Chapter 16
The Grace of Giving

Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing.
—Jesus (Luke 6:38, The Message)

… When someone has been given much, much will be required in return …
—Jesus (Luke 6:38)

I was really stingy when I was a kid. Penny pinching didn't even come close to defining me; I hoarded my money and refused to spend a single cent of it until there was something I *really* wanted. When I received God's grace for salvation, I slowly began to change my miserly ways. I *wanted* to start giving. My hard heart started to break open and I learned to share my time, energy and money to help others. I began to see that sharing my resources was just one way of responding to the lavish love of God. After a few decades of knowing times of want and times of plenty, I have learned that there is a direct connection between giving away money and living with integrity.

King David sheds light on this idea. After the collection of the offering for the construction of Solomon's temple, King David addressed the assembly and said:

> I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. O Lord … keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you (1 Chr 29:17-18).

Giving our money to the work of God is an expression of our loyalty to Him. He watches to see how we will use our money, the results being a test of our integrity. All our inner and invisible commitments, priorities and loyalties are manifest in our outer, concrete actions. As pastor of the Corinthian church, Paul brings up the subject of giving, " … to test the sincerity … " (2 Cor 8:8) of their love. This kind of integrity was what Jesus was getting at when he told the Samaritan woman about "worship in spirit and truth."

Giving is an act of worship, an expression of our confidence in Him. In giving, we acknowledge that God is the source of every good thing. We surrender power as we surrender money. We cross over a line between the material and spiritual world, understanding that there is spiritual significance in our material gifts that will reap a spiritual reward for us.

So, yes, giving matters. Generosity is important. Materialism is probably the most powerful idol that threatens my authenticity as a Christian and I believe the same is also true for the church at large.

Part of the power of giving lies in the fact that it is a slap in the face to the god "mammon." As we give, we crush an altar of idolatry. In giving, we demonstrate in a practical way our belief that " … Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Rev 5:12). When we give willingly and joyfully, we dethrone materialism and participate in the generous heart of God.

Billy Graham said, "If a person gets his attitude toward money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area of his life."[1] Jesus knew what he was talking about; it really is true that we can't serve God and money. So if we get the love of money thing taken care of (which for me is a daily choice) it helps us put everything else in order. Giving helps me remember that God owns everything, including my body. It reminds me "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it … " (Ps 24:1). It puts back before my eyes the fact that I am like a flower, quickly fading in this world, here today and gone tomorrow to a better place. Giving helps me set my mind on heavenly things where Christ is seated.

Once again, grace is at the center

I've tried in this book to keep coming back around to the theme of grace. On the subject of giving, the bells of grace ring loud and clear throughout the New Testament. God's grace saves us, and it also empowers us. Paul continually emphasizes the fact that giving is made possible by God's grace, by his help. It isn't our heroic action. It's just an act of submission to God's enabling.

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church we see him provoking the readers to generosity toward the poor church in Jerusalem. He points to the example of the generous Macedonian church to encourage the Corinthians to give. "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity" (2 Cor 8:2). Many have taken the view that the Macedonians were a poor church, but their "severe trial" may have been temporary.[2] Whether they were always poor or not, they were very eager to give despite the severe trial they were undergoing. How can "overflowing joy" and "extreme poverty" co-exist except in the hearts of those who have been touched by the great Giver?

"They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem" (2 Cor 8:4 NLT). The Macedonians saw giving as a "privilege." That's the heart of Christian giving. They weren't caving in to a heavy-handed preacher who was laying guilt trips on God's flock. They "begged" for the chance to give. They gave joyfully and freely. In the next chapter, Paul emphasizes this point again, "You must

each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. 'For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.'" (2 Cor 9:7 NLT).

This sense of privilege in giving echoes the heart of David, who prays: "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand" (1 Chr 29:14). David felt humbled and privileged to be able to give. He really understood that *everything*—every possession—was a gift from God. He knew that God had entrusted him with possessions and it was his privilege and responsibility to give generously. David was acknowledging the great Giver by giving something back to him.

David's prayer: "Who am I to be able to give as generously as this?" indicates a posture of humility, a lack of pride. Worship and pride are opposites; if my attitude is "I deserve what I have because I've worked for every penny of it," I am ignoring my creator-God and exalting myself. This is selfish pride. If I take all the credit for my hard-earned money, I am boasting in my wisdom, power and riches. God warned the Hebrews to avoid this attitude: "You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me'" (Deut 8:17). This attitude prevails when we are blind to our Source and Sustainer.

