

## Daily Bible Reading Schedule The Golden Thread

**September 18 – Proverbs 11:3; 12:5, 15; 15:22; 16:1-4, 9, 25, 33; 21:5; 27:1**

Today's readings deal with the subject of how do we receive guidance from God, or how find out from God what he wants us to do. No matter how hard you search the Bible there are many questions in life that we have that the Bible doesn't speak to directly. We know we need guidance to help us make right decisions, but we are not always sure how to get God's guidance in these matters.

The thing we must understand about God's guidance is that God gives us freedom to choose and make decisions for many areas of our lives, but then God takes our choices and works them out in his perfect plan so his will is accomplished no matter what we decide.

Look at Proverbs 21:5. What does this Proverb teach us? If we are diligent, if we think strategically, if we plan, our lives will go much better than if we are just hasty and impulsive in our decision making. God has given us brains and he expects us to use them to plan and live our lives. God has given us immense freedom to make decisions about what we are to do with our lives.

But then look at Proverbs 16:33. Casting lots was a way people made decisions during Old Testament times. It was basically like flipping a coin, and look what the writer of Proverbs says; God determines whether it is heads or tails. It's not random, it's not chance it's determined by God. Every little detail down to a coin flip is ordained and controlled by God. Most of us don't have a God that big, but we should, because that is the God of the Bible—a God who is in control of even the smallest details.

We are free, but we are in the hands of God. Our brains can't hold those two thoughts together. They seem incompatible. We go to the extremes and we think that either we are in complete control or we are just puppets in the hands of God, but neither of those is the case.

Look at Proverbs 16:1 and 16:9. God allows us the freedom to plan and make choices, but God takes our freedom to choose and then works his plan through our choices. God is the one who is directing history. We make the choices, but God determines the outcome of the choices.

Do you see how practical this is? If you believe that everything is fixed no matter what you do—that your destiny is controlled—then you will have a life that is very boring, you'll be passive, cynical and indifferent. You'll think what does it matter what I do? What's the difference? I can't change anything. On the other hand, if you really believe that every choice you make determines your destiny and you are in complete control, that should make you so scared you never want to get out of bed in the morning, because what if you mess it up?

What the Bible teaches is that we are completely free to choose, and therefore we have to be responsible and we should work hard and plan well. But the Bible also teaches us that God uses our choices to accomplish his plan so we can't screw it up, because God is in control.

Many times, though, God exercises his control over our lives in ways that aren't obvious to us. Look at Proverbs 16: 4. This verse tells us that even evil things and bad things are part of God's plans.

Proverbs 16: 3 tells us that in order to get God's guidance we must be willing to commit everything to him. If you read it carefully what the verse is really saying is "commit everything you do to the Lord and if you do that you will be a person who makes wise plans."

To get a better sense of what this verse really means we have to think about what that word commit meant in the original Hebrew language it was written in. In the original Hebrew, the word that we translate as commit really means to roll over onto—to put all your weight on something.

In other words, what this verse is saying to us is that we must learn how to radically, completely and unconditionally trust God with everything, and if we do that we will be a person who makes wise plans. To make wise plans we have to roll everything over onto God.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus rolled everything over onto God. What you will, when you will, how you will. What happened to Jesus on the cross was horrible, but it was God's plan to save us. That's why Paul calls the cross the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1: 20-25).

Do you want to talk about God using evil to accomplish his plans? Look at the cross. In the midst of all of that evil Jesus rolled everything over onto God. Here's my life do with it what you want, accomplish your purpose, carry out your plan. And by doing that Jesus paid the ultimate price and purchased God's guidance for each one of us.

**September 19 – Proverbs 12:25; 13:12; 14:10, 13, 30; 15:4, 13-14; 16:2, 18:4.**

One of the hardest things for us to control is our inner being. So often we are just helpless when it comes to dealing with ourselves and what we feel inside. When we get down and when our spirits get crushed it is hard for us to snap out of it.

There is nothing more important than maintaining and taking care of our inner spirit. If we are not right inside of ourselves nothing is going to be right in our lives. Look at Proverbs 18:14, whatever experience you are going through in life, if your attitude is bad, because your spirit is crushed it makes things so much worse.

