



SAVING *grace*

HOPE-FILLED DEVOTIONS ALONG THE
WAY TO FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

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Day 17

Everyone who was excited and eager to participate brought the LORD's gift offerings to be used for building the meeting tent and all its furnishings and for the holy clothes. Both men and women came forward. Everyone who was eager to participate brought pins, earrings, rings, and necklaces, all sorts of gold objects. Everyone raised an uplifted offering of gold to the LORD. And everyone who had blue or purple or deep red yarn or fine linen or goats' hair or rams' skins dyed red or beaded leather brought them. Everyone who could make a gift offering of silver or copper brought it as the LORD's gift offering. Everyone who had acacia wood that could be used in any kind of building work brought it. All the skilled women spun cloth with their hands, and brought what they had spun in blue and purple and deep red yarns and fine linen. All the women who were eager to use their skill spun the goats' hair. The chiefs brought gemstones and gems to be set in the priest's vest and the chest pendant, spices and oil for light and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet-smelling incense. All the Israelite men and women who were eager to contribute something for the work that the LORD had commanded Moses to do brought it as a spontaneous gift to the LORD.

Exodus 35:21-29

*We give you thanks, O God, that out of all of the ways
you choose to be made known, you choose to work
through us, as imperfect as we are.*

When I pray publicly, I pray this one line more often than any other because I never cease to be amazed that God chooses to work through us to convince the world of the reality of God's love. Even as

I write these words I am full of awe. Who am I? Who are you that the One who created the universe, the One who did not grasp equality with God but who left heaven and chose the path of suffering, and the One who breathes new life into hopeless situations, would say, "I choose to be made known through you." And yet, Scripture conveys this astoundingly amazing message to each of us. God wants to work in and through us individually and collectively. God is counting on us to let the world know that God exists and that God cares.

The Israelites who provided the supplies to build the tent of meeting, the place where God would meet with them, gave joyfully and generously because they were amazed and grateful that God had rescued them and chosen them to be a light to the world. Read into the next chapter (Exodus 36:3-7) and you will see that they gave with such excitement and such eagerness that Moses had to command them to quit bringing gifts!

Every church I have been a part of has carried out a stewardship emphasis in order to raise funds for ministry. After the team communicates the ways in which the church is impacting and transforming lives inside and outside the congregation, sufficient funds are raised, but it always requires quite a bit of intentionality and effort. As a pastor, it is hard for me to imagine commanding people to quit giving because they are giving so extravagantly! However, Exodus shows us that those who fully grasp how amazing it is that God wants to work in and through them will be led to give excitedly, eagerly, and extravagantly.

As I have grown in my understanding of how God works through my gifts, my attitude to giving has shifted. I no longer give out of obligation or guilt; I give because I am in awe that God chooses to work

in and through me. I invite you to consider the following questions prayerfully:

- When I look at the world, what tugs at my heart strings?
- What injustice angers me?
- What need is God calling me to help meet?
- How might God use what I offer to change the world—to feed those who are hungry, to comfort those who are hurting, to offer hope to those who are despairing?
- How will I share the assets with which God has entrusted me?
- Does knowing that God is trusting me to help convince the world of the reality of God's love influence how I feel about giving?

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