

The Giving
Discipleship
Journey

Mentioned throughout Scripture, the olive was an essential crop around the Mediterranean. The olives were a staple food source, the wood used for cooking utensils, and the renewing and therapeutic uses of the olive oil were limitless.

It only takes about 40 days for an olive tree to germinate, but they don't begin to bear fruit until they are around five years old. A transformation process is required for the olive tree to reach its maturity and begin to bear fruit.

Similarly, our growth in generosity is less about a financial transaction and more about a transformation; a transformation of the heart. The Giving Discipleship Journey is designed to help you think through the change of heart that must occur for a full transformation.

There are five steps within this journey. Each step is mapped out following the life of an olive tree: from the olive pit to the renewing oil.

You are invited to use this booklet as a guide for prayer and conversation. It is up to you to determine where you are now and what would be required of you to take the next step toward transformational generosity.



1. The **Initial** Giver

Olive trees grow well over 25-30 feet tall, with a spread just as wide. The transformation from a small olive pit to a mature tree is miraculous.



An initial giver

is someone who decides to give for the first time, out of a response to God's Word about giving. This is someone who decides to give something and trust God and the leaders of the Church with this gift.

But since you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you – see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:7-9





2. The **Consistent** Giver

Early in an olive tree's life, consistent pruning is required to maintain its shape. Regular care is essential for abundant yields of olives in the future.

A consistent giver

is someone who decides to give something and to give it on a consistent basis to exercise the discipline of giving on a regular basis. Often, someone who decides to make their gift an online recurring gift will be someone who is learning the behavior of consistency. Non-online givers can be consistent givers as well of course; it just requires more discipline.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8



3. The **Intentional** Giver

A key factor when choosing where to plant an olive tree is the location's drainage. Intentional planning and placement of the tree in the right place is required for it to grow, reach maturity and bear fruit.



An intentional giver

is someone who is beginning to think about their giving in relation to other ways in which they spend their money. This type of giver might ask, “why am I spending more for my cell phone than I am giving to God” or “Should I be giving to God more than I spend on my mortgage each month?” This may also be the point of intentionality when someone begins to earnestly pursue the tithe.

“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'”

Luke 14:28-30





4. The **Sacrificial** Giver

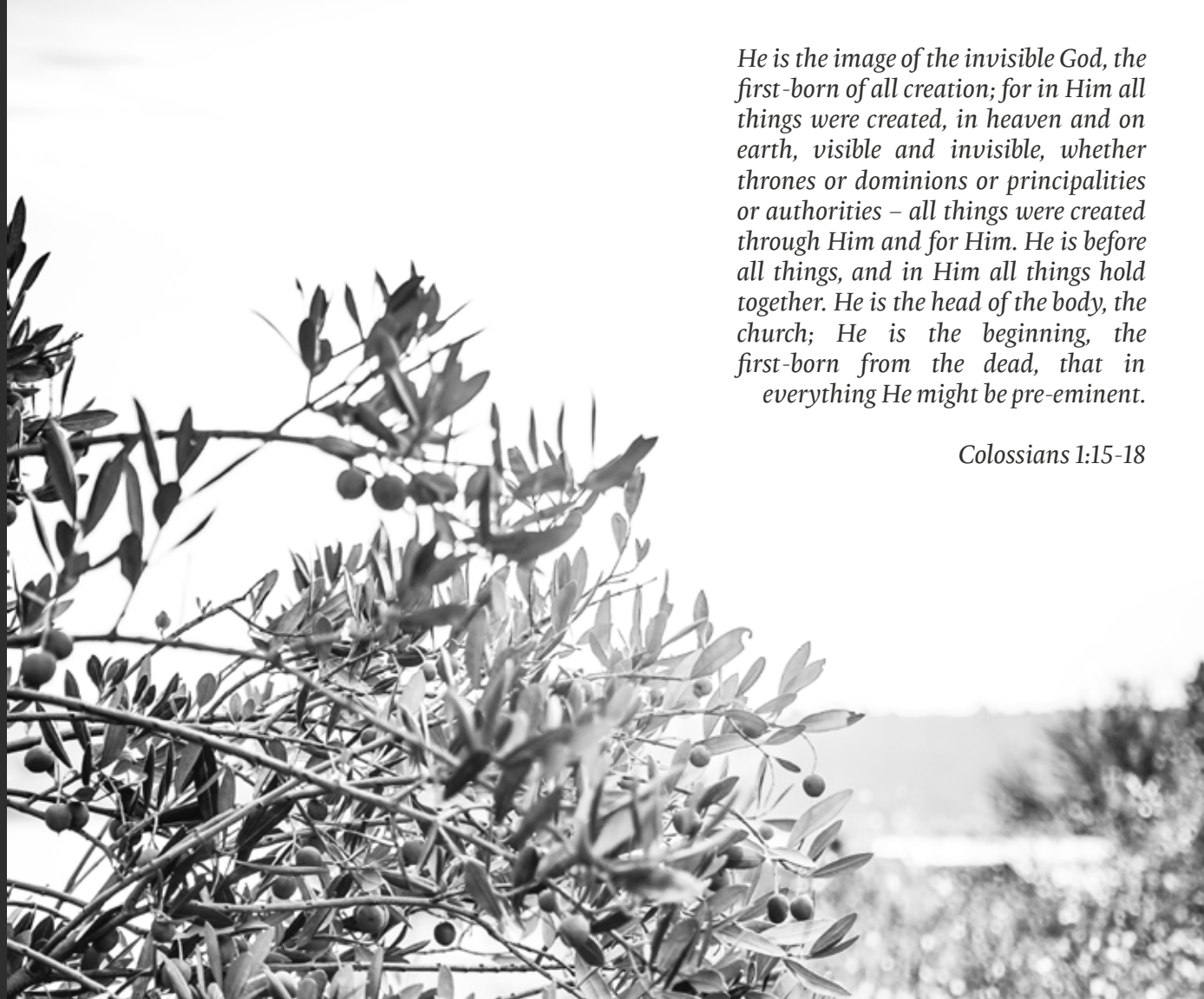
If olives will be used to make oil, the fruit is best when it's purple. Olives must be processed within three days of harvest, and harvesters must sacrifice the entire olive in the pressing process.

A sacrificial giver

is someone who recognizes the cost that Christ paid on the cross for us and is surrendered to honoring God with 100% of their resources as a result. A Sacrificial Giver is someone who gives in a way that changes them, in a way that reflects that their giving is governing their spending/saving rather than their spending/saving governing their giving.

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities – all things were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything He might be pre-eminent.

Colossians 1:15-18



5. The **Lifetime** Giver

There are many ways to extract oil from olives. They all include cleaning, mashing, squeezing and separating the oil from other liquids. The oil then provides several uses throughout its lifetime.



A lifetime giver

is someone who is thinking about the longer trail of generosity rather than just the shorter term of month-to-month generosity or even year-to year. A Lifetime Giver makes decisions in the short term that have longer term effects as it relates to their generosity capacity. They think of what home they buy, what car they purchase, how much savings they choose to keep, all in relation to their generosity capacity.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

1 Timothy 6:6-12



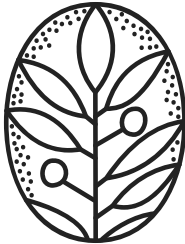


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