There are 5 things that we see in these Proverbs that can crush our spirits. The first one is found in Proverbs 14:30. There a lots of passions that can

work on our emotions that cause us to be emotionally unhealthy. Things like anger, envy, jealousy, worry and fear can work away at our inner life to the point where they take a toll on our physical well being.

Look at Proverbs 12:25. What this verse says is that an inner spirit that is in turmoil weighs you down, it literally makes you feel like you are sinking. That is why we need each other. When we are sinking we need a kind word from someone who cares to lift us up.

But there is also moral aspect that can take a toll on our inner spirits. Look at Proverbs 28:1. What did Adam and Eve do right after they sinned by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge? They ran and they tried to hide from God. Moral failure, and the guilt that comes from it, throws our inner spirit into turmoil. Our moral failures and our guilt can quickly crush our spirits, and the problem is most of us have something to feel guilty just about all the time. Even when we haven't done anything wrong we still have this floating guilt that seems to hover over our lives making us feel that things just aren't right. In order for our inner spirits to be whole we need for the guilt we feel to be dealt with.

But we don't only suffer from floating guilt we also suffer from a feeling of floating doom. Look at Proverbs 14:13. The way this verse has been translated from the original Hebrew makes it sound like it is possible that joy may end in grief and the heart may ache in laughter—like the tears of a clown. But most commentators see this as an absolute statement “Joy will end in grief and in laughter the heart still aches.” What does that mean? To be blunt it means we all know that sooner or later the party is going to end. If you are enjoying a vacation you know sooner or later it has to come to an end. If you love your work you know that sooner or later you won't be able to work any more. Even in laughter our hearts are sad. Joy will end in grief.

And there is one last thing that will crush our spirits and that is unfulfilled dreams. Look at Proverbs 15: 13, and 13:12. When the Bible talks about your heart it is talking about the things you are living for. It's talking about your desires. When your dreams fail and your desires go unfulfilled your heart aches and your spirit is crushed.

On top of all of this Proverbs 14: 10 also teaches us that most times we are on our own when we are trying to deal with our hearts. No other person really understands the pain we feel inside. In fact, as we read in Proverbs 16:2 sometimes we don't even understand why our hearts are so weighted down. Only God really knows what is going on in our hearts, only God can look into the very depths of our souls, and ultimately God is the only one who can fix our crushed spirits.

If God is someone you just simply believe in, if you don't really have a relationship with God you are utterly alone. You are on your own, and you can't fix yourself because even you don't understand what is going on in your own heart.

The secret to healing your crushed spirit is found in the tree of life. To understand our deepest desire we have to understand the tree of life. The tree of life is found in Genesis 2:9 at the beginning of the Bible. When God put Adam and Eve in the Garden and the Garden was filled with all kinds of trees that they could eat from, including the tree of life. But of course we also know there was one tree that they couldn't eat from and that was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

When Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil God not only drove them from the garden but he set an angel with a flaming sword to keep them from ever being able to eat from the tree of life.

Most of the time when we talk about the tree of life we talk about it terms of giving us the ability to live forever, but its much more than that. What good is it to live forever if you never have the deepest desire of your heart? When the Bible talks about the tree of life it is talking about a life that is not only eternal it is full of everything we need to satisfy our deepest desires.

When you get to the very last chapter at the end of the Bible in the Revelation 22 we find the tree of life mentioned once again. Once again it is at the center of everything. The curse has been removed and once again those who have washed their robes are able to enjoy all of its benefits.

**Revelation 22:14** *Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life.*

The only other time the tree of life is mentioned in the Bible is here in Proverbs 13:12. We spend our whole lives looking for that tree of life. Believe it or not the tree of life is the deepest desire of your life. It's what you are looking for every day. That one thing that will make your life complete and meet your deepest need.

If you want to find the tree of life you have to look in the right place. You have to go to another tree. In the New Testament, the writers talk about Jesus being hung on a tree, and that seems like a funny way to describe the cross. Why did the writers refer to the cross as a tree? In the Garden, God told Adam and Eve to obey me about the tree and you will live. But they disobeyed. Centuries later in a different Garden God told his son Jesus to obey him about the tree. God told Jesus if you obey me they will live. And so Jesus the obedient son went to the tree and was crucified, and he was crushed for us, so that our crushed spirits could be renewed.

