



ROOTED IN GENEROSITY

The book "Acres of Diamonds" by Russell Conwell was first published in 1915, has been reprinted many times & is still available on Amazon. In it is the famous story of a 6-year-old girl called Hattie May Wiatt.



Hattie lived near Grace Baptist Church in Philadelphia, USA. One Sunday the church & Sunday School were full of people & she was told she could not come in because it "was too crowded." Standing outside sobbing, the church pastor, Rev Russell Conwell walked past her. He saw that she was shabby & unkempt, so he guessed this was the real reason that she was not let. Later Conwell said, "I took her up in my arms, lifted her to my shoulder & then as she held on to my head I carried her through the crowd into the Sunday school room & seated her in a chair away back in a dark corner". Hattie was so happy that he had found room for her, but she went to bed that night thinking of all the other children who had no place to worship Jesus. Two years later in 1886 Conwell was called to pray for 6-year-old Hattie who was extremely ill & subsequently died there in the dirt & poverty of her parents flat. As her body was taken out

of her bed, they found a worn, crumpled, old red purse that she had reclaimed from a bin. From that day 2 years ago when Conwell carried her into Sunday School, Hattie had been saving what little money she could get. Inside the purse was 57 cents (worth 2p today in UK) & a note scribbled in childish handwriting which read, "This is to help build the little church bigger so more children can go to Sunday School". Conwell says, "After Hattie's funeral her mother handed me the little bag with the 57 cents. I took it to the church & said we had the first gift toward our new Sunday school building, from little Hattie May Wiatt". Conwell goes on, "I then changed the 57 cents into 57 pennies & offered them for sale. I received about \$250 for the 57 pennies!" Back then that was enough to buy the new Sunday School house!

The generosity of church members & people from far away didn't stop & cheques kept flowing in, so the Wiatt Mite Society was formed to handle the money. Within 5 years the 57 cents had increased to \$250,000 (approx. £1.5 million in 2021). Today in Philadelphia that has funded Temple Baptist Church (seats 3500 people) Tmpl University with 40,000 students & the 220 bed Tmpl Hospital, plus other houses.

Each year at the AGM as we go through the TCF finances from the previous year, it is such a blessing to see the generosity of you all in supporting this work. It is never taken for granted & is much appreciated by myself & the leadership. **THANK YOU FOR BEING GENEROUS.**

Many of you also support our missionaries at various times with projects. Again your generosity is obvious. 2 Cor 9:7 says "Don't give

reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a cheerful giver". God loves your generosity!

Recently in response to political turmoil in Myanmar, without being asked, 5 people here decided to send financial gifts to our brothers & sisters out there. Despite the military govt. blocking the banking system & the internet so that there is almost no help from nor communication with the outside world, Pastor Siang was able to email us on Thurs sending their "heartfelt thanks for the love gifts [which] are really great blessings to each of us & for our ministry". Prov. 19:17 says "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, & He will repay him for his deed". God leads different people at different times to support different things in many different areas. As we do so we remember that it is impossible to outgive God. In Ps. 50:10b He says, "I own the cattle on a thousand hills". He has immeasurable riches & in His economy what we give He gives back many times over.

There are many other non-financial ways to be generous. The TCF family have been magnificent during this last covid-disrupted year with numerous practical helps given to people. In Prov. 11:25 "A generous person will prosper, whoever refreshes others will be refreshed". Your generosity is delighting the LORD.

* People have been generous with their resources, by giving clothes, shoes, food, laptops & tablets, toys.

* People have been generous with their time, shopping for the vulnerable & doing doorstep visits to encourage those on their own.