Sharing

Paul was a tremendous example of a man from a well-to-do family who poured out his life for the benefit of the less fortunate. He was in "the top few percent in his society in terms of level of education."[3] The chances are that Paul was … at home in more prosperous levels of society."[4] Despite his elite education and position in society he worked hard as a tent-maker while simultaneously pastoring and planting churches. "In everything I did, I showed you that by *this kind of hard work* we must *help the weak,* remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35, emphasis added).

Here is a man who freely shared all of his gifts and resources—his loving concern for the churches he planted, the sweat of his brow to earn money for daily expenses, and his well-trained mind to teach his friends and co-workers.

We see Paul, a rare case of a Jew who was also a Roman citizen, laying down his privileged position in society to serve the needs of people in every socio-economic category. He followed the example of Jesus by taking a downward step to make others rich in faith, explaining his actions with the words "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" (2 Cor 8:9).

The second chapter of Acts is one of my favorites in the Bible. We see what happens when real revival comes. The result is a riveting revelation of the Lord's goodness, a

depiction of believers who experience a deep day-to-day community as they eat with one another and worship together, sharing not just their resources but also a sense of an awesome reverence of God that pervades the community.

All of these characteristics of revival flow out of the work of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Peter said "repent … be baptized … and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38) and it is true that there is a direct connection between receiving the Holy Spirit and sharing material goods. "What we do or do not do with our material possessions is an indicator of the Spirit's presence or absence."[5]

Paul encourages the well-off Corinthian church to share with the needy church in Jerusalem, " … that there might be equality" (2 Cor 8:13). We see the same idea in Acts 2, where "All the believers were together and had everything in common" (Acts 2:44). Out of the overflow of love and community, the believers wanted to help one another by sharing their goods.

In this letter "Paul is not enunciating the ideal of some fully egalitarian communism. But he does recognize that there are extremes of wealth and poverty, which are intolerable in the Christian community. If those who are better off will simply provide from their surplus, all of the most basic human needs of the more impoverished will be met."[6]

"The term used for 'giving' in this New Testament context is not the typical Greek word for making a gift. Instead the New Testament adopts the Greek word *koinonia,* which means 'sharing.' As Christians shared life in Christ, their family relationship was expressed by a sharing of financial and material resources."[7]

Generosity is one of the keys to real "koinonia." When we freely give, we're freed from the prison of isolation and we share the joy of friendship in Christ. I'm not financially needy, but when my friends support my ministry, I feel more deeply connected to them. Sharing our things and time with one another builds unity. The strata of socio-economic classes disappear. Generosity, and the unity it fosters, is a spiritual-social phenomenon.

Here is a wonderful story of the interplay between the spirit of generosity, the gathering of the community and conversion to Christ—a twentieth century Acts 2 episode:

> "Dr. Truett of Texas was invited to a church that was raising $6,500 to dedicate a church building. After $3,500 had been promised, the offerings ceased. Then a plainly-dressed woman arose and spoke to her husband who was taking the names. "Charley, I wonder if you would be willing to give our little cottage, just out of debt. We were offered $3,500 for it yesterday. Would you be willing to give our little house for Christ that His house may be free?" The fine fellow responded in

> the same high spirit: "Jennie, dear, I was thinking of the same thing." Then looking up at Truett with his face covered with tears, he said, "We will give the $3,500."
>
> Then there followed a scene beggaring all description. Men and women sobbed aloud, and almost in a moment the $3,500 was provided. Then without invitation there came down the aisle men and women, saying, "Sir, where is the Saviour, and how can we find him?"[8]

In this story, one couple's generous gift provoked others to give. This is yet another example of the great benefits of gathering together for worship. Gathering together for worship helps us "spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Heb 10:25). Dr. Truett's story also shows us the evangelistic effect of radical giving in response to the Holy Spirit's urging. If an unbeliever sees such a thing, they sense something genuine and powerful is motivating the act, and they take another step closer to Jesus.

Erwin McManus gives a wonderful description of the spirit of generosity as compared to greed:

> While the greedy see the world with limited resources, the generous always operate from an abundance mentality. The greedy take measures to ensure they will never be without; the generous give without fear … The generous invest their lives in the prosperity of others … They have discovered that life is most enjoyed when we give ourselves away … The generous give more than their things; they genuinely give themselves.
>
> Generosity is love in action, and love is measured in giving, not taking. The generous … engage every dimension of human experience from a dramatically different vantage point. Their agenda is always to make a contribution. They are committed to leaving every encounter having given more than they have taken. They are investors rather than consumers.[9]

I especially like Erwin's description of the "emotionally generous people:"

> You don't identify them as such; you just know you love to be around them. You enjoy their company and cannot spend too much time with them. They naturally invest through the economy of human emotion in you. You always feel as if you have received more than you have given. You're both indebted and made free by a generous giver.[10]

I think Jesus was "emotionally generous" and that's one reason people wanted to be around him. This is why everyone including tax collectors and prostitutes were attracted to him—he was emotionally generous; he freely offered friendship. He was critical mostly of the self-righteous religious people.

