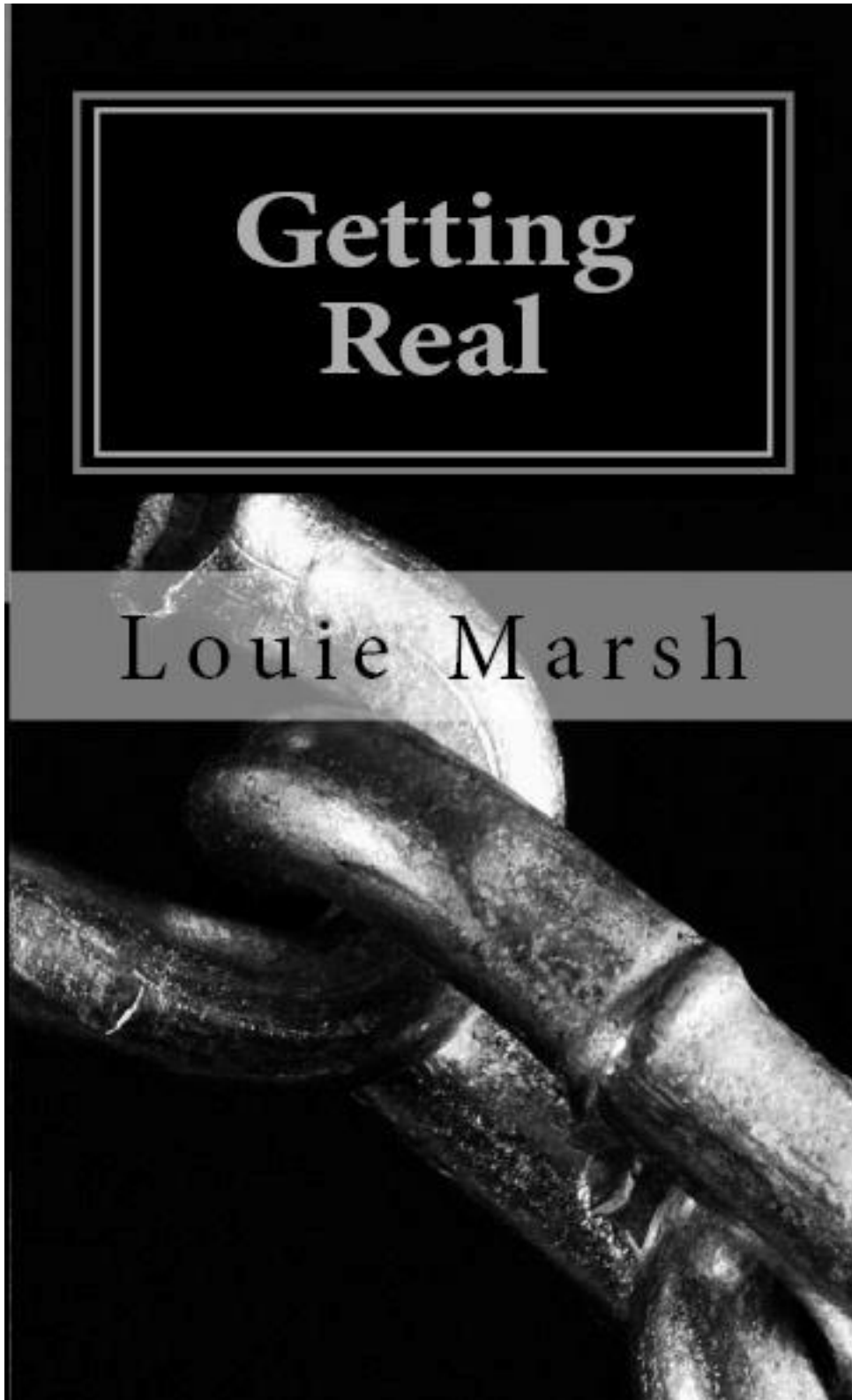


DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

Getting Real

Louie Marsh



Guide Written by Louie Marsh
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Chapter One: The Theory & Practice of Faith

Opening Discussion Question:

Do you agree with the author's idea that there is a big difference between theoretical & practical faith?

