

Practice.



LOVE

Choosing to follow Jesus' way invites more of His love to overflow out of our lives to others.

WONDER

I wonder what God might be inviting me into, with what I have?

ABUNDANCE

He provides for everything we need, reminding us to see the proof of this as we look at the birds, the grass...

What's Inside

2

WELCOME TO THE INTENTIONAL LIFE

4

THE GENEROUS LIFE

6

ON HOSPITALITY

8

FROM FEAR TO LOVE

10

DIVE DEEPER

12

FROM WALLS TO WONDER

14

DIVE DEEPER

16

FROM SCARCITY TO ABUNDANCE

18

DIVE DEEPER

19

CLOSING PRAYER

20

SOURCES/RESOURCES

Welcome to the Intentional Life

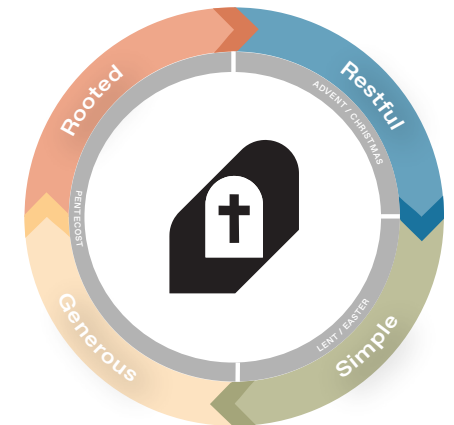
THE WORD "INTENTION" is defined as an aim, target or purpose. Something that you shoot for, regardless of whether you hit it or not, it's a direction.

At Open Door, we have a desire to be a community of people radically committed to spiritual formation (the ongoing, lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus), for the sake of others. This sort of commitment allows our very selves (mind, heart, soul and body) to be transformed by the Spirit into the likeness of Christ.

This incredible and mysterious formation process requires both our attention and our intention, an aim and a bit of a rhythm to help us practice, together.

That said, we have identified four seasonal rhythms that help us practice living more intentionally.

Our seasonal rhythms include: The Rooted Life, The Restful Life, The Simple Life, and The Generous Life.



These rhythms are informed by the ancient church calendar, and are a part of the larger desire we have to live an intentional life.

They invite us into and equip us to practice the Presence and Way of Jesus in an authentic way where we can grow in our faith while actively living in community and loving others.

The Generous Life

In the Generous life, we invite the expansive and abundant nature of Jesus to overflow into how we love, welcome and receive those around us.

In this season, our primary practice is **hospitality** which helps create a safe place for others to experience the love of Jesus in another.

“By this everyone will know
that you are my disciples,
if you love one another.”

JOHN 13:35

Whenever we are introduced to a practice, let's first slow ourselves down and then consider the invitation to a new and deeper life with Jesus. One that invites us to expand, grow and move from one place to another. From Fear to Love, from Walls to Wonder and from Scarcity to Abundance.

Rather than reducing hospitality down to an experience or a unique gift, we invite you to look at hospitality as a lens through which we begin to see God and others.



On Hospitality

Early on in our ministry years, Dave and I loved hospitality. In youth ministry, it felt easy. Fling open the doors, make some cookies, and say, "Come on over." The thrift store furniture or the dirty floors didn't matter, teens just wanted to be known and loved.

Then we had kids, my mom got sick, my sister moved in, ministry life got busier, the budget stretched thinner, and my exhaustion compounded. Suddenly the word "hospitality" began to fill me with a sort of dread, a feeling of overwhelm. I knew it was something Jesus valued and even asked of us, but as a wiped-out introvert, I could feel my capacity shrinking, and I could not figure out how any of it fit. I began to pay attention to what I said "yes" to and why, which was good. But I also wrestled with over-protectiveness of what margin we had available, and the conflict between how badly I wanted people to feel loved in life and how dried up I felt inside. It felt like a command Jesus had made that I could never truly meet, a demand that just took more of everything I already felt draining out of me.

