

## PEOPLE WHO HELP 4: GENEROSITY

“Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.” (Matthew 5:42, NIV)

**W**HEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU MEASURED UP YOUR OPPONENT? If you’re not a match play golfer—be it in high-level competition or games around the club—perhaps you’re thinking you’ve never done this. You know the friends you play with, and there’s no need to think one round will be much different from the next. But you may be trapped in our context here. After all, this is a golf devotional, and our illustrations almost always come from the game. So let’s go off map a bit. Remember those early days of parenthood? Physically speaking, you were the champion, a giant in the eyes of that little one. Until she started throwing food. Until he started throwing up. Until she hit “the terrible twos.” Until he started asking *why*? Each day brought fresh challenges, and you had to size up your child in a way that had nothing to do with size.

So we’ve all been there, in the place of measuring others up. And we often go there now. Let me show you where.

Likely, it happens to you as you pull to a stop at a busy intersection or you walk a big city street. There you find the panhandlers, the ones who may or may not have need. Instantly, you start the whirring little engines in your head: *Is this a druggie just looking for some cash to support his fix? Is this a swindler who makes far more money outside this fast food joint than the people working inside? Or is this an honestly needy person, with a wife and a child and no place to sleep tonight? And oh, am I even carrying any small bills?*

Generosity, especially when it comes at us with spontaneous requests, is no easy business. And then there are the words of Jesus: “Give to the one who asks.” No stipulations, no vetting, no hesitation. It’s one of those Nike commands: Just do it. How could something so simple be so hard?

If we would be counted among those who help, maybe we need to go back to the beginning and start with prayer: “Lord, help me to do what does not come naturally. Help me to be generous with everyone. Not just my grandkids. Not just those who might pay me back. Everyone.” If Jesus expects difficult things of us, surely he stands ready to help us get it done. Here he has called us to help others by giving. Let us enlist his support in prayer, then unhedgingly take up his call, for Jesus himself was among those with “no place to lay his head.”

**Opening questions** How does today’s devotion ring true in your own experience ...as a golfer? ...as a parent? ...as a person on the street? Where do you find it easy and hard to be generous?

**READING** Psalm 112:5, Proverbs 22:9, 2 Corinthians 9:9-15

**Rewards for the generous (Psalm 112, Proverbs 22)**

What promises do you find in these passages? How does this encourage your generosity?

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**Cheerful giving (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)**

In verse 11, what reason do we find for the riches God gives us? Returning to the start of the passage, how should our giving be done? What makes for a cheerful giver?

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**The reach of our generosity (2 Corinthians 9:11-15)**

Who all benefits from our generosity? What will people blessed by your generosity do? How does this motivate you to be even more generous?

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