### **September 20 – Proverbs 3:11-12; 20:20; 22:15; 23:22-25**

God's love for us is never conditional, if it was we would constantly be in the wood shed. But God also isn't going to just sit there and affirm us and tell us we are good when we are not. The God we see in the Bible is a God who loves us and delights in us as his children, but does not let us continue in our sin.

Look at Proverbs 3:12. The God we see in the Bible sets a standard for us to live by, disciplines us according to that standard, but delights in us and loves us throughout the whole process. Throughout the whole course of our lives God is training us so that we can be all that he has created us to be. In a very real sense, that is the role of a parent, isn't it? To train the child so that can grow up and become all that they were created to be.

Look at Proverbs 22: 6 and 15. The goal of discipline is to train, and God uses discipline in our lives to train us and make us wise in the way we should live our lives. Look at what the writer of Proverbs is saying the purpose of the rod of discipline is. It is to drive folly from the heart of a child. Folly is the exact opposite of wisdom, and children are naturally filled with folly. Children are naturally unwise. They must be taught wisdom. Children are foolish and think the world revolves around them. They are self centered and therefore they are out of touch with reality, and discipline is needed to bring them back to reality to make them wise.

To understand the phrase rod of discipline we must understand the words rod and discipline. In the Bible, the rod is a symbol of authority, and to discipline means to coach or to train. So, what this verse is really saying is that parents have been given authority by God to train their children, and they need to use that authority. It doesn't necessarily mean you have to beat your child in order to discipline them. God treats each of us as individuals and uses different things in each of our lives to train us.

How children are to respond to their parents is found in Proverbs 23: 22. I want you to focus on that word despise. When we think of despise we think in terms of not liking or hating something, but in the original language this verse was written in the word for despise means to hold in low esteem or regard. In other words, it is the opposite of honoring something. The word honor is the Hebrew word "kabod" and it means to give glory to. It is the same kind of glory we are called to give to God.

As God's children, no matter what is going on in our lives, we are called to glorify God at every moment in every situation, whether we like what God is doing or not.

A parent's role is to appropriately train and discipline their child so they become wise and the child's role is to honor their parents no matter what. Neither of those is easy to do, but we have a perfect example to follow as we look at how God the Father and Jesus the Son interacted with each other. A lot of times we think that Jesus just appeared on the scene and had it all figured out, after all he is God. But the Bible teaches us that when Jesus took on flesh and became human he was just like us. Jesus needed to be trained, to be disciplined, not because he was bad, Jesus never sinned, but so that he could become wise and become what the Father wanted him to be.

**Hebrews 5:7-9** *During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. <sup>8</sup> Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered <sup>9</sup> and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation.*

Think of that, the Son of God, the Son of Man had to learn obedience through suffering. If Jesus had to learn obedience how much more do we need to learn it? Everything that Jesus went through while he was here on earth was designed by the Father to discipline the Son to train the Son, so that he could be the perfect sinless, obedient sacrifice for our sin. Throughout Jesus' life the Father worked on Jesus' heart to shape it, to make it wise, so that when that moment of decision came for Jesus, and he had to decide, do I go to the cross for them, or walk away and live for myself, he was able to make the wise choice. The choice that saved us from our sins.

God is working to accomplish the same purpose in each of our lives to shape our hearts. The main difference between Jesus and each one of us is that Jesus was an obedient son allowing the Father to work on his heart and accomplish his will—even to the point of death—and each one of us are rebellious resisting and questioning everything the Father brings into our lives.

**Proverbs 3:11-12** *My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, <sup>12</sup> because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.*

God disciplines and trains us because he loves us and delights in us as his children. Don't despise that discipline. Honor it like Jesus did, allow God's discipline to shape you and train you into what he wants you to be. The cross wasn't just a rod of discipline for Jesus it is a rod of discipline for each one of us. God doesn't have to beat us with the cross, all he has to do is show it to us and we are reminded at once of the folly of our sin and the great love of our Father.