But my heart ached over it because I knew hospitality's power; years ago, a friend's mom pushed a steaming bowl of soup across the counter, leaned over, and asked me how I truly was at a time when life was hard and few knew—and it changed my life. It was simple but I felt seen, felt **worth an offering of a simple moment with joy**, zero strife, or exasperation or even perfection. It was care and ease and it brought me in.

A few years into this internal wrestling, I was pulling into my driveway with groceries and saw Dave on the porch, watching our kids and neighbor kids as they bounced back and forth between yards, smiling and laughing and dirty. I thought to myself how perfect it was in all its chaos: children at ease, joyful in the pure pleasure of being free but also safe and watched over. And I felt a whisper that seemed like it flowed right from the heart of Jesus: *It's like Eden. Just make a little more Eden wherever you go.* And it clicked: **hospitality is simply making our world a little more as it should be**, an offering of heart and spirit—what else matters? And those

offerings will be different for every person and every season, for we were never meant to be all the things; in fact, trying to be so only perpetuates the lies of "not enough" that has invaded Eden to begin with. But to relax into who I am and just offer that? That I could do.

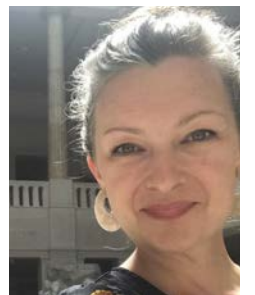
Over time, I've learned what those values are for me: I love for things to be beautiful, but I love for the value of comfort to be felt above perfection. I love for people to feel they can be themselves (which also means I need to be myself in front of them). I love noticing what people love and somehow bringing that into our interactions. I love good food and real conversations, I love seeing people take deep breaths or have a little reset, and I love setting the stage for all that and then stepping back and just letting it do its thing.

How all of those values play out changes daily, but I now know that if **I offer myself the hospitality of grace**, then others feel that too. Maybe it's as simple as looking someone in the eye, sharing laughter, being honest...maybe a little extravagance thrown in or maybe just "all I have left is this leftover chicken" but offered in love and grace. It doesn't even have to be in our home, it can truly be a way of *being*: generous in spirit,

caring, present, and fully there; a space offered even in the most undone of spaces, offering a little taste of Eden and being in that together.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- What vision of hospitality might God have for *you*? Whether it's a vision of Eden in your own life or something else, what aspect of that vision can you implement now and then cultivate over time?
- Take some time to consider how God has uniquely made you and set you in your life...what of those values and ways of being can you offer to those you come into contact with?
- What are some ways God might be speaking to you about being hospitable to yourself? How could offering grace to your soul and your current life overflow into extending that grace and life to others?



STEF BRICKEY
Curator of All Things Lovely

From Fear to Love



"There is no need to be afraid as we walk through life—afraid of the unknown, the unexpected, even other people. Deep within the heart of Christian spirituality lies a remedy to fear, anger and suspicion: hospitality."

—Pratt & Homan

Fear can have a significant way of shaping the way we practice generosity. We may have fear of a stranger—someone who is not like us, or fear of rejection, fear of what it will cost us or a fear that we don't have enough to share.

We are not implying that all fear is bad, in fact, at times it can be super helpful...like when you choose not to walk into a dark, creepy alley or into a building that's already burning! That's just wisdom!

AND, we are invited, over and over again in scripture to not be afraid. Consider 1 John 4:18-19: *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because He first loved us.*

In his letter, John puts fear and love together, with love driving out fear. Love is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5) and has the ability to grow, thrive, conquer and actively diminish fear. And the way we practice love is by loving God and by loving others.

When asked the greatest commandment, Jesus elevated loving neighbors alongside loving God (Matthew 22:36-40). By practicing the radical hospitality and generosity of Jesus, we are choosing to follow His way and inviting more of His love and abundance to overflow out of our lives to others.

