

pray . fast . give .



Living Lent | Day 6

## Sacrifice = Generosity

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***"Now we make known to you, brothers and sisters, the grace of God given to the churches of Macedonia, that during a severe ordeal of suffering, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in the wealth of their generosity. For I testify, they gave according to their means and beyond their means. They did so voluntarily."***

***II Corinthians 8: 1-3 NET***

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### **Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:**

What does it mean to be generous? There are several definitions in the dictionary, but one applicable to this Bible verse is "willing to give or share." One example of generosity is if you have two pieces of candy, and before you eat, you notice your friend looking at you with empty hands. If you offer him one, you are generous.

What about the word "sacrifice"? That means the act of giving up something for the sake of a more important or pressing need. An example of this is baseball, in a tight game, where the opposing pitcher is good, and your team has had trouble scoring. The batter ahead of you hits a double and is on second base. Your coach may signal you to lay down a sacrifice bunt to move the runner to third base so that he might more easily score on a fly ball or ground ball. You give up your chance to hit by bunting. You sacrifice for the good of the team!

In our Bible verse, the Corinthians were not rich, but they were much better off than their Christian brothers in Jerusalem. Their brothers in Jerusalem were going hungry and without sufficient clothing. They were not simply without a piece of candy or a second helping of mashed potatoes; they were going to

bed hungry every night and without a blanket for their beds. Can you imagine what this must've been like?

Paul calls the people in the Bible verse brothers and sisters. They were from Corinth, a prosperous trading city in southern Greece. Most Corinthians were doing pretty well compared to the folks in Macedonia or northern Greece. When the Macedonians heard about their Christian brothers' plight in Jerusalem, they reached deep down in their pockets for an offering, giving generously, even sacrificially. The Macedonians likely skipped a few meals and sold their extra blankets. Perhaps they gave up their only blanket and shared one with the brother. Their giving was beyond generous. They gave up their food and comfort for the health and welfare of a brother in Christ that they had never met in person. Yes, indeed, they gave sacrificially. Paul used the example of the Macedonians to encourage the Corinthians to give generously and sacrificially.

To be generous doesn't always refer to money or the extra candy bar to share. Generosity can also mean to be seen in our behavior towards others. We can be kind and friendly to others, especially those who may be lonely and lack friends.

We can be sacrificially generous when we offer our friendship and company to those who don't appreciate it or who are hurtful to us in return in our offer a charity. It's easy to be generous of our time and company to those who are nice and friendly. It is sacrificially generous to stay friendly to the unfriendly. After all, Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice, even to those who rejected or ignored Him. Jesus' laying down his life for us, on the cross, in obedience to his Father's will was the ultimate act of sacrificial generosity.

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### **Challenge to Prayer and the Exercise of the Privilege of Generosity**

**As you pray and sacrifice throughout this Lenten Journey, will you take this opportunity to pay forward in generosity a gift of at least \$1 per day throughout the 40 days for the Children of Morningstar? It is a privilege and a blessing to give as we all look forward to Easter and the Resurrection.**

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### **Contributor**

Ed Cawthon, Pine Harbor area of McIntosh County, is retired from the maritime industry and is husband to MaryAnne. He is a Deacon and Member of the Shellman Bluff Church, where he teaches Sunday School for Senior men and avidly supports Summer Bible School for children and families. He has been a dedicated supporter of the Children of Morningstar, having been on campus and supporting the Ministry financially. He is aware that the generosity and

sacrifice that he may make to the Children of Morningstar could never match that of His Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but is a blessing indeed!

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