**September 21 – Proverbs 10:18; 11:12; 17:9; 24:17-18; 24:28-29; 25: 21-22; 27:5-6**

We were created by God to be relational. To have a relationship with Him and with those who live around us. You can't make it in life without relationships. Whether we want to admit it or not we need other people and we need God—we can't get through life completely on our own. Because we are human and prone to make mistakes a lot of times our relationships run into difficulty. All of us struggle in our relationship to God, and we all struggle from time to time in our relationships with other people. Whether it is our marriage, our children, our friends or our co-workers sooner or later our relationships are going to run into trouble.

Why do our relationships go downhill? If we are wise people, it shouldn't surprise us that if we don't take care of our relationships they are going to go

downhill fast. Our relationships are in constant need of repair, because of the kind of people we are. Because of our sinfulness each of us has a desire deep down inside of us to try to get what we want for ourselves and there are always people in our way keeping us from getting those things.

**James 4:1-2** *What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it the whole army of evil desires at war within you? <sup>2</sup> You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous for what others have, and you can't possess it, so you fight and quarrel to take it away from them.*

At the root of every broken relationship is the fact that the people in the relationship care more about themselves and about getting what they want for themselves than they do about the other person in the relationship.

The Hebrew word that our Bibles translate as hatred really means to wish someone ill-will—to find happiness in their unhappiness. Look at Proverbs 24:17-18. When you gloat you are rejoicing in someone else's misfortune—when their foot slips, when they step in it, you are happy. And if it is not happening, you root for it to happen, you hope for it and when they finally get their comeuppance you rejoice. Have you ever said, "Serves them right?" If you have, then you are gloating over someone else's misfortune.

According to the Bible that is what hatred really is wishing for bad things to happen to others. And what does Proverbs 10:18 say we do with that hatred? Most of the time we lie to ourselves and we try to conceal it. We hide it even from ourselves. We don't want to admit that we have a problem with the person we just want something bad to happen to them.

Now here is the problem, if just wishing someone ill will doesn't satisfy us we turn it up a notch. Look again at Proverbs 10:18. First, we try to conceal the fact that we wish the other person ill will and then we resort to slander. In the Bible slander means spreading a bad report about someone. In a sense, it is verbalizing the ill will we feel toward them without us admitting we have it.

And then if the relationship continues to spiral downward we will start to look for ways to get revenge on the other person. Look at Proverbs 24: 28 – 29. If our desire for ill will goes unchecked it will begin to twist us into the kind of people that look to get revenge on those we think have wronged us.

So what does the book of Proverbs say are the steps to repairing our relationships? The first step in repairing relationships is to have a right view of ourselves—to see ourselves as we really are. The minute we start to feel superior to someone we begin to think we have all kinds of rights over them. We think we have the right to judge them by wishing the worst for them, we also think we have the right to slander them and gossip about them, and we think we have the right to take from them whatever we want. You can't feel angry with someone unless you feel superior to them.

Look at Proverbs 11:12. The Hebrew word that is translated as judgment is really a word that refers to the inner man or the heart. So, literally what this

verse is saying in the Hebrew is a man without a heart or without a soul is one who derides his neighbor.

When we deride or speak badly about other people it shows that there is something wrong deep down inside of us. It shows that we are people who are heartless—people who have something wrong at their very core. And here is what's wrong with us. Each of us has this deep seated need to justify ourselves constantly. To make ourselves feel like we are o.k. And when someone fails us that need to be justified goes into high gear. Here's how it works. If someone lies to us we think how could they do such a thing to us? How could they betray our trust like that? As we think that we start to feel superior to them and that begins to justify in our minds our right to wish them ill, to spread bad reports about them, and to pay them back. Of course, if we lie we justify that as well; coming up with all sorts of reasons why its o.k. for us to tell a lie.

To be foolish means that we are out of touch with reality and the more we justify ourselves in situations like that the more foolish and out of touch we become with the reality of our worth (we inflate it), and the other person's worth (we devalue it), so in the end we deceive ourselves and we feel superior to them.

### **September 22 – Proverbs 10:18; 11:12; 17:9; 24:17-18; 24:28-29; 25: 21-22; 27:5-6**

The second step in repairing broken relationships is found in Proverbs 24:29. If we want to repair our broken relationships we have to stop looking for payback. Very simply we have to be willing to forgive those who have wronged us. Proverbs 17:9 tells us it is better to cover over an offense than to keep rehashing a wrong has been done to us. But that doesn't mean we just cover up a wrong and pretend like it didn't happen. Look at Proverbs 27: 5 – 6. The most unloving thing we can do to someone is to let them keep doing the wrong thing and keep going down the wrong path.

