



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

"Who's got time to read?" I hear that, a lot. What an anomaly: the brightest people, packing the greatest education investment (*their private university education, obtained at significant cost to their parents*), with the greatest potential for influence on others... are "too busy" to sit down and increase their intellectual capacity through reading a good book.

Good book? That's one of our shorthand nicknames for the **Bible**. Too busy to read the **Bible**? I hear it all the time. But, there are other good books (*note the lack of capitals*). What does it take for me to denote a "good book?"

For one thing, it's probably not *fiction*. Listen, there are exceptions – the works of fiction that will advance your development of your personhood and potential – but, for the most part, fiction is a waste of your time. Not surprisingly, over 90% of the **NY Times** Best-sellers list is usually fiction. Romance novels are always the #1 genre of books sold... and they are often literary pornography, offering to women what **Playboy** does to men.

Good book? A good book is a book that aligns with Paul's advice, in the Great Book: "*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is*



*admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things*" (Philippians 4:8). Great books give you something to think about; while you're inputting new things to think about, make sure that they are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. Be as discriminating about what you put into your head as you are about what you put into your mouth...

My (mostly) weekly review of books – good books – continues with one that is both nonfiction, AND answers the "who's got time to read?" question. **Generosity: moving toward life that is truly life** (National Christian Foundation, 2009), by Gordon MacDonald and Patrick Johnson. Rather than a scholarly treatment of the subject of generosity and stewardship, these men have created a devotional book – designed for daily contemplation over a four week period – that can be conquered in about 10 minutes each day. Over the four weeks, they guide the reader toward

**transformation, freedom, trust** and **life**... and, then toward the **action** that grows out of those newly-strengthened positions.

An excerpt: " *It is more blessed to give than to receive* (Acts 20:35). In this one simple sentence, Jesus expresses a truth so deep we could spend eternity trying to plumb its depths. Like many of Jesus' sayings, it's a paradox. Our human nature screams out just the opposite: *'It is more blessed to receive than to give... accumulation is better than distribution!'* "

The value of biblical generosity is always measured by sacrifice; what a great time - during Recession 2009 - to heighten our understanding of generosity, in the midst of circumstances that allow it to be rehearsed and perfected!

You can't buy this book from stores; you have two options. First, visit their dedicated website at [www.generositybook.com](http://www.generositybook.com) and order a case of them - based on my recommendation - to get yours and gift to friends. Second option: go to this web form, [www.mastersprogram.org/book/](http://www.mastersprogram.org/book/) , fill out your address and name, and tell me you'd like a copy. I'll send it to you - our gift to you, from **The Master's Program** - and simply ask you to let me know how you experienced it, after you spend a month pondering the power of generosity.

So, what are you reading right now? *Could you spare 10 minutes each morning for a month to enhance your ability to emulate one of God's most compelling attributes?*

*Bob Shank*

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