Eating Together

I'm so glad that eating is a regular practice of the church! Luke describes the scene after Pentecost where they " … met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity" (Acts 2:46 NLT). Sharing the food of our table is love in action. This simple gift of our time and food conveys love and builds friendship. It's a way of honoring and serving our friends.

Many years ago, Bishop Hughes of the Congregational church in Boston described a certain deacon who said to himself:

> I cannot speak in a prayer meeting, I cannot do many other things in Christian service, but I can put two extra plates on my dinner table every Sunday and invite two young men who are away from home to break bread with me.

"He went along doing that for more than thirty years. He became acquainted with a great company of young men who were attending that church, and many of them became Christians through his personal influence.

"When he died he was to be buried in Andover, thirty miles distant, and because he was a well-known merchant, a special train was chartered to convey the funeral party. It was made known that any of his friends among the young men who had become Christians through his influence would be welcomed in a special car set aside for them. One hundred and fifty of them came and packed that car from end to end in honor of the memory of the man who had preached to them the gospel of the extra dinner plate."[11]

God does not ask most of us to preach or speak eloquently among a large group of people. But this deacon steadily invited two guests to dinner each Sunday and eventually saw a great harvest. Most of us can share a meal with a friend or two, bringing a lasting impact of God's love.

Simplicity

In the stories and scriptures we've just looked at we see the *inward* attitude of simplicity expressed in an *outward* lifestyle of simplicity. In matters of worship, we always start from the inside and work outwards. Living with the discipline of simplicity creates the right orientation for a life of freedom and generosity, not just with our money but also with our time and talents.

Richard Foster shares three basic attitudes of simplicity:

1. what we have we receive as a gift,

2. what we have is to be cared for by God, and

3. what we have is available to others.[12]

If we live out these attitudes, we'll be free from anxiety about our possessions.

"Simplicity is freedom. Duplicity is bondage. Simplicity brings joy and balance. Duplicity brings anxiety and fear."[13] These simple statements are loaded with profound meaning; they ring so true with my spirit but it's still a challenge for me to walk out these principles moment-by-moment. I haven't yet detached myself from my possessions enough to be totally free of anxiety. I haven't yet gotten rid of all of my stinginess and I sometimes find in myself a reluctance to let other people use my stuff, hanging on to it too tightly. When my behavior doesn't line up with what I believe, there is duplicity. Not letting people use my things is incongruous and inconsistent with my stated value of sharing. "Inwardly modern man is fractured and fragmented. He is trapped in a maze of competing attachments."[14]

It is true that "knowing your purpose simplifies your life. It defines what you do and what you don't do."[15] My purpose in life is to love God with all my heart and love my neighbor. I settled on that plan a long time ago. Giving money to help others isn't a strain because it naturally flows out of my life's purpose. It feels good when my actions are congruent with my beliefs, and likewise, I don't spend very much time thinking about the next recreational or house-décor item I want to buy because that doesn't fit with my life's purpose. Sure, occasionally I buy a non-essential item, but the great majority of the time I'm focused on more important things. The peace of mind I get from living a life of purpose is worth a lot to me.

Singleness of mind and heart means we can love God, trust Him for everything and he'll take care of the rest. Real life isn't found in a frantic race of hoarding and grabbing all we can get. Following Foster's second attitude of simplicity means we won't worry about our retirement accounts, our investments, the value of our house or even the stability of our job. We should certainly be wise in managing all of these things, but ultimately we're dependent on Him. Recent economic upheaval has shown us that the stock market and value of real estate are no place to put our trust. In the end, God is sovereign and he cares for us. When we trust in God we are free to give.

After losing everything, Job realized that he was trusting in riches instead of God:

> Have I put my trust in money or felt secure because of my gold? Have I gloated about my wealth and all that I own? Have I looked at the sun shining in the skies, or the moon walking down its silver pathway, and been secretly enticed in my heart to throw kisses at them in worship? If so, I should be punished by the judges, for it would mean I had denied the God of heaven (Job 31:24-28).

Recently a friend of mine purchased an income-generating property in a U.S. city that has suffered from severe real estate devaluation. It's a good investment for my friend. Many investors are capitalizing on "buying low" with the thought of eventually "selling high." That's a wise investment strategy. After hearing about my friend's investment, I started to think about the possibility of borrowing money to buy a townhouse to rent out.