Part One: The Theory of Faith

1) Page 9: The author points out that David begins Ps. 27 by proclaiming that God is his personal light. This is the only place in the Old Testament where this happens. Does it surprise you that people in the Old Testament had what we would call a "personal relationship" with God?

2) Pages 10-11: The author lists the 3 results of this kind of faith (no fear, enemies will fall, in war he'll be confident). Do you see this kind of confidence in your life? Why or why not?

3) Pages 11-13: Discuss what it means to be focused on "one thing." How does this work in our world of multi-tasking, busy schedules and constant distraction from all the forms of media?

4) Pages 14-15: Is the author right when he says he tend to become either legalistic or phony in the light of holding high the Theory of Faith? We sing "I Surrender All," but have we? What does an unbalanced view of the life of a Disciple do to us?

Part Two: The Practice of Faith (Begin by reading Ps. 27:9-12)

5) Pages 17-18: Do you agree that we need to learn how to endure contradictions by faith? If you do, *how* do you do that?

6) Pages 19-21: Is the author's definition of doubt correct? If you use that definition is doubt you are currently struggling with? How do you deal with doubt in your life?

7) Page 22: The author gives a definition of what the Christian life is (not avoiding trouble but going through trouble the power of God. Etc.). Agree or disagree and why?

Part Three: Some Parting Advice

8) Page 22-24: David talks about seeing the goodness of God in the land of the living. What does that mean to you? Are you seeing signs of God's goodness now, or are you in a dark place waiting and hoping for God's goodness to dawn upon you?

Chapter Two: The Only Way Out! Ps. 32

Opening Discussion Question:

The issue in this Psalm is guilt. Take a few minutes to talk about guilt. Is it a big problem with most people? How about YOU? Do you think Christians do a good job explaining how our guilt can be forgiven?

Sin's Trinity of Evil (Pages 27-30)

1) David uses three different words for sin in Ps. 32:1-2. Discuss them:

- How often do we deliberately violate one of God's Commands? Why do we do it?
- Why is it a sin to "miss the mark" if I'm trying the best I can? Is that fair?
- Are we guilty of distorting God's Word and Will to better fit into our increasingly licentious culture? In what areas are you most tempted to warp God's Word to fit in with friends & family?

God's Trinity of Forgiveness (Pages 31-35)

2) Here David uses three different words to describe God's forgiveness (Ps. 32:1-2). Discuss them:

- Does the thought that God lifts your sin up & carries it away make you feel more freedom from guilt? Did you realize that when Jesus was "lifted up" on the cross, your sin was lifted up with him?
- Guilt often drives us to cover up (see Adam & Eve). Here we are told that God covers up the guilt of our sin. Your shame is gone, how does that make you feel?
- Once we are forgiven God is no longer counting our sin against us? It's taken away, covered up, and no longer counts. Have you ever thought about how full God's forgiveness really is? How should this realization of God's full forgiveness change how we act and what we do?

Not Confessing & The Only Way Out (Pages 35-39)

3) Why is it so damaging to us to not confess our sins?

4) David says confession had a powerful impact on his life. Why does God demand confession? Why do we sometimes fight confessing?

A Word From the Lord (Pages 39-43)

5) Who do you think is speaking here, God or David?

6) If it is God, then what is your reaction? Are you being open to God's guidance and teaching, or is he having to use a bridle on you? Whose dumber – your average Christian or a horse??

The Lord's Unfailing Love (Pages 44-45)

7) Do you think the quote from Martin Luther King Jr. on page 45 accurately sums up Ps. 32? Can you repeat it from your heart too?

Chapter Three: Evil In the Long Haul Ps. 37

Opening Discussion Question:

Do you struggle with the problem of evil? Can you relate to the feelings described on page 46-47 at a funeral or other places? Have you ever been asked why a good God allows evil? How did you answer that question?

The Prosperity of the Wicked (Pages 48-52)

1) Page 49: David points out how often the wicked prosper. Does this bother you? Notice how honest the Bible is about evil and how it can, in the short term, often pay off. Why do you think God allows this to happen?

