

MARCH 2025



Bible Study | Faith in Action

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Prepare

- Bible
- Journal
- Pen/pencil

Get Started

How would you define generosity? Is generosity merely giving when you have extra, or does it involve something more?

Modern Western culture is extremely individualistic, but the early church set an example of profound communal generosity we should imitate today. Believers shared their possessions and distributed their money to those in need among them even though they themselves faced struggles and persecution. Whether you have much or find yourself in a time of trouble, Christians are called to give generously to others. God gave of Himself far beyond what we deserve, and He expects His followers to share that same generous attitude toward others.

Study and Learn

• Read Acts 4:32–35.

After Jesus ascended to heaven in Acts 1, His disciples waited for the promised Counselor, who would help them live out Jesus' commission to be His witnesses to the world. At Pentecost, they experienced miraculous empowerment from the Holy Spirit, and they followed His leading as they taught and lived out the gospel in their lives. Because the Spirit was guiding them, these disciples lived in unity and displayed radical generosity that stood out in their community.

If you read the context surrounding these verses in Acts 4, you will see that the church was facing intense persecution. The Sadducees and other Jewish leaders questioned Peter and John, punishing them for healing and preaching in Jesus' name. Throughout the rest of Acts, the church witnessed people like Stephen and Paul being imprisoned and killed for their faith. The believers were not accepted by the masses, and they had to pray often for boldness to follow Christ. They were outcasts in their community, but God answered their prayers through the Spirit, who empowered them to provide for one another despite their circumstances.

The believers' generosity centered around their devotion to Christ. The apostles repeatedly reminded them of the gospel message, and they enjoyed the grace of God, celebrating their salvation by generously caring for one another. Despite their lack, and even amid persecution, the believers gave generously to all who had need.

The gospel flips our priorities upside down. No longer do we focus on furthering ourselves, but instead we live to further God's kingdom. One way we do this is by shocking the world with our generous spirits, imitating the church in Acts. When God transforms our hearts, no matter what our circumstances bring, we can confidently give to others, trusting God will provide for us in His abundance.

Apply

Make a list of needs you observe within your local church body. Can you meet any of those needs? How?

How can you organize your budget to utilize your finances to give to those in need within your community?

Follow Up

• Read **Mark 12:41–44**.

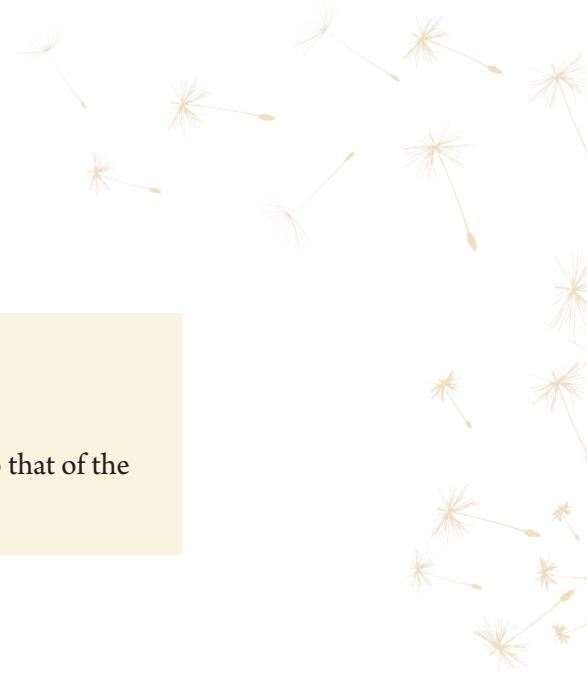
What is significant about the widow's gift? How does her generosity compare to that of the church in Acts 4?

Commit to Memory

Verse: **Acts 4:32**

Challenge: **Acts 4:32–35**

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HAYLEE COLLINS is a writer, former missionary kid, and pastor's wife in Norco, Louisiana. You can read more of her work at hayleecollins.com.



Faith in Action | Celebrate the Week of Prayer and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

By Jenee' Shearin

Participating in the Week of Prayer for North American Missions and contributing to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO) is a great way to support the work of missionaries and their loved ones. Your prayers can encourage missionaries as they navigate various challenges, seek God's favor and direction, and serve to build up His kingdom. In addition, your financial support through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering helps missionaries in various ways.

Let's look at a few ideas for getting involved this month:

myMISSION Small Group Participation

- Consider meeting for several sessions to discuss the book *Go Forward: The Story of Annie Armstrong*. Close each session with prayer using the prayer guide for the week of prayer. Select someone different to lead prayer each time.
- Challenge group members to collect donations for the AAEO. Motivate participants by setting a group donation goal. Tally your combined total at your final meeting.

Individual and Family Participation

- Take time to learn about Annie Armstrong and the importance of observing the week of prayer and AAEO.

- Hold family discussions each day after your devotion. On your own or with your family, commit to sacrifice something, such as coffee, going out to eat, or subscribing to a certain streaming service, and contribute your savings to the Easter offering.
- Host a family trivia night to test your knowledge of Annie Armstrong and the AAEO. Write trivia questions on index cards and design a game show backdrop using poster board and markers. Designate a host and game participants.
 - Incorporate time for individual or family prayer concerning the designated missionaries during the week of prayer.

Helpful Resources

- *Go Forward: The Story of Annie Armstrong*: wmu.com or wmustore.com
- North American Mission Board Missionary Prayer Guide: anniearmstrong.com/week-of-prayer
- AAEO resources and information about Annie Armstrong: wmu.com/annie
- How AAEO works: anniearmstrong.com/your-gifts-at-work

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