Let's be honest, opening our lives to others can be both beautiful and messy. We may end up in surprising conversations, unfamiliar settings or really awkward experiences. But when we are open to moving from fear to love, with God, we participate in bringing God's Kingdom to earth in incredible and ordinary ways.

“Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

HEBREWS 13:2

PRACTICE

Practice showing hospitality to someone you don't know. Consider buying coffee for the person behind you, holding open the door for a stranger, or choosing to go second.

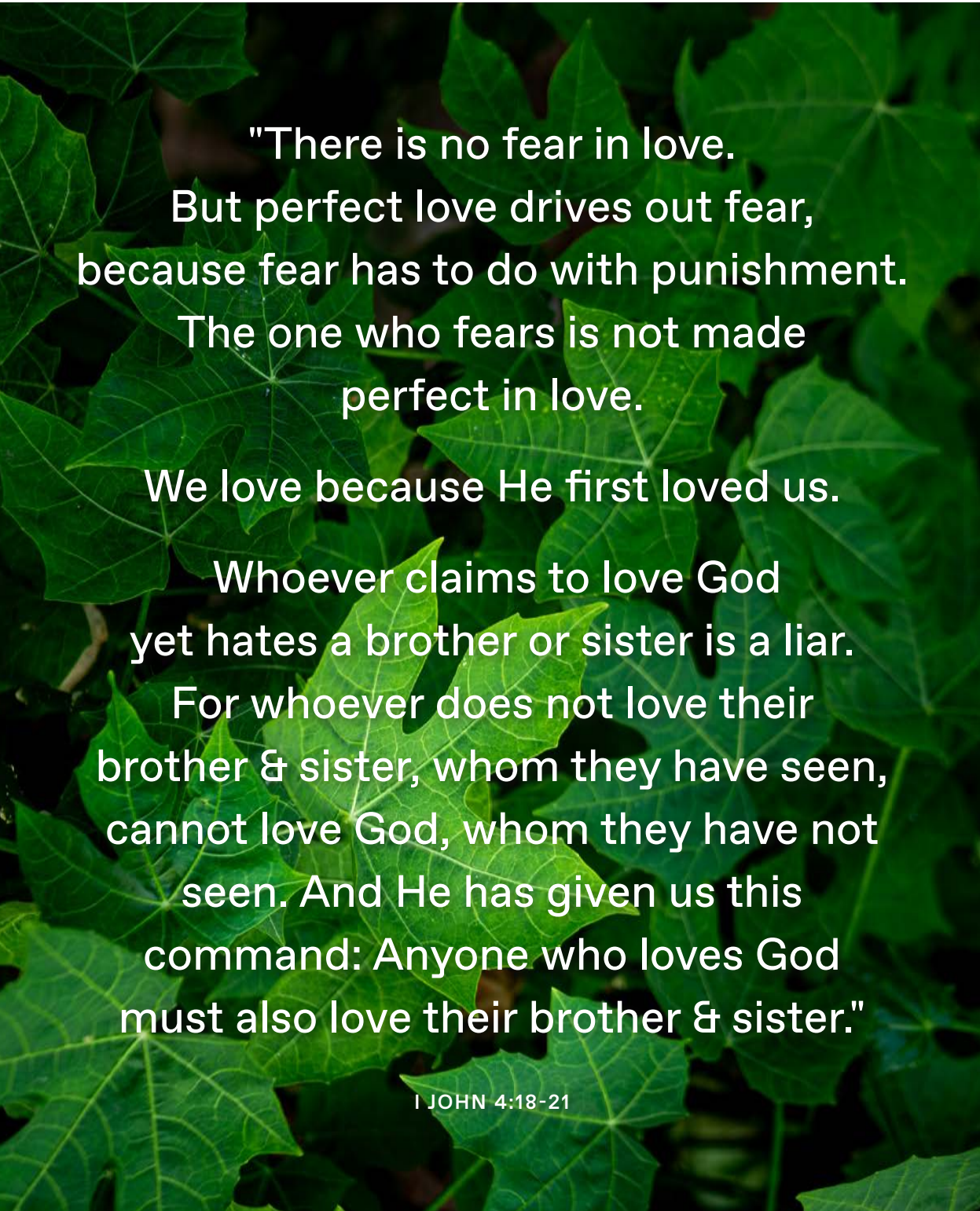
Dive Deeper

Write down a time when you experienced the enjoyment of generosity. Were you receiving generosity or giving it away?

What fears or desires keep you from being generous?

How would your life be different if you were free from the fear of not having enough?

Questions taken from *Practicing The Way Generosity Practice*



"There is no fear in love.
But perfect love drives out fear,
because fear has to do with punishment.
The one who fears is not made
perfect in love.

We love because He first loved us.

Whoever claims to love God
yet hates a brother or sister is a liar.
For whoever does not love their
brother & sister, whom they have seen,
cannot love God, whom they have not
seen. And He has given us this
command: Anyone who loves God
must also love their brother & sister."

1 JOHN 4:18-21

From Walls to Wonder



A large aspect of hospitality is the openness to share our time, talents, and resources with others. The way in which we love and welcome others comes out of an overflow of our life with God. When we are willing to see all of our possessions in light of God's goodness, and that all we have belongs to King Jesus, instead of building walls to contain or protect our things, we move to a more curious place of wonder, with God.

Here are a few "I wonder" questions to ask:

- ... I wonder what might God be inviting me into, with what I have?
- ... I wonder if there is something that I can give away or share with others?
- ... I wonder if there is a unique talent that I have been given that would benefit someone else?

PRACTICE

Practice opening your life and inviting in your neighbors—maybe through a driveway chat, sitting around the campfire, or sharing a meal at your place.

OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE WONDER AND ENGAGE IN HOSPITALITY

AROUND THE TABLE

One of the most fundamental expressions of hospitality is to invite others around your table for a meal.

