

DAY ELEVEN

We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

2 Corinthians 8:1-2

Artyom is a ten-year-old Russian orphan. When the church group visited Artyom, for some reason, latched onto Scott. He took Scott by the arm and led him through the orphanage showing off his room and the place he ate meals. All the while Artyom's eyes were filled with joy and laughter. In spite of the fact that Scott spoke little Russian and Artyom spoke no English, the two connected. As the church group prepared to depart, Artyom sat beside Scott, pulled a silver ring from his finger and held it out for Scott to take. Scott eyes filled with tears and he spoke the only Russian word he knew -- nyet, nyet -- no, no. This child, who had nothing in the world to call his own except this ring, desperately wanted to give this ring to Scott. For Artyom, his abundant joy and extreme poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity. Like the Macedonians, Artyom desperately wanted to give.

What do we want? For many of us who have so much, we want more. And truth be told, it's never enough. What would happen if, by God's grace, our desire to gain more and have more could be transformed into a heart-felt desire to give more? What would happen if we spent as much time figuring out ways to give as we spend figuring out how to earn, have and keep?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Who has taught you about generosity?
2. Can you recall a time when someone who could least afford it gave you a generous gift? What was it like? How did you respond? Did it affect you in any way?
3. Can you recall a time when you were particularly generous? What was it like? What did you learn? How has it impacted your life?

PRAYER

Oh God, thank You for the examples of generosity You have sent into our lives. Forgive us Lord for being more concerned with how much we can earn, have and keep, instead of how much we can give. Open our hearts, Oh God, to the joy of generosity, Amen.

PS. Yes, Artyom finally convinced Scott to take the ring. He wears it as a vivid and real reminder of what it means to truly give.