

LIVING GENEROUSLY

a stewardship narrative series presented by TENS

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When I reflect upon today's first reading from Haggai, along with the Epistle reading from 2nd Thessalonians, I take notice of the fear in the communities of those days, the alarm that followers are feeling given their circumstances.

How are those sentiments of fear really that different from what we feel today? Sure, the circumstances are vastly different, but perhaps the overall sentiment is the same.

Fear of the uncertainties of our lives is what keeps many of us from giving back to God. That fear can represent uncertainty about income, unforeseen expenses, health concerns, education costs, and so on. Sometimes, we fear giving of our time and skills because we worry about being spread too thin.

Famed University of Houston researcher and Professor Brené Brown sums it up quite well: "The root of the scarcity issue is fear.... Fear consumes an enormous amount of energy in our lives, and to me that's probably the greatest casualty of the scarcity culture. We are spending so much time and energy being afraid that we are not fully walking into our power and our gifts."



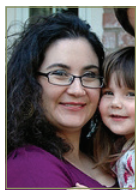
reflection questions

- What is one way you can overcome your fears and make a bold commitment to God?
- What actions do you take that contribute to a feeling of scarcity?

In my limited experience on this Earth, it's been my experience that fear separates me from living the life God meant for me to live. But as a mother of two young children, and as a person wanting to leave her mark on the world, I am working on pushing past my fears and cling to the words of Haggai 1:5b: "My spirit abides among you; do not fear."

One of the ways I work past fear or scarcity is to give more of myself and of my resources, and put my trust in God that there will be enough. When I put a part of my income in the collection plate, I set aside the fear of not having enough, and put a piece of myself up on the altar, giving back a part of what was graciously given to me by God. When I spend time in ministry, I set aside the fear of not having enough time for other endeavors, and I choose to invest in being the hands and feet of Jesus in a world that so desperately needs Him.

But beyond that, in giving, I'm also actively helping to create a silver lining in this world — sharing the hope, the joy, and the salvation that exists for us all. I don't want to be a part of the pervasive culture of fear and scarcity that exists — I want to be a part of helping people to know the lavishly generous God that loves us all. And isn't that Good News worth sharing?!



Elizabeth Honeycutt serves as Chief Steward for Membership & Finance for TENS. A CPA, wife, and mom to two little ones, Elizabeth also serves as treasurer for Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Tomball, Texas.