



Date: **12-7-08**

Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Giving to God Series, Lesson 31

Lesson Title: Give Gifts Daily – Make It a Habit

Take Home Point: Clothe yourself in daily habits of giving.

Warm-Up:

When I was in college, money was usually very scarce. I remember one Sunday morning when there really was almost no food in the house with several days remaining until payday. As I was leaving church after worship, a friend and his wife asked me how I was doing. I half-jokingly told them I was going home to peanut butter on a knife. I had breakfast cereal but no milk. We had a good laugh and I went home to have my lunch. As I was getting the peanut butter jar down from the shelf, I heard a knock at the door. There stood my friend and his wife! They had followed me home without my knowing it. He handed me a \$20 bill. "Here," he said, "go buy some groceries." I have never forgotten their kindness and their willingness to act on it in generous, thoughtful giving.

Read: Colossians 3:12

Observation (What happened?):

What is God's perspective of his chosen people?

With what attitudes are we to clothe ourselves as God's people?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why does God consider us to be holy and dearly loved?

What do you think it means to "clothe" ourselves with these characteristics?

Insight:

It is interesting that all the characteristics Paul lists are internal. Nothing he tells us to clothe ourselves with are actions; they are attitudes. Paul is telling us that our heart is where it all starts. How we think and how we choose to let God fill our hearts and minds determines our approach to the rest of humanity. A heart that is filled with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience is a heart ready to give. A giving heart looks at the need and says, "I can give. I want to give. I will give." Giving that pleases God is the outflow of a Spirit-filled heart. As Paul writes in Galatians 5:22-23, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."*(NIV) The habit of giving especially helps us in two ways. First, it helps us remember who is the true owner and giver of all we have. We are only stewards of God's property. Second, it helps us not get too attached to the things of this world. By giving them away, we acknowledge that God is in our hearts; and our time or possessions are not ours for eternity, but temporary assets for God's use in this world.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What are you doing to fill your life with these characteristics of God himself?

Pray for the children in your small group to desire to be filled with these characteristics.

Kingdom Quest year 2