So, what does Proverbs 17:9 mean when it says to cover an offense? It means that you pay the cost of the offense. It's just like getting up from a meal in a restaurant and saying to your friends I'll cover it—I'll pay the cost. Sometimes people ask me how do you forgive someone who doesn't ask for forgiveness? The only way to do it is to act out that forgiveness by paying the cost. Paying the cost means that you don't gloat when trouble comes into the life of the person who has wronged you, but instead you hurt for them and what they are going through.

Paying the cost means that rather than repeating a matter over and over again and dwelling on it, you let it go. When the opportunity comes for you to bring it up again to yourself, somebody else, or the person who hurt you, you hold your tongue instead. Every time you hold your tongue it's going to hurt because you are paying the price, you are covering the offense, but that little act of holding your tongue is the start of acting out forgiveness.

The third step in repairing broken relationships is even harder. It's found in Proverbs 25: 21-22. When Paul quotes these verses in Romans 12:20 he adds the words "overcome evil with good." In other words, we seek to bring good to the lives of those who have wronged us. Rather than wishing them ill will, rather than spreading bad reports about them, rather than seeking vengeance against them, we do our best to bring good into their lives—to meet them at their point of deepest need.

People won't listen to the hard things you have to say to them unless they know that you love them, and you show that love to them.

**Galatians 6:1** *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.*

Confrontation will bring reconciliation but only when it is done in humility and love. In the gospel, we see Jesus do all of these things for us as he seeks to reconcile our relationship to God. We see Jesus humble himself and become like us, we see Jesus cover our offense as he died on the cross for our sins, we see Jesus overcome our evil with good, and the love of Christ confronts us with our need to change our hearts to be more like him.

### **September 23 – Proverbs 3: 17-20**

Today we are going to look at the subject of justice to see how justice ties into wisdom. To start let's look at the last verse, Proverbs 29:7. On the surface this verse sounds pretty good doesn't it? Well of course righteous people care about others and wicked people only care about themselves. Do you see that word care in this verse? In Hebrew it means a lot more than just to care. The word care is a translation of the Hebrew word "yada." Yada means more than just having some concern for something. Yada means to care passionately and deeply about something. So what Proverbs 29:7 is telling us is that righteous people care passionately about justice for the poor. It is not just a passing fancy it is a consuming passion. It's not just saying "that's too bad" when something happens to someone. It's rolling up your sleeves and entering straight into the mess to help them sort it out.

The heart of a wise life is caring deeply about mercy and justice for the poor and the oppressed.

Look at Proverbs 3:17-18. The her and the she in these verses refer to wisdom, so verses 17 and 18 tells us wisdom leads to being blessed and to peace. In our vocabulary, we have lost the meaning of blessed and peace. When someone says it blessed me, or I have peace it just means I liked it or it made me feel good or it made me feel calm.

But in the Hebrew language these words blessed and peace are very closely related and they are very powerful words. To get an idea of what these words mean we have to understand the meaning of the Hebrew word shalom. Shalom is a word that has made it into our English language but we

really don't understand it. A lot of times shalom is equated to peace, but it is much more than that.

To understand shalom better let's look at Proverbs 3:19 - 20. Verses 19 and 20 tell us God created world in wisdom. So the world is not a hodgepodge of things that have just been randomly thrown together.

In fact, Psalm 102 says that God made the heavens and earth like a fabric, and that is a key concept to help us to understand just how God created everything, what shalom is, and why we need justice.

A piece of fabric has lots of individual threads in it. But a piece of fabric isn't just a pile of threads piled or thrown together. To have a piece of fabric all of those loose threads have to be interwoven together. Each thread has to go over under around and through to make a fabric that is beautiful and strong.

God didn't make world by just throwing a lot of things together. No, he wove it together and made everything interdependent—knit and webbed together, and that interdependence and working together is what the Bible calls Shalom. So, you can see where the idea of peace comes from with everything working together in harmony, but its meaning is much richer than that.