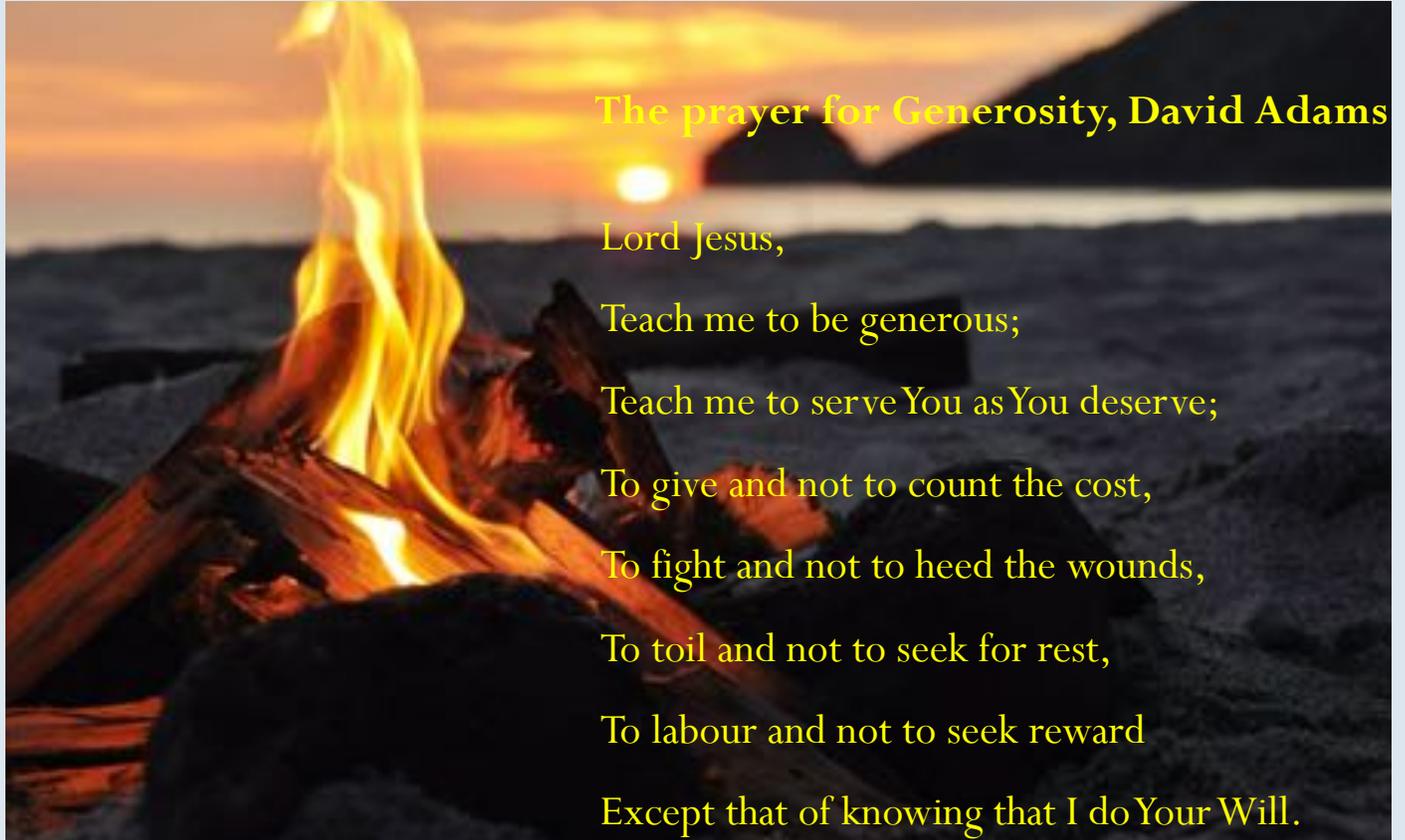
* People have been generous with their skills and abilities. For e.g. I wonder how many cakes & buns have been baked & delivered, hot meals cooked & distributed, rubbish removed & gardens manicured?

* People have been generous in their compassion – think of the many prayer requests that Ruth has emailed out, or that have come through by WhatsApp or by text, and how many people (such as Colleen during the last few weeks) have really sensed & felt the church family being generous with their love towards them during difficult times.

* People have been generous with their prayers. These are the most powerful mission prayer times we have had in 10 years & the Beacon of Light prayer for our community was fantastic. Paul from school after it commented to me "it was a pleasure & an honour" to attend it! People are praying more and more in prayer triplets, prayer circles, and WhatsApp groups.

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Those of us who read or listen to “The Bible in One Year” by Nicky Gumbel will have come across his version of Hattie May Wiat’s story recently, where he developed the idea of “*What You Give to God, He Multiplies*”. The theme of multiplication runs throughout the Bible. What cannot be achieved by addition, God does by multiplication. You reap what you sow, only many times more. What you give to the LORD, He multiplies. In Matthew 14 Jesus fed 5000 with only 5 small loaves & 2 fish, by multiplying up a simple offering. In Mark 12 & Luke 21 He valued the widow’s mite. When we are generous in times or places of scarcity God sees our personal challenge & He does amazing things, for example we love someone unconditionally despite having a difficult relationship with them, or we are patient with an impatient person, or in our busy schedule we are generous with our time. **During these our generosity of spirit shines through, which reflects Jesus’ generosity towards us all seen in John 10:10b “*I have come that you may have life to the full*”.** How generous is that, and how blessed are we to be rooted in generosity!



The prayer for Generosity, David Adams

Lord Jesus,

Teach me to be generous;

Teach me to serve You as You deserve;

To give and not to count the cost,

To fight and not to heed the wounds,

To toil and not to seek for rest,

To labour and not to seek reward

Except that of knowing that I do Your Will.

Contagious Generosity – Max Lucado

You have a ticket to heaven no thief can take.

You have an eternal home no divorce can break.

Every sin of your life has been cast into the sea.

Every mistake you've made is nailed to the tree.

You are blood-bought and heaven-made

A child of God – forever saved.

So be grateful, joyful – for isn't it true?

What you don't have is much less than what you do.