2) Page 50: If we go by the standards of Scripture and this Psalm, do we live in an evil culture? Have you ever done evil according to God's standards in the Bible?

3) Page 51: The author says, "sin is sin." Do you agree with that and does that make you an evil person? Why or why not?

Enduring Evil-The Don'ts (Pages 53-56)

4) Page 54: David tells us not to "fret" about this, which means "to grow hot." Do you get hot under the collar when you see evil prospering? *Why* does that seem to bother people so much?

5) Pages 54-55: Have you ever gotten angry at God for bad things happening around or to you? Is it a sin to get angry at God? According to the author what steps can we take to resolve this anger?

Enduring Evil-The Do's (Pages 56-62)

6) Pages 56-57: How does trusting in the Lord help us cope with the evil we see around us? Does it do anything other than make us feel better?

7) Page 57: The second Do is to Do Good. Do you think that our good deeds help fight against all the evil in the world? How does a little good deed (like helping someone across the street, holding a door open for someone, being polite, etc.) make the world better?

8) Pages 57-58: The author suggests we need to be "spoiled by Yahweh." What does that mean to you? How does that really help, does it make the world a better place?

9) Pages 59-62: How does not fighting back when you are slandered help the fight against evil? In the Bible Paul defended himself in court, Jesus didn't. How do you know when to fight and when to turn the other cheek?

The Ultimate Answer To Evil (Pages 62-69)

10) How does God laughing at all the evil men do help me cope with it? Why does He laugh and what will the ultimate fate of all unforgiven evil doers be?

Chapter Four: Out of the Frying Pan & Into the Fire (Ps. 40)

Opening Discussion Question:

Do you find it difficult to deal with change? In your opinion are things changing too fast? How can Disciples of Jesus deal with this?

Out of the Frying Pan (Pages 71-77)

1) Pages 71-72: How well do you do when it's time to wait on the Lord? Do you like waiting on Him?

2) Pages 73-74: Discuss moral relativism. What is the basis for Christian morality? Do we believe God's standards change over time, or does our morality stand firm as the culture changes around us?

3) Pages 75-76: What is the rock upon which we stand? How can God put us on a firm footing for life?

God's Plan for Us (Pages 77-79)

4) Pages 77-79: Is it hard for you to trust God with your future? Do you worry about what might happen? Is that worry a sign of lack of trust in God?

David's Prophecy (Pages 80-86)

5) Page 80: Do you find it strange that this prophecy is found right in the middle of the Psalm?

6) Pages 80-86: Discuss what these verses teach us about Jesus, who He is and how he works in our lives.

Into the Fire – David's Difficulties (Pages 86-88)

7) Pages 86-88: In this section David talks about problems that were outside of him, and issues that were within him. Which are more difficult to deal with – internal or external problems, and why?

Into the Fire – David's Hopes (Pages 88-89)

8) Pages 88-89: Here David that God will take care of those who are troubling him. Often when we pray like this nothing much seems to happen. Why is that? Why is it that God doesn't seem to change those around us?

Into the Fire – David's Prayer (Pages 89-93)

9) Page 89: David admits he's helpless. Is that a hard thing for you to do? Is this really a prerequisite to receiving God's help?

10) Pages 90-91: David looked to what God had done in the past to strengthen his faith. How can we do that? Where can we find stories about God's working in the past that will help us deal with our present and future?

Chapter Five: The Most Terrible Psalm (Ps. 22)

Opening Discussion Question:

Psalm 22 has historically been known as the Psalm that best predicts and describes the crucifixion of Jesus. Would you call Christ's death on the cross the ultimate example of suffering?

The Loneliness of Suffering (Pages 96-105)

- 1) **Page 96:** Do you agree with the quote that when one dies he "dies alone?" Why do you think we tend to feel very alone and/or lonely when we do suffer?
- 2) **Page 98:** "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." This Psalm was quoted by Jesus on the cross. Have you ever felt abandoned by God? Did you honestly and openly express it the way Jesus did on the cross? Why or why not?
- 3) **Pages 99-100:** David said his friends had deserted him; Jesus was deserted by almost everyone when he died. Have you ever been deserted by friend or family in the midst of severe suffering? Why do you think people often pull away from those who are suffering?
- 4) **Page 101:** Do you agree with the author that David's use of terms like "bulls of Bashan," etc. are an indicator that he's speaking prophetically and not primarily about his personal experience?
- 5) **Page 105:** Do you agree or disagree with the author's statement that while we look at Jesus suffering on the cross as an example of how to suffer in a Godly manner, we can never honestly compare our sufferings with his?