"...They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people..."
(Acts 2:46-47 NIV)

The early church was situated around the table. They followed the way that Jesus modeled for them and they ate together.

Who could you invite over for a meal?

THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY

When you start your day, invite God to give you His eyes and heart for others.

As you go throughout your day, who did you notice?

Bless that person by silently praying for them: "God, may Your Kingdom come and may Your will be done in their life."

If you feel a nudge to engage, see what happens when you respond to this nudge. Respond with curiosity and love.

IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Go for a walk. Notice where you live. Who is around you? What are the names of your neighbors? Where is God already at work in your neighborhood and where can you partner with Him?

Take it a step further...

Let's bring God's love to the world through building relationships, fostering community, and getting to know neighbors through service projects, social gatherings, cross-cultural events or simple acts of kindness.

Dive Deeper

Share about a time that you experienced generosity from a neighbor, including ways you felt invited into their life.

Think about a time that you were generous with someone, how did they respond and how did their response affect you?

Read Matthew 5:14-16 (MSG) what are ways that you can "keep open house" and "be generous" with your life? Is there a specific invitation you could extend?

“Here’s another way to put it:
You’re here to be light, bringing out
the God-colors in the world. God is not
a secret to be kept. We’re going public
with this, as public as a city on a hill.

If I make you light-bearers, you don’t
think I’m going to hide you under
a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a
light stand. Now that I’ve put you there
on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine!

Keep open house; be generous with
your lives. By opening up to others,
you’ll prompt people to open up with
God, this generous Father in heaven.”

MATTHEW 5:14-16 (MSG)

From Scarcity to Abundance



Slowly read this familiar passage, out loud if possible:

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (*Matthew 6:25-34*)

Take a minute to think about the thing that is worrying you most; it can be big or small. As you ponder that thing, read the Matthew 6 passage again.

