

“WHO do you follow ~ VISION” [1.22.12]

The **VISION** of WRCC will not happen w-out you; *it is dependent upon you b-c that's how God designed it to be!*

PRAY

The **Dead Sea** lies in the southern part of Israel ~ this body of water occupies the **(53 deepest miles)** in all of Palestine.

- **The Dead Sea is continually fed by the Jordan River & (4 more) smaller streams;** which literally pours into it = *millions of tons of water per day.*
- **[QUESTION]** ever thought about why the **Dead Sea is considered DEAD?**
 - It's b-c the **Dead Sea** has *no outlets ~ no tributaries* [that flow out of it].
 - The **Dead Sea** is completely land-locked = no way for water to escape it.

Someone has said *that our lives should resemble channels, not reservoirs;*
a reservoir stores water: **a channel** distributes the water!

*It struck me this week that God created us to be channels of blessings to others:
it's how God designed us!*

I. God's original design

A. (R) Genesis 1: 26 – 27 or p. 3 in pew Bible

“...let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.”

1. **It's impossible to be totally like God** b-c He's God our supreme Creator.
2. But we have **the ability to REFLECT His character** in being *loving + generous*

B. @ least (2 ways God intends) for us to REFLECT His character:

1. **We are to be loving as God is = (R) Matthew 22: 34 – 40 or p. 753 in pew Bible**
(+)
2. **We are also to be generous as God is =(R) II Corinthians 8: 9 or p. 886 in pew Bible**
3. **God's most generous gift** of all = *God's gift of Jesus given for our salvation!*

GOD'S VISION for WRCC = *Loving God ~ Loving Others ~ Together*
is dependent upon you b-c that's how God designed it to be!

[WE understand] that God doesn't need anything from us to get His work done;
God is sovereign & He could do all it w-out our help!
[YET God arranged it] so that His work often depends on our love & generosity!

I believe that @ least **(2 things happen)** when we give w-the right attitude:

- C. **1st thing that happens is** = God reminds us that all we possess from our resources to our giftedness isn't really ours =
b-c God gave us everything we have & it actually belongs to Him.
1. **I Chronicles 29: 14,**
"Everything we have comes from you & we give you only what you first gave us."
 2. **EVERYTHING includes:**
 - a. Are you gifted, attractive, eloquent, brilliant, creative, or clever?
 - b. Are your opportunities in life favorable b-c you were born in the right family or the right country? Do you seem to have the **'Midas touch'** in business?
 - c. If you have any of these **traits or (+) circumstances ~ you have only God to thank.**
 3. **(R) Deuteronomy 8: 10 – 18 or p. 147 in pew Bible**
 - a. **TIME-LESS WARNING** = God wanted Israel to understand that any prosperity they enjoyed came from His hand, not their own.
 - b. **IT'S NOT** our money nor our resources = **it all has come from God!**
 - c. We are not entitled to it but **rather we are only ENTRUSTED with it!**

God expects us to use it to bless others in Jesus' name!

Can you just imagine the *impact on our culture* if American Christ-followers began using their riches as if they belonged to God?

Dave Ramsey puts this **time-less principle into perspective**, “*Every time I put money in the plate at church I am reminded that I am not the owner.*” He goes on to say, “giving his money during offering is like **his own little AA meeting, where he confesses,**

Money is my drug of choice = My name is _____ and I like stuff.”

I also like STUFF ~ I like things you can rev up + I like things that go BOOM!
It’s why we have to build in safe-guards against being completely self-absorbed:

[INSERT] Randy Alcorn’s statement

We spend GI-NORMOUS amounts of money annually = just on:

[INSERT] American Spending Habits

+

\$ 41 Billion in un-used credit cards since 2005

Better way to do life ~ to become who God designed us to be = being loving & generous!

**2nd thing that happens when we give =
we help meet the needs of others whom God also loves!**

II. Being loving & generous is MORE ABOUT US than THEM

A. There’s a line in our VISION STATEMENT that reads =

“They seek to simplify their lives so that others may simply live.”

B. Do you realize what happens w-in you (physically + emotionally) when you give?

1. Psychology Today did a study on generous people who give of their time & resources & the benefits that are associated w-being kind, **here’s what they found:**

- a. **Kinder people live longer ~ healthier lives:** people who volunteer tend to experience fewer aches and pains.
- b. Giving help to others **protects overall health twice as much** as aspirin protects against heart disease.
- c. People **(55 yrs & older)** who volunteer for two or more organizations have an impressive **(44% lower likelihood)** of dying prematurely = this data came after sifting out every other contributing factor including **physical health, exercise, gender, habits like smoking, marital status, and many more.**

2. **Volunteering** ~ giving back to others has a stronger effect than exercising **(4 times)** per week. Research indicated that **being kind** is nearly as beneficial to our health as quitting smoking!
3. **Why does this make sense to me ~ BECAUSE it's how God designed us!**
4. **Proverbs 11: 24 – 25**, "...*there is one who with holds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, & he who waters will also be watered himself.*"
5. **[INSERT] Dr. Karl Menninger ~ self absorption**

C. **What I know** from personal experience since arriving @ WRCC in 2003

1. 100's & 100's of lives are better **BECAUSE OF YOU**.
You chose weekly to be generous with your time & resources.
2. **BECAUSE of YOU:**
 - a. Literally 100's of families are fed each month from our Food Pantry
 - b. **Medical clinics are built & supplied + medically supplied**
to care for those in Panama & Kenya who otherwise would go without!
 - c. **Children are** clothed & supplied with **physical & spiritual nourishment weekly**
here in Hamilton County & throughout our world
 - d. **Gospel is preached weekly** & by God's grace 100's of lives are changed
eternally each year = not only here but through the Global Missions Partners
 - e. **BECAUSE of YOU** ~ people get to see Jesus + feel Jesus thru your personal touches

THANK YOU ~ we could not do this without YOU!

3. IT's TIME to announce the CHRISTMAS OFFERING that will benefit the Special Needs community here in Noblesville and on the Island of Haiti!

I'm so thankful to be part of a church that has FRESH & LIVING WATER flowing thru her!

Thank you for choosing not to settle for **STAGNANT WATER** which is covered over with good intentions + big talk = SCUM!