

30 Questions for Reflection

I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. **PSALM 16:7**

Please take some time before tomorrow morning's session to read through these 30 questions. Come back prepared to share about two questions that most stood out to you and why. You do not have to answer the questions; just share why they are causing you to wrestle. Though some of these questions might feel like there is only one right answer, they are meant to be provocative, not prescriptive. Please use these questions as conversation starters to explore how God may be working in your heart.

- 1 Am I viewing myself as a manager or trustee of what God's given me, or seeing myself as owner and controller of my own stuff? Are there things that God would have me manage differently if I acknowledged them as really being His?
- 2 Am I striving to use my income, influence, and privileges as God directs? Or am I assuming I know what he's asking me for (10% giving) and can use the rest as I choose?
- 3 As I continue to realize that Jesus gave everything by his death on the cross to purchase me, is there a new level of sacrifice I want to give and surrender to Him?
- 4 At what points in my journey with God have I realized His generous mercy on my brokenness and sin? Do I hold others to a higher standard than God holds me? Can I give radically to others even though they have brokenness and sin in their life?

- 5 Does the thought of sacrificial generosity make me anxious because I feel I don't have enough to make ends meet? Do I live trusting God to provide all that I need in the same way he provided his son for me to be redeemed? Or have I compartmentalized my trust for my salvation, putting my daily needs in a different category?
- 6 Is Christ's undying love my true treasure, or do I actually treasure other things more? Is my money an indicator of my true treasure? Is it my reputation, comfort for my family, recognition? Or do I live my life knowing that his love and grace is all I need?
- 7 Does the thought of sacrificial generosity make me anxious because I might have to carefully look at my spending and give some things up? Are there things I've decided are non-negotiable? The place I live? The car I drive? Do I live believing that my ultimate treasure is in heaven and not in the comforts I desire on earth?
- 8 How much money do I need? Will my answer always be 'more'? Or can I set a finish line for myself, and give away everything beyond that?
- 9 What does it mean to give responsibly and wisely? How can I honor getting out of debt while giving generously? How can I honor saving for the future or estate planning while giving generously? Since Jesus praised the poor widow for giving away everything, is it possible that He is asking me to worry less about saving for the future and to give more now?
- 10 Am I trustworthy to make financial decisions entirely on my own, or am I potentially biased by greed, comfort, or culture in such a way that it would benefit me to share my financial and giving goals with some other mature Christians in my community? Who might some of those people be?

- 11 If the Bible commands us to bear one another's burdens in Christian community, are there opportunities within my community that God might be calling me to bear? Do I assume that this isn't my role because of my culture, or am I looking for such opportunities?

Is Christ's undying love **my true treasure**, or do I actually treasure other things more?

- 12 Has having more money caused me to feel more in control of my life and circumstances, and has that control become an idol for me? Is Christ inviting me into a new level of surrender where I trust him with control of my life and future instead of trusting my money for that control? How can I step into this practically?
- 13 If an outsider were to look at how I use my time, my energy and my resources, what would they learn about my priorities? Would that outsider see my time, energy, and resources being put primarily toward a hope and vision of renewal for our city and world?
- 14 Do I live as if I'm focusing on heaven, where I plan to live forever, or on earth, where I'll live one-billionth of my existence? In light of eternity, am I happy about where I'm placing my focus?
- 15 If it is the nearness of God that I ultimately seek, what if I dared to pray, 'Bring anything into my life - take anything away from my life as long as I get to be closer to you.'? What scares me about that prayer? What excites me about that prayer?

- 16 Have You raised me up, with the financial assets and opportunities you've entrusted to me, for just such a time as this? (Esther 4:14) Have You called me to join a great team of your children in freeing up money and possessions to reach out to the needy and fulfill the great commission?
- 17 What am I holding onto that's robbing me of present joy and future reward? What am I keeping that's preventing me from having to depend on You? What am I clinging to that makes me feel like I don't have to depend on You to provide, like I used to before I had so much? What do You want me to release that could restore me to a walk of faith?
- 18 In light of 2 Cor. 8:14 and 9:11, do You want me to assume that each financial blessing You entrust to me is not intended to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving?
- 19 Am I treating You as owner and CEO/CFO of "my" assets, or am I treating You merely as my financial consultant, whom I pay a fee (10% or greater)?

Should I put the **burden of proof** on keeping rather than giving?

- 20 Once they've finished college or are working on their own, would inheriting wealth (beyond items of special sentimental and heritage value) help my children's eternal perspective and walk with God? Or would it have a corrupting influence on their character, lifestyle, work ethic or marriage?

- 21 Would You ever say to me, when I stand before your judgment seat, 'You blew it-you sold those shares and gave them to feed the hungry and evangelize the lost, and then two years later the market peaked'? Or would You say, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant'?
- 22 Is it ever wrong to give to You now rather than wait until later? What's the eternal downside to giving now? What's the eternal downside of delaying giving until later? Am I really in danger of giving too much too soon? Or is the only real danger giving too little too late? "But if I give away most of my assets now, what will I give from later?" Is the answer "From whatever You choose to provide?" If Christ commended the poor widow (Mark 12) for giving to God everything she had-considering her faithful, not irresponsible-how much would I have to give away before he would consider me irresponsible?
- 23 Why do I want to hold on to my wealth? Am I trying to prove something? What, and to whom? Is it pride? Power? Prestige? Selfishness? Insecurity? Fear? Am I a control freak? Or is it just because it's normal, and I'm going with the flow of my culture? Do You want me to go with that flow? Or to do something different, maybe radically different?
- 24 Am I living to hear others say of me "he/she's a great success" or to have You say to me, "Well done my good and faithful servant?"
- 25 Instead of asking "Why should I give this away?" do You want me to ask "Why shouldn't I give this away?" Should I put the burden of proof on keeping rather than on giving? When money comes in, should giving rather than keeping be my default, the rule not the exception? Unless there's a compelling reason to keep, should I normally give?

- 26 Am I hanging onto excess money as a backup plan in case You fail me? Is my fear of health catastrophes and old age creating an inertia in my giving, because I imagine I must provide everything for myself in case something goes wrong? Considering that the vast majority of people in history and most in the world today have nothing stored up for retirement, am I too preoccupied with putting treasures in retirement funds? Are You calling me to work without a net — or with less of a net — trusting you'll catch me in case of a fall?
- 27 How can I better communicate with and pray with my spouse so we can walk together down this exhilarating road of giving, leading each other but not leaving each other behind?
- 28 What am I doing to train my children to be generous givers — and not just donors but disciples?
- 29 How are you calling me to steward my influence to share this message with my friends? Who could benefit from experiencing a Journey of Generosity? Could I host a group from my church or a board I serve on?
- 30 Five minutes after I die, what will I wish I would have given away while I still had the chance? Help me spend the rest of my life closing the gap between what I'll wish I'd given then and what I'm actually giving now. Empower me to help others do the same. Would you, for your eternal glory?

These are a combination of questions written by Randy Alcorn (from "The Treasure Principle") and Tim Keller. All questions are used with permission.