**3 Small Steps: Journey of Generosity**

If you have taken part in a generosity FIKA\* (and if you haven’t, the New Year is a good time to plan one in) you will have seen the excellent videos from Generosity Path, whose strapline is ‘Head – Heart – Hands’. The exploration and living out of our Christian faith is often described as a journey, one that moves from our head to our heart to our hands and these **3 Small Steps,** based on the life of Nicodemus in John’s gospel, will help us in that journey.

**Step 1: Head… Discover what the Bible says about giving and generosity.**

Nicodemus was a respected member of the Sanhedrin, a Pharisee thoroughly trained in Jewish law and theology. He would have read and re-read the scriptures and be well acquainted with the idea of God, who is both mighty and merciful, just and generous.

How well acquainted are you with the scriptures endorsing generosity? “A generous man looks for ways to be generous…” (Isaiah 32:8); “Freely you have received, freely give.” (Matthew 10:8); “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse…” (Malachi 3:10). There are hundreds more. Equip yourself with God’s word and make generosity a foundation for your life.

**Step 2: Heart… Allow God’s generosity to permeate your heart.**

Nicodemus came to Jesus expecting to learn something new. He addresses Jesus as “Teacher” and is ready to add to his knowledge of God. Jesus’ goal is to get through to Nicodemus’ heart. We see by Nicodemus’ questions (vs4/vs9) that he continues to think with his head, trying to work things out in the natural.

Many people I meet in churches talk with their heads about the impossibility of tithing, giving more or obeying God’s word. They have never taken the step of faith required and allowed the word to descend from head to heart. Jesus counters Nicodemus’ head argument by emphasising, “you must”, which must reminds us to replicate the selfless giving of God himself.

Has generosity moved from your head to your heart? One translation of Romans 8:7 says, “If our weak human thoughts rule us, we become God’s enemies. People like that do not want to obey God’s law. They are not even able to obey it.” Let’s take a small step of faith and trust God to fulfil His promises.

**Step 3: Hands… Let generosity pour out of your life in deeds.**

Was Nicodemus’ heart changed? What do you think? Let’s see. We encounter him next in John chapter seven. He’s still weighing it up, using his knowledge of the law to affect his speech and stance - not a bad example for us to follow. But, nearing the end of John’s gospel (chapter 19), Nicodemus is mentioned for the last time, bringing myrrh and aloes to prepare the body of Jesus for burial. This act of generosity, carried out unashamedly in full view, signifies a change of heart. Perhaps, as he anoints his Saviour, he still has the words of Jesus ringing in his ears from that first encounter, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son”.

This advent, as you meditate on God’s word and the gift of his Son, will you allow the Holy Spirit to touch your heart? The proof of that particular pudding will be in a generously lived-out life, obedient and faithful in word and deed. Happy Christmas!

\*FIKA = Time (including cake!) spent with others, in reflection of the generosity of God. [Generosity Fika | The Church of England](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/building-generous-church/generosity-resources/generosity-fika)