A week or two after I started entertaining that idea the Lord gave me a very brief but clear picture of myself stuffing food into my mouth. The message was clear: you don't need another investment; don't be like a person who has already had enough to eat but keeps gorging himself on more and more. I thank God for sending me those kinds of warning messages, whether they come in the form of a "picture" or a solid knowing in my heart that something is wrong. Simplicity is freedom. Simplicity brings joy and balance.

This story is also a good illustration of the error of making a legalistic system out of the use of our possessions. An investment that's right for one Christian isn't necessarily right for another. One factor here is the income level of the two people. For one person, a certain investment would be a small outlay of cash in relation to their income while for the other it would create undue financial pressure, hinder their giving, and create anxiety. Foster says that living in simplicity isn't tied to your income level: "It [living in simplicity] has nothing to do with abundance of possessions or their lack. It is an inward spirit of trust. The sheer fact that a person is living without things is no guarantee that he or she is living in simplicity."[16]

The guiding principles here are not rules and regulations. If that were so I would have reason to boast about my generosity and I'd have reason to criticize others who aren't giving. That's not the heart of grace. The guiding principle is to follow Jesus. Let his word form our behavior, and ask him to expand our hearts and acts of generosity more and more.

Money Is a Good Thing. The Love of Money Is a Bad Thing.

This leads us to the topic of the nature of money. Money in itself isn't a bad thing: "no scripture ever declares *money* as the root of all kinds of evil, but rather the *love* of, allegiance to or attachment to money in the fashion that led Jesus to declare, 'You cannot serve both God and money.'"[17]

The Bible shows that God blesses his people with material provision and rewards the generous:

> Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow (Prov 13:11).
>
> Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine (Prov 3:9-10).
>
> Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously (2 Cor 9:6).

> … Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity (Luke 6:38 *The Message*).

The overwhelming message of the Bible in regards to possessions and money is clear: don't be attached to money, and be very generous.

> And if your wealth increases, don't make it the center of your life (Ps 62:10).
>
> An overseer should not be a … lover of money (1 Tim 3:3).
>
> Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you" (Heb 13:5 NLT).
>
> But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction (1 Tim 6:9 NLT).
>
> Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world (Jas 1:27).

How Much Should We Give?

While we see a minimum of one tithe of ten percent being the standard in the Old Testament, with periodic second and even third tithes for the poor:

> As we move into the New Testament era, however, we note several important contrasts. The epistles never call for a tithe. There is no single worship center and no priesthood to be supported by the old, annual temple tithe. While giving to support individuals who minister full time is mentioned in the New Testament, no letter suggests this be done through a local tithe. The New Testament emphasizes a deep concern for the poor and needy, especially within the family of faith. Paul and others did organize offerings to be taken for those in hunger-ridden foreign lands. But the guidelines for giving that Paul laid down nowhere mentions or implies that the tithe is to be used to measure a Christian's obligation.[18]

"It seems significant that no other New Testament passage [besides Luke 11:41-42] explicitly commands [tithing], while the principles of generosity and sacrifice … will suggest that different people should give varying percentages based on their varying circumstances."[19] The story of the widow's mite—a widow who gave everything she had—shows us that God values sacrifice. Rather than giving a minimum, our hearts should be inclined towards increasing in generosity, and making sacrifices for the benefit of others.

The statistics show that rich American Christians on the whole haven't caught the vision of generosity. Wealthy Christians give a much lower percentage of their money than low-income believers. In the following survey that is many years old, the salary amounts are lower than today's levels, but the lesson is still relevant:

> The Russell Sage Foundation several years ago published the results of a survey. In the United States, families with a net income of less than $3,000 a year gave more than 60% of all the money donated to charity; families whose income was less than $5,000 donated 82% of the total; families with an income between $10,000 and $20,000 a year gave only 1.9% of their income! According to an Internal Revenue Service analysis, Americans who itemize their deductions give less than 3% of their adjusted gross incomes to church and charity.[20]

While there are many generous American Christians, on the whole, we haven't learned that "you can't serve God *and* money, but you can serve God *with* money."[21]

We Find Our Life by Giving it Away

In the upside-down kingdom of God, we gain freedom by letting go of our stuff. It seems backwards to the natural human mind, but that's how God set up his universe. God really does take care of us if we hold loosely the things he has given us. Those who give the most get the most.

Paul says to the Corinthians: "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Cor 9:8). The word "all" is used four times for emphasis.