But eventually as fabric gets older it starts to lose its shalom—its interwovenness and it starts to fray and deteriorate.

For most of us when we were young our bodies had shalom. Everything felt good, everything worked, but as we get older, or injured, or sick things start to breakdown and unravel, and finally death unravels everything completely. You might say we lose shalom physically.

The same is true for our inner being. We have a conscience, emotions, and reason, and when they all work together and they are all on the same page we feel good, and we have inner shalom. But when one of those things goes out things unravel internally for us, and we end up with anxiety, inner conflict, meaninglessness—we lose shalom.

The same is true in our social structures, whether it's a community or a church. When everyone is working together and caring for each other you have shalom. When you experience community like that it is really something special. It's what I want one of the marks of Meadow Creek to be. Lots of groups are just loose threads of people but when everyone is really woven together its beautiful and durable fabric. When everyone lives for themselves you lose shalom, and everybody become just individual threads again.

Shalom is what God in wisdom made the world for. Shalom means more than just peace. Biblical shalom is the way God webbed together himself, humans and all creation in fulfillment and delight of one another. Shalom is the way world ought to be. Shalom was in the Garden of Eden before the

curse of sin. The whole reason Jesus had to come and be born in a manger and die on the cross was because shalom was lost when Adam and Eve sinned. Things began to unravel.

The work of justice is to go into places where world is unraveling and inject yourself—your time, your money, and your talents into the lives of those that society has left behind. The work of justice is to bring shalom by restoring the broken and making the crooked straight.

That is what Jesus did when he came. He injected himself into our world to bring justice. He wove himself into our lives to bring us shalom. Listen to what Jesus told those who came to see if he was really the messiah:

**Matthew 11:5** *The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.*

Jesus came to bring shalom, and he did it by weaving himself into the lives of those around him, and he ultimately did it when he gave up his life so that God's justice could be satisfied, so that we could have shalom—with God, with ourselves and with each other.

### **September 24 – Proverbs 3: 27-32**

Yesterday, we saw that God made the world for shalom, and we saw how Jesus came to bring shalom to our lives and to our world. But because Jesus has woven our lives back together, we are called to do the same. As you read Proverbs 3:27-28, we see that we are not to withhold good from those that deserve it.

In these verses good does not mean just being nice. It means your tangible goods, your stuff—your money, food, tools, whatever your neighbor needs (housing, college education, food, hurricane relief, anything). If you have the power it is your responsibility to share and weave your life into other lives to bring good to them to bring justice and mercy to them.

Justice is not just going to court to get something fixed. Justice is each one of us realizing that we are not just a thread next to all other threads. We are part of the fabric, and when you see other people falling out of the fabric—people who don't have goods and are told to fend for themselves it is our responsibility to thread ourselves into their lives. It is not just a matter of throwing some money at a problem—it is throwing all of our lives into their lives to thread them back into the fabric, because that is exactly what Jesus did for us.

Now it seems like in verses 27-28 we might have an out with the words those who are deserving. It seems like we can set some criteria and give our help only to those who deserve it. But that's not how Jesus dealt with us. He didn't die on the cross because we deserved his help because we are such good people. Jesus died because we were undeserving. We were in spiritual poverty.

In these verses being deserving isn't talking about those who are worthy. The Hebrew word that our Bibles translate as deserve is the word "baal" and it literally means to own something. I know this is hard to swallow but what this verse is saying is that your neighbor owns your goods. It is saying your neighbor owns your goods as much as you do.

As Americans the first thing we want to say is What???? That can't be true that's communism. But it is true, and here's why. None of our stuff is ours, its all God's, and he just loans it to us to use, The reason why he loans it to us isn't so that we can have the good life—it is so we can bring shalom to others.

The Bible clearly recognizes private property—there is a commandment against stealing. But Bible also recognizes interdependence—that we are woven together and if we don't share what God has blessed us with we are not just stingy we are being unjust, and I can guarantee you that in the end you will lose whatever you are trying to hold onto.

Listen to what Jesus said in:

**Matthew 16:25-27** *For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup> What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.*

Jesus is calling us to do exactly what he has done for us. He gave up his life so we could find ours. He gave up all that he has and all that he was to become poor so that we can become rich.

**2 Corinthians 8:9** *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*