it as lavish as you can. As you give, remember Paul's words, "This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God" (2Co 9:9-11 MESSAGE).

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