

“The Christian’s New Clothes: Generosity”

Ephesians 4:28

C. I. T.—The Christian life is characterized by honest hard work.

C. I. S.—You must work hard in order to share with others.

Purpose—I want to encourage to live a Christian life.

Introduction—

I. *Sticky fingers reveal a stinking heart.*

- a. Steal/Thief—takes something in an unauthorized/unjust way—kleptomaniac
 - i. Used of stealing possessions like livestock or money
 - ii. Used of enslaving people
 - iii. Used of taking Jesus’ body from tomb
- b. Authorized/just ways to take someone’s stuff—work for it, trade for it, and receive it as a gift.
- c. Many forms of unjust gain/stealing
 - i. Common Thievery
 - ii. Fraud—taxes, financial reports, professional welfare
 - iii. Cheating—steroids, school work
- d. Illus.--
- e. Application
 - i. Selfish ambition and preservation drive thievery.
 - ii. Ultimately, it is a lack of faith that leads to thievery.—The idea that I have to provide for myself.
 - iii. Seek ye first...
 - iv. We trust the Lord to provide and therefore, we don’t have to steal.
 - v. How does the Lord provide?

II. *Work is how we trust the Lord to provide.*

- a. Diligent Work—hard/strenuous work
- b. Dignified Work—own hands
- c. Divine Work—good work that pleases God
 - i. **Ecclesiastes 2:24**
 - ii. **Deuteronomy 8:18**
 - iii. **2 Thessalonians 3:6-12**
- d. Illus.—Sparrows—not just sitting in the nest waiting for mama bird, but go find it.
- e. Application
 - i. We trust the Lord by engaging in work.
 - ii. He provides for us by blessing out work.
 - iii. We find great joy from the Lord in working.
 - iv. How do we balance against worshipping work?

III. *Work is how God provides for others.*

- a. Have something to share—profit by work
- b. Those who are in need.
 - i. Not those who are able, but unwilling—**2 Thessalonians 3:10**
 - ii. Those who can’t provide for themselves.
 - 1. Family—**1 Timothy 5:8**
 - 2. Orphans/Widows—**Ja 1:26-27**
 - 3. Sick—**Matthew 25:34-40**
 - 4. Gospel workers—**1 Tim 5:17-18**

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- c. You can’t spend all of your money on you and expect to be able to help others.
- d. Illus.—Parable of the Hoarder—**Luke 12:13-21**
- e. Application
 - i. The Lord wants to meet the needs of people in order to glorify Himself and win them to Christ..
 - ii. Many times he meets the needs of people through other people.
 - iii. We are merely a vehicle that the Lord uses to pour blessings on others.
 - iv. Once he finds out that He can trust someone to serve as a conduit for His blessings, He will continue to pour blessings on Him.

Conclusion

- **Malachi 3:8-10**
 - Principle of the Tithe/Offerings
 - 10% of gross pay package was to be given to support the ministry of the Levites, fed them and the poor
 - This was God’s plan to provide for the needy.
 - The tithe/offerings are not a law, but a principle for Christians today.
 - They were not participating in this plan, because they were spending all of their money on themselves.
 - Since the money was intended to be flow-through, but withholding it, they were robbing God.
 - I am afraid I am in a den of thieves right now.
- Bring the whole tithe—10% of gross, not after taxes, insurance, annuity, etc. is taken out
- How do we fight pride and selfishness?
- By being generous.
- Afterall, didn’t Jesus give Himself for us, who were in need of a Savior?

Ecclesiastes 2:24 There is nothing better for a person than to eat, drink, and enjoy his work. I have seen that even this is from God's hand,

Deuteronomy 8:18 but remember that the LORD your God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm his covenant he swore to your fathers, as it is today.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from every brother or sister who is idle and does not live according to the tradition received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you should imitate us: We were not idle among you; ⁸ we did not eat anyone's food free of charge; instead, we labored and toiled, working night and day, so that we would not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ It is not that we don't have the right to support, but we did it to make ourselves an example to you so that you would imitate us. ¹⁰ In fact, when we were with you, this is what we commanded you: "If anyone isn't willing to work, he should not eat." ¹¹ For we hear that there are some among you who are idle. They are not busy but busybodies. ¹² Now we command and exhort such people by the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and provide for themselves.

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1 Timothy 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own family, especially for his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

James 1:26 If anyone thinks he is religious without controlling his tongue, his religion is useless and he deceives himself. ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ ' 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or without clothes and clothe you?' ³⁹ When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?' ⁴⁰ "And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who are good leaders are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says: Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain, and the worker is worthy of his wages.

Luke 12:15 He then told them, "Watch out and be on guard against all greed, because one's life is not in the abundance of his possessions." ¹⁶ Then he told them a parable: "A rich man's land was very productive. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What should I do, since I don't have anywhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸ I will do this,' he said. 'I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones and store all my grain and my goods there. ¹⁹ Then I'll say to myself, "You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself." ' ²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared-- whose will they be? ' ²¹ "That's how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Malachi 3:8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing me!" "How do we rob you?" you ask. "By not making the payments of the tenth and the contributions. ⁹ You are suffering under a curse, yet you-- the whole nation-- are still robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house. Test me in this way," says the LORD of Armies. "See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure.