

Every Member Commitment Sunday 2025

“The One Who Gives Freely”

Proverbs 11:23-31

Well, we're going to take a continue on in our brief hiatus from the book of Ephesians. And as the children are dismissed to children's worship, we will turn in our scriptures to Proverbs 11 as we discuss the theme of today, which is stewardship and generosity.

Now, I do want to give a few words about the reading of Proverbs. The Proverbs are very particular way of teaching. Okay. They are an ancient kind of pedagogy where you say eight concise statements about the world that are true and the work of learning, the work of being disciplined through proverbs. It's kind of like doing calisthenics or something, but for your wisdom muscle. Okay. It's like doing jumping jacks or stretching on a regular basis. As a matter of fact, if you're ever wondering, like, I wish I do. You know what should I spend my quiet time in this morning? Go to the day of the month number. So if it's if it's, November 2nd, go to Proverbs two. There's 31 Proverbs, so you'll have one for every day of the month. And just sit in the proverbs and consider it kind of a workout in wisdom. And this is how I encourage people to read Proverbs as you read them. Stop on each one. Pause on it. Think about how it's true. Then think about how it's true in your life. And you can do this kind of like you would do a workout. You can do low reps, but high intensity, right? So you can read a few proverbs and really, really just sit with them and meditate on them. Or you can read many proverbs and just kind of go quickly, right? High reps, low intensity, go quickly and get a big, full orb view of the wisdom teaching that the text is giving you today. So as we're looking at this EMC weekend, as we're looking at generosity and stewardship, I thought, let's take a chunk of Proverbs. And I could have grabbed several different sections of the proverbs that talk about generosity and stewardship, but I got this one out of Proverbs chapter 11. So I'm going to read through it, and we're going to come back and reflect on them, but treat them almost like calisthenics. How are they true in my life? How might they apply to me? And these proverbs apply in a different way because life is complicated, right? So we have a lot of proverbs because there's a lot of complicated situations we might find ourselves in. So with that said, turn to Proverbs 11: 23-31.

The desire of the righteous ends only in good. The expectation of the wicked and wrath one gives freely, yet grows all the richer.

Another withholds what he should give, and only suffers. Want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered. The people curse him who hold back grain, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it. Whoever diligently seeks good seeks favor or grace. But evil comes to him who searches for it.

Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf. Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind. And the fool will be a servant to the wise of heart. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life. And whoever captures souls is wise. If the righteous is repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner?

This is the word of the Lord. Please be seated.

Well, this is a time in our yearly calendar where we talk about stewardship. And I'd like to particularly focus on stewardship in the kind of stewardship that we're called to offer as Christians. And so, I want to talk about generous stewardship. I'm going to focus on generosity this morning. Now, I know that for some of you, this is a harder topic to talk about than even something like sexual purity. This is a tough one to talk about. As a matter of fact, I've known pastors who, whenever it comes around to this time of the year, they'll always invite in a guest to talk about generosity because they don't want to talk about it with their congregation. I want to argue this morning that this should actually be one of the most wonderful, encouraging conversations that we get to have as a church.

Okay. I can remember when I was a young Christian thinking about generosity as kind of a constraint. It was a restriction. I'd have to go and ask my parents because my family tithes and I'd ask my family like, so. So do I have to give 10% of everything okay? Or can I give 10%? Just have like what's left over after I pay for all the things I have to get done? I'd have those kind of conversations because I was trying to figure out, what do I need to do to jump through the hoop of generosity? Okay. I wasn't even thinking about time, tithing my time or how I'm tithing. The gifts that the Lord has given me in terms of personality and skill set and background. Okay, because what am I doing? I'm thinking about generosity as a law and forgetting what Dale just pointed out to us in that catalog of wonderful verses. I couldn't we didn't plan this out, but he gave me all the best proof text for this whole sermon that I could have imagined. That generosity is not a law for those who are in Christ. Rather, it is a gift for those who are in Christ.

As a matter of fact, that word carries grace at its foundation. For Paul means just that a radical, world changing, life transforming, offensive gift. Okay, Paul uses it so much that he says the way God gives to us is so radically generous that it's offensive, and it makes people angry. It's true. If you've ever said if you've ever seen someone in your life who was just a person who really obviously did not deserve to be saved, and then they were. If you felt a twinge in your heart that said, Lord, why them? They don't deserve it, right? What is that showing? That's showing the radical grace and generosity of God. Okay, so when we talk about generosity, I want to talk about it as a gift. It's a gift of grace. It is a wonderful outpouring of our hearts that should be disciplined. It should be disciplined. And what is discipline? All that is discipline is a taking of an occasional desire or value in your heart and cultivating it and nurturing it over time so that occasional desire becomes a habit, which becomes a lifestyle that marks who you are.

So this morning we're going to talk about disciplining ourselves into generosity okay. And we do this all the time. This isn't just something that we do in the church. This is something that we do in all of our relationships. I mean, imagine, you know, you can remember for those of you who have been married your whole lives, you remember what it was like to first meet your spouse, right? And that was an occasional desire right on occasion. But I remember the occasion of meeting this person. You suddenly had this desire. You had the seeds of love begin. And as a result, you sort them out and you pursued them. Someone didn't have to tell you, okay, well, this is now that you have a burgeoning love for a person, you ought to now show them affection. Okay? When you got married, hopefully you didn't have to be reminded (but sometimes you do) to show affection, to show the love that you have. Because the love is already there. As a matter of fact, we often find that as we cultivate love for another person, whether in marriage or in family or with your children, as you cultivate, you find yourself naturally doing things naturally, acting in a certain way that gives expression to that love. It's not a law to you.

It's not a law to a mother to coddle and to care for her child. It's a wonderful thing. It's a gift. And when it's taken away, you lack it and you desire it. You see, we want to discipline. We want to nurture and cultivate the gift of generosity. So this morning we're going to talk about how to do that through discipline, through the forming and the directing of our desires. In other words, we should not see generosity as a constraint or restriction, but rather an expression of our deepest desires as those who have been called by grace, called by God to be a follower of Christ. So I want to give three incentives to our discipline of generosity. Okay, so three incentives. And for you ethicists out there, philosophers, you may notice something about these. They're getting it. All of the different incentives for why we do anything in life.

So the first one is this I want to talk about the heart of generosity. In other words, what kind of heart do I have to have to be a generous person?

Secondly, I want to talk about the goals of generosity. In other words, what should I look for in the world outside of me? Not my heart, but what's out there as I'm being generous?

And then lastly, I want to talk about the God of generosity. In other words, the one who calls us to be generous. Okay, so what's going on within me? What's going on in the world outside of me? And then what is just that which God requires of me? Yes. The God of my salvation. Okay, so we're going to talk about those three different incentives, okay. And they really are incentives. The gospel is more than okay with incentivizing us unto living unto the Lord.

So the first one is this the heart of generosity, the subjective, the interior part of our giving, what we learn throughout the scriptures and what we see in our passage today, is that biblical generosity is a blessing to the one who gives. It is an internal blessing to the heart of the one

who gives. Notice what he says here in verse 23, right at the beginning, the desire of the righteous is only in good, the expectation of the wicked in wrath. And notice again in verse 27, look. And he says, whoever diligently seeks good favor. Notice the emphasis on diligently. That's desirous. let's earnestly whoever diligently seeks good for the good seeks favor, but evil comes to him who searches for that word for his favor. By the way, charis is translated into the Greek as grace. Whoever seeks good seeks favor or grace. But evil comes to him who searches for it. You see, as you grow in Christ, you're going to develop, Lord willing, you're going to develop a kind of appetite, a kind of desire, an inner desire and taste for generosity. You're going to develop a desire to give to others, to care for others with your time and with your talents and with your treasure. And it comes from two different places. One that we just talked about to a large extent with daily testimony. The first is just this when you grow in your realization of your own sin, your own inability to save yourself, not only that, your own offensiveness to God, and then you consider what he's done, the generosity that he had to give of himself, that is, to give of his son, second person of the Trinity, who took on flesh so that he might become sin, the one who had no sin, so that those he created who were in rebellion against him might be saved. When we consider that radical gift, it just changes your disposition towards the world right? I mean, consider that we wouldn't be changed by a much lesser gift.

Imagine if on your way out the door today, someone grabbed a friend. He said, you know what? I know you've been struggling with your mortgage lately. I'm going to pay off your mortgage and whole as a whole, you will own your house outright. Okay, I'm going to pay off your car payments so you don't have to pay for that anymore, right? That would transform your day, your week, your year. That would transform the way you see the world. As a matter of fact, when you saw that person on the street and you're walking by them the next day after they'd paid off your mortgage, you wouldn't consider it a law or a constraint to go, hey, how are you doing? Thanks again. Right.

You would be transformed in the way that you think about that person, about the people around you, and even about the world. Think about the much greater thing that you have in Christ, your reconciliation to the God of the universe. You don't just inherit a house without a mortgage. You inherit the earth. You see, when we recognize that incredible grace has been shed for us. It leads us. It's enough alone to discipline our hearts towards generosity. But secondly, it's not merely that as we grow in Christ, we grow in our recognition of all of the things that the Lord has done to bless us, to watch over us, and to care for us. We see how he's being generous to us on a day to day basis, and we stop seeing events as kind of random cause and effect, just things that happened. We stop seeing it as a matter of good luck and bad luck, but we start seeing it as the Lord being generous and blessing us, even in our suffering, even in the difficult experiences that we have on earth.

As I was preparing this, I kept going back to that story. I know many of you know it. It's a well known story. It's one that Corey Ten Boom tells about her time in the Ravensbrück concentration camp during World War II. As many of you know, Corrie Ten Boom was a young woman, a Dutch woman whose family, at the leadership of her father, hid Jews away during the invasion of the Third Reich into Holland, into the Netherlands. And they would hide them away so that they wouldn't be arrested. And the family was finally arrested because one of their neighbors turned them in. They were put in jail. The father died ten days into his imprisonment, but Corrie and her sister Betsie lived on and were transported to this concentration camp, where they were put in the worst of the dormitories that she could be put in, and she describes about how when you walk in, you could just smell the filth and the depth in the place and how they, they had these beds that were just wooden planks with straw laying over the wooden planks. More for hygiene to keep people from dying too quickly than for anything related to comfort. And she talked about her disgust, as when she got up and she saw the bed, you could see the fleas crawling all over the straw that was laid out on the planks. And then she was talking about how during one Bible study that they had -- these clandestine Bible studies within their dormitory, her sister Betsy was saying, we have to give thanks for all things. We give thanks that we're alive. She was praying. They're praying together. She said, Lord, I give thanks that you've kept Corrie in me together. Corrie is praying along. She has his grace and I give thanks that that that you've continued to be with us so that we can read your word and pray. And he said, yes, this is good, it's yours. And I give thanks for the fleas. That's when Corrie said, I knew at some point she would realize she'd gone too far. You can't. She must have. Betsie must have been wrong in that prayer. But then it was over time that they realized that, unlike many of the other dormitories, their dormitory was not being raided, is often by the guards. They weren't being harassed by the soldiers, they were allowed to study God's Word. And many people in her dorm were becoming Christians and praying with them as they ministered in the dorm. And it slowly dawned on Corrie that it was the fleas that kept the guards and the soldiers away because they thought, we're just not even going to go in there. It's so disgusting. And so is because of the fleas that they had this kind of guard of protection around their dormitory, so they can have a little moment of freedom and refuge in the midst of this terrible situation. You see, what we're saying here is that all blessings that we have in this life are a gift of a generous God.

That that old hymn, one of the oldest hymns that we have, that we still continue to worship, to say today in the church, Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. That goes back into the fog, the dust, the smoke, and the haze of early church history. And you know, that hymn was sung by churches that were being persecuted by Romans. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. You see. The modern world creates this illusion that the world around us is just random cause and effect. And yet we know. We know that God has given to us generously and continues to. He's

behind every event in our lives. He ordains our hearts. He ordains the hearts of kings. He ordains the flows of rivers.

According to Scripture, the modern world also creates this illusion within us that your property is yours and yours alone. Now don't get me wrong, free market capitalism is one of the greatest innovations of human history. But here's why it's not. It may not be why you think. Here's why it is because it gives us, as believers and as humans, the freedom to accrue wealth and steward it to the glory of God.

Other systems don't do that in the same way. And that's why we see incredible wealth developing up in free market economies, because it gives you the ability to do that. And yet it's not to accrue wealth unto yourself, but it is. For if you are a follower of Christ, the stewardship of those gifts and those resources of your time, of your talents, your skill sets, of your personality to steward that to the glory of God.

Notice what we see as soon as the Holy Spirit descends upon that church in acts two. As soon as the Holy Spirit comes, the Lord pours it out. He says, my work's not done until I pour out the spirit. The spirit is poured out. You notice what they begin doing right away. They worship together. They listen to the word together. They pray together. So we get all the means of grace. And then what do they do next? They share with each other in everything so that there's no need. You see, it's not compulsory. This isn't communism. They're not they're not being forced to do it. As a matter of fact, even with Ananias and Sapphira, when they lose their lives because they lie about how much they've given and how much they're willing to give notice, notice the sin is not that they're being forced to give, it's that they lied to the Holy Spirit. The Lord is saying, give freely. That's what I want. The one who gives freely is the one who enjoys the blessing. Give joyfully. Give freely out of the work of the Holy Spirit, not to gain the Holy Spirit, but rather because of the work of the Holy Spirit. You see, as a recipient of divine abundance and as someone who perceives divine generosity in the world around you, you begin to see your heart shaped by biblical generosity. It'll become the air that you breathe. You'll become the way that you look at the world. Where are their needs? Where can I dedicate some more time, some more energy? Where can I dedicate some of my abilities to helping those around me? How about let me ask you this. What are the prayer requests that you're starting to hear a lot?

Okay, don't just think of prayer requests as a subject matter for your prayers. That's a good thing for requests are also calls for help. Who is the Lord providentially put around you and what are their needs? How can your time and your talent and your treasures go to benefit them? Remember, this is about 20 years ago.

We were in church and a friend of mine was preaching through Proverbs and he had a different section. He wasn't doing generosity, he was doing depth. He was talking about what do the

Proverbs say about dead? And he said, and there's something that I have thought about over and over and over again, and it's one of those it was a side statement. It wasn't a major part of his sermon, but he said this. He said one of the greatest evils of debt is that it steals from you the ability to be generous. About what makes sense? It's not the worst thing that debt we're saying about debt is that I owe something. It's hanging over me, you know? It's a burden. No, no, no, no. The worst part about it is that you don't have extra that you can give because all of your extra has to go to paying off the debt.

And let me tell you, I have three graduate degrees. And that's not a boast. That's a confession. Okay? That's a lot of student possibilities for student debt. And I remember hearing this sermon and being under the burden of student debt and mourning how that was true. But what it did, and by God's grace, we don't have that debt anymore. But what that did is that they gave me another reason to be getting out of debt. Because generosity is not a constraint on me. It's a gift. And that debt was holding me back from it. You see, I know that many here at Briarwood understand this gift of generosity that we're talking about. I know that it's a desire that shapes you, because my family and I have experienced it over the last three months. We've heard stories about how you are generous. You continue to be generous. Your history is in many ways a history of biblical generosity, and we want to continue on that road, disciplining ourselves unto the gospel. Generosity. Now, let me be clear about something. I know we're still on point one. Point one is the longest point. Okay, this interior subjective part of desiring generosity. Okay, this only comes after salvation. As a matter of fact, if you are not a believer, as you hear me talking about this, it's hard for you not to say. Yeah, you're just saying nice things to try to tell us that you we should have this restriction that just this constraint, this law to give more. I want I want you to hear me.

If you are not a follower of Christ, hear this. I hope that it draws you. I hope it's attractive to you. This generous gift of salvation that is offered in Christ. And yet, I want you to know I have known believers who give generously to nonprofits, to political campaigns, even to Christian ministries. My ministries have benefited before from non-Christians who are giving because in some way they see us as aligning with their broader vision of the world. And yet, if you are giving, while at the same time rejecting the generous God of the universe from whom all blessings flow, you are ultimately not giving in a way that is we could call biblical generosity. You're giving might be kind of an assurance of your own identity. It might be sort of, you know, securing for yourself your place in the world, or maybe even accomplishing changes that you'd like to see around you in the world. And yet, because it is not an outpouring that comes from the work of the grace of God in you through the power of the spirit, that is not a biblical giving. Notice what Paul says in Ephesians, Ephesians that we've been reading chapter four. He talks about putting off the old man. Right? This is Ephesians 4:23-24 put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life, and that's corrupt and deceitful. Those desires are corrupt and deceitful, but

rather put on the new self, created after the likeness of God and true righteousness, and holiness. You see, biblical generosity is about that. Putting on of the new self. It changes the way that I see the world around me. The heart of generosity is only possible for those who have been freed by the radical gift of grace in Christ Jesus, but I want to invite you to that if you haven't experienced it. If you have experienced it, I want you to find your heart attuned to this grace which even prayed. If you're coming out of this and you're like, I, I still I just, I want to for myself. I don't want to be generous and stewarding my gifts to others. Pray, Lord, give me a spirit of generosity. Let me tell you, he will give it to you. Our father loves to give abundantly, especially when we pray for things like wisdom. James says, ask for wisdom. He'll give it to you guys. Ask for generosity. True generosity of one's time or gifting comes from the knowledge and the gift of grace through Christ Jesus, who gave himself up to save the lost. But that leads us to our second point.

I've been talking about the interior work of desiring generosity. Now I want to talk about the goal of generosity. What's out there in the world around you? Okay. All right. Again, for you philosophers, if you're interested in this, the first part was about the subjective, the existential, the within you part. The second part. Now we're going to talk about this is the teleological. This is the situational. This is that which is out there in the world around us. You see, there is a goal to generosity. Biblical generosity returns, according to the Proverbs sage. According to Jesus himself, biblical generosity returns a reward greater than the gift. Look at verse 24 to 26 one gives freely, yet grows all the richer. He's giving freely. He's not trying to grow, but he's giving freely, and he's getting richer as he gives freely. Another withholds what he should give, and only suffers one. Whoever brings blessing, that person is going to be the one who is enriched and the one who waters will himself be watered. The people curse him who holds that grain. This is this. The negative side of this. But there's blessing on the head of him who sells it. So the first incentive is about what's going on within us. The second incentive is what happens out there in the world around us. If you think about desire as the source of your giving, think of reward as the purpose or the end goal of your giving. As we see here in this proverb, the Lord is promising to be generous to those who show generosity. Now, let's be clear about this. I want to be absolutely clear. This is not a gospel of health, wealth, and prosperity. In other words, God is not a vending machine. And if I just do it right, he'll give me back exactly the things that I want. If I give \$10, he'll give me \$100 back. If I dedicate an hour, I'll gain two hours or something like that. That is a false gospel. It is not what the Bible teaches. Okay, there are too many examples of people who give it all, and yet they don't see any return in this life. Okay, exhibit A Jesus Christ, okay. Our Lord and Savior. I don't know how the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel stands when the central figure in our gospel is Jesus Christ, who gave it all. And it ended only in his death, not only in his death, it ended in his death. In this life, however, what do we say? Did he fail? Was the Lord not faithful to him? No. Of course he did not fail. He received the greatest

reward you can possibly receive. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him. He sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, interceding on our behalf. So where do we see the reward come? It comes in the new heavens and the new earth. It comes in the resurrection. It doesn't come in this life, but it comes in the life to come. Now I want to be careful, as I say, that it doesn't merely come in the new heavens and the earth. You will see blessings in this life, but it is not in a mere 1 to 1 kind of vending machine type relationship where I put in my coin and I get the thing that I paid for. It's not like that. It's never been like that. The Bible is a catalog of how it's not like that. And yet you will also find that when you give generously of your time and your talents and your treasures, you will enjoy blessings. I didn't tell you this. You can enjoy blessings in ways you did not even expect. You're going to think, oh, I need a blessing over here, Lord, and then you're going to find yourself blessed over here and you'll realize that was the thing I needed. That was the blessing that I was looking for. Now you're not doing it merely for that. This isn't transactional. You're not just trying to get a return on your investment. But let me tell you, if you are the greatest ROI you can imagine is offered to you and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, 15% of an index fund cannot hold a candle to everlasting life and an undying body. You can be confident that the blessing that you receive in the resurrection will be a full reward. Times ten times 100 times a thousand times infinity. Okay, I know, I know, that's impossible. And in the age to come, in the age to come, that reward, that return will far outmatch whatever generosity you have shown in this life. But don't close your eyes to how the Lord blesses you, even in your generosity today.

So how do we identify generosity in light of this? How do we identify objects of our generosity, of our stewardship? Well, we do this. First of all, we say, Lord, show me what is righteous. I don't want to do a sinful thing. I want to do a righteous thing. Show me what is righteous. Then we say, Lord, I pray that you would open my eyes to the needs around me. Who have you providentially trust in Providence? Whom you providentially put around me again? What are the prayer requests that I've been hearing? What are the needs that I see around me? How do I give in ways that are extravagant and thoughtful and active? See, the Lord has given us rational minds. Proverbs 16:9 is an important proverb to remember man plans his way, but the Lord directs or ordains his steps. Notice what the Proverbs proverbial sage is not saying is don't plan your way. Saying no, the Lord has given you a rational mind. Use it. Steward it. Plan your giving. Plan your stewardship plan where you're spending your time. But remember, the Lord will guide your steps as you do. This leads us to the last aspect of generosity. We talked about the heart of generosity, the goal of generosity.

Finally, and we've already been speaking about him and full, the God of generosity. Why be generous? Because God is generous and he tells us to be generous. That's a good enough reason, even if your heart wasn't conformed to it, even if you didn't see benefits out there in the world around you, it is enough that the one who created you and redeemed you tells you to

do it. That's a good enough reason to do it. So we should give because we desire. We should give because we want to see the results in the world around us. But ultimately, we should give our time and our talents and our treasures simply to glorify and live in harmony with the creator who calls us to generosity. Why give? Because it is good and right. So to do. The quote by Luther that we read last week, where he is in the diet of worms, and they're saying recant. And he says, I cannot, I shall not recant. Or what he says, because God exists and I have to live in the reality of him. Why be generous? Because you have to live in the reality of a God who exists and is generous, and calls you to generosity.

I think about Thomas Chalmers, a reformed preacher, an economist from the early 19th century. He was an abolitionist who lived in Scotland, and he was a social reformer in Scotland, as he was also a preacher then a teacher was a brilliant, brilliant man. He's a wonderful example of sort of Scottish Presbyterian thought and Christianity, thinking about not just how to preach the word, but how to be operative in the society around you. And he says this it is not cold, the cold law of man, but the warm love of God that ought to move us to charity or to generosity. But for him, charity was not just a manner of giving money. It wasn't just a financial thing. It was about all of your life. He also recorded many of his prayers, and I love this prayer that he gives. He writes this, Oh God, impress upon me the value of time and give regulation to all of my thoughts and to all of my movements. You see, by regulation what he means, he means about focusing our time in a deliberately intentional way. Because God is a God of generosity. I want to for my whole life about being intentional in the way that I steward that which he has given me. And you don't need to be rich to pray that kind of prayer.

Brothers and sisters, you don't have to have a lot of profit, a lot in your bank account. You don't have to have a lot of time even this prayer can be prayed even by the weakest of believers. Because guess what? God loves. He loves to turn around again, going back to ROI. He loves to take weakness and make it into strength. Says as a matter of fact, that's how I show my strength. I typically don't work through the wise, the beautiful, the noble, right. And that with Paul tells us, I tend to work through the weak to the still small voice, not the big earthquake to the nation. That's the least of these. Not the greatest of these. To the man who was a man of sorrows, who had nothing to esteem him to self, to us, he says. I tend to work through those things, so you don't have to have a lot to pray. That prayer of charmers. Whether you're a young Dutch woman standing against the Gestapo of the Third Reich, or a Scottish preacher facing the economic forces behind slavery, slavery and poverty in the 19th century, the Lord loves to show his strength and our weakness. This proverb ends with this, or almost the second to last proverb here I love this how it ends. It says the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise. For those whose souls have been captured by a generous and loving God, we should expect to see our hearts transformed by his likeness.

We should expect to see the goals of our generosity succeed beyond our wildest expectations, and we should expect to see God glorified in the way that we reflect his character in the world around us.

Let's pray.

Heavenly father, we do lift up this consideration, this meditation on poverty that we find here in Proverbs 11. And I pray that as we consider, we would see the wisdom of it, we would desire it, we would pursue after it.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.