What do you notice? What stands out? How do you feel or experience the statement that Jesus makes in this teaching “...do not worry about your life...”?

When we lean into this passage of Scripture, we see how generous and hospitable God is. He provides for everything we need, reminding us to see the proof of this as we look at the birds, the grass and the flowers. This is abundance and then some! The Kingdom of God is at hand and there is more than enough to go around.

God's Kingdom economy stands in stark contrast to the world's economy, where there is never enough. We worry and grasp to provide for ourselves, accumulating and possessing more than we need in a race for the newest, best, and most efficient. Everywhere we turn, there is something to buy that we didn't even know we needed. Grab it or it will be gone...which can lead to even more worry! This is scarcity.

We ultimately live in both economies. We live in this world, *and* we are

called to seek FIRST the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. When we are open to moving from scarcity to abundance, it can shift us from grasping to openness, from envy to gratitude and from owning to stewarding.

There is more than enough in God's economy and He's got you. It is good to be reminded of this and to love others from the overflow of God's incredible generosity. May His Kingdom come and His will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

PRACTICE

It matters what you think about before you go to sleep at night.

As you close your eyes, take a few moments to reflect on your day with both humility and gratitude, resting in God's Presence and thanking Him for His goodness in your life.

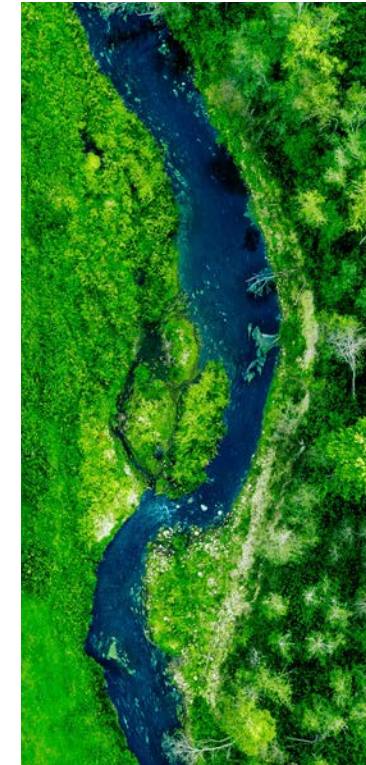
Dive Deeper

What is capturing your attention most these days?

How much is worry influencing your thoughts?

What might it look like to expand your generosity in light of the abundance of God's Kingdom? Consider both time and resources.

Closing Prayer



JOHN MARK COMER

*Where our hearts have shrunk,
and our giving with them,
Holy Spirit come.*

*To the fears that restrain us,
and our anxiety for material things,
Holy Spirit come.*

*To our other-blindness,
and the busyness that causes it,
Holy Spirit come.*

*That we may overflow
in abundant generosity,
Holy Spirit come.*

*That our giving may transform the world,
the poor, the church, and us,
Holy Spirit come.*

*That we may know You greatly,
through the expansion of our offering,
Holy Spirit come.*

*Father, You're the embodiment of
"giving is better than receiving",
and we want to be like You.*

*We praise and love You,
honor and desire You,
with all our being,*

*now and forever,
amen.*

Used with permission. Comer, J. M., & Way, P. (2024).
*The Generosity Practice: A Four-session Companion Guide
to Help You Experience the Joy of Giving.* WaterBrook.

Sources & Resources



q.me-qr.com/Smw4uOWk

FORGOTTEN PRACTICE OF GENEROSITY SERMON

Church of the Open Door



q.me-qr.com/h90tbg1o

THE GENEROSITY PRACTICE

John Mark Comer



q.me-qr.com/ugL3S1lz

RADICAL HOSPITALITY: BENEDICT'S WAY OF LOVE

Lonni Collins Pratt with Father Daniel Homan, OSB

PRAYER ROOM

Everyone is welcome on Sundays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Just take the elevator to the second floor and enjoy!