While there is the promise of reward in heaven for helping the poor and giving generously, stern warnings are given to those who hoard their wealth. James warns the wealthy not to amass wealth for self-indulgence: "You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every desire. You have fattened yourselves for the day of slaughter" (Jas 5:5). Paul tells Timothy:

> Tell those rich in this world's wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage—to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous. If they do that, they'll build a treasury that will last, gaining life that is truly life (1 Tim 6:17-19 *The Message*).

In the story of the "rich fool" in Luke 12:16-21, a man asked Jesus to tell his brother to divide the family inheritance with him. This "rich fool" wasn't a fool because he was rich, but because he was "not rich towards God." "The rich man demonstrates an unrelenting, self-centered focus and an unmitigated accumulation of surplus goods, with no thought for anyone else."[22]

When we read the word *rich* most of us quickly think of a friend who has more money than we do, but we don't think that word applies to us. But compared to global standards, and by first century standards, the great majority of us are rich. Living in a first world country tends to make us myopic on the subject of riches.

In her book *Hope Lives,* Amber Van Schooneveld shares:

> Did you drink clean water today without risk of death or disease? Are you wearing a pair of shoes? Do you have a dry, safe place to sleep tonight? Did you eat today? You are rich. You are richer than billions of others. The Gross National Income per capita in the United States in 2003 was $37,610. In India it was $530. In Ethiopia it was $90.[23]

These figures help us adjust our eyeglasses to see our lives through a global economic lens.

While we never want to lose sight of "the grace of giving" nor do we want to close our eyes to global realities or to the clear teaching of Scripture. The Bible cuts across the grain of materialism with a sharp and powerful sword. If the scripture's teaching on money causes us to blanch and recoil it means we need to ask Jesus for more of his heart and less of the world's ways in our lives. Remember: "Simplicity is freedom. Duplicity is bondage. Simplicity brings joy and balance. Duplicity brings anxiety and fear."[24]

On February 18, 2002, I recorded this entry in my journal:

> During worship, on the day of the annual offering for the poor, the Lord gave me a beautiful picture of myself taking a crown off my head and reaching up to put it on Jesus' head. My face was lit up with a huge smile. The Holy Spirit met me powerfully in worship. The words given to me that morning were of God's huge resource to provide everything I need.

Another picture was of a magic carpetbag like Julie Andrews' character in *Mary Poppins*; you never know what's going to come out of it. Looking back over the past several years, there have indeed been a lot of surprises of provision and guidance in my life, many of them supernatural.

On another occasion he showed me a picture of a treasure chest with smoke rising up from it. The box symbolized my tithes and offerings; the smoke represented a pleasing aroma of incense, indicating that this gift of gold was pleasing to him.

" … When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required" (Luke 12:48 NLT). I have been entrusted with a lot of knowledge, gifts and resources, and if you are reading this book in a room with glass in the windows, with food in your belly and shoes on your feet, you should know that you have too.

Will you join me in this prayer?

> "Lord, help me use what you've given me wisely. Help me to always keep heaven in view. Help me enjoy the freedom and joy that flows from simplicity. Help me grow in the attitude and action of generous giving."

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1. Hunter, *Giving Church Another Chance*, 125. A quote by Billy Graham.
2. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches,* 191. "Although some have argued for an inherent poverty in the Macedonian churches, what we know of that province in the mid-50's in general suggests that they were relatively prosperous … " (2nd Corinthians was written around AD 55).
3. Ibid., 177.
4. Nils A Dahl, *Studies in Paul: theology for the early Christian mission,* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977), 35.
5. Gerhard Krodel, *Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 95.
6. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches*, 194
7. Lawrence O Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 870.
8. Paul Lee Tan, "They Dared Lose Home," Bible Communications http://www.tanbible.com/tol_ill/tol_ill_giving.html (accessed Sept 10 2010).
9. McManus, *Uprising, A Revolution of the Soul,* 157.
10. Ibid., 158.
11. "Dinner Plate Gospel," F. M. Barton Publisher http://books.google.com/books?id=mxopAAAAYAAJ&1pg=PA494&ots=LPHnTr_Qr3&dq=%22the%20gospel%20of%20the%20extra%20dinner%20plate%22&pg=PA494#v=onepage&q=%22the%20gospel%20of%20the%20extra%20dinner%20plate%22&f=false (accessed October 26 2010).
12. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 77.
13. Ibid., 69.
14. Ibid., 70.
15. Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, 31.
16. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 76.
17. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches*, 211;[1] Prov. 13:11, NIV
18. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary*.
19. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches*, 136
20. Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations*, (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc. 1996).
21. Hunter's *Giving Church Another Chance,* 125. A quote by Selwyn Hughes.
22. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches*, 119
23. Amber Van Schooneveld, *Hope Lives,* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2008), 19.
24. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline, 69.*