Real Life Resurrection (Pages 106-112)

- 6) **Page 106:** David prays for deliverance. Have you ever been in such a terrible situation that you did not or could not pray? Should we always pray for deliverance no matter what?
- 7) **Page 108:** David says that God has despised or rejected those who suffer. Do you think that most people (and Christians) really understand that God is with them in their darkest night? Why do we sometimes equate suffering with rejection or punishment by God?
- 8) **Page 110:** Do you agree or disagree with the author's statement that God has never promised and we are not met to always feel close to God? Why you think we tend to focus so much on our feelings instead of our faith in God's Word?

The Purpose In Pain (Pages 112-118)

- 9) **Page 114:** The author says the ultimate in the suffering of Christ was to bring salvation to the world. Do you think that God can and does use our suffering to help spread the Gospel to others? Can you give a real life example of that happening?

Chapter Six: No Truth Decay (Ps. 16)

Opening Discussion Question:

Everything decays; even non-physical things like relationships often decay and die. Why does this happen, and how can we avoid it?

No Decay (Pages 121-124)

1) Page 122: Ps. 16:10 says the Holy One would not see decay. *Why* did God care about that since he was going to raise Jesus from the dead anyway? What difference would decay have made? He raised Lazarus' decayed body just fine

2) Pages 123-124: Do you agree or disagree that decay is always the easy choice? Why does it seem so easy for people to choose what's bad but easy, over what is good but difficult?

Faith's Bottom Line (Pages 124-127)

3) Pages 124-125: The author says that God is the only person or thing that will not, cannot, see decay. Does this knowledge of God's unchangeable nature encourage you to trust him more?

4) Pages 126-127: Since everything decays, is it possible to leave behind a legacy that won't see decay? If so what do you think that might be?

God's Good Plan (Pages 127-130)

5) Page 128: What's the difference between God having a good plan for my life, and being destined to do or be things with no choice? Can I reject God's plan? Why are there both positive and difficult parts of God's plan for my life?

Spiritual Wisdom (Pages 130-133)

6) Page 130: We live in an age that has more knowledge than ever before. But are we any wiser than our ancestors? What's the difference between wisdom and knowledge?

7) Page 131: The author says that to receive real wisdom from God we must keep Jesus #1 in our lives. Agree or disagree and why? Also, is keeping Jesus #1 hard for you? Why?

8) Page 132: If God is the only source of reliable wisdom, why read books other than the Bible or ask other people for their counsel or advice? How does this make you feel when people ask *you* for advice?

No Truth Decay (Pages 133-138)

9) Page 136: If Christ has defeated all forms of decay in our lives, aside from prayer and Bible study, how can we open our lives to him so that we'll keep growing closer to Him?

Chapter Seven: What A Sick Prayer! (Ps. 38)

Opening Discussion Question:

Why do you think that healing is such a controversial topic in the church? Why is it that we can't seem to ever stop arguing about it?

Two Vital Points (Pages 141-143)

1) **Page 141:** Do you agree that all sin is not caused by sin? Are any illness cause by sin?

2) **Pages 142-143:** The author says not all sicknesses are physical. Do you agree or disagree and why? Can you give some examples of a non-physical illness?

The Inner Illness (Pages 143-151)

3) **Pages 144-145:** The author says that God's grace never allows us to sin. Have you ever justified sinning by saying God will forgive it, or have you heard someone else say that? Do you think that cheapens the grace of God?

4) **Pages 145-146:** Shalom refers to a wholeness of body and mind as they relate to their Creator. Do you agree the root of all real illness is a lack of harmony between God and man?

5) **Pages 146-147:** The author talks about God disciplining us. What is this discipline? How does God do it? Are all my troubles and problems God's discipline?

6) **Page 150:** The author says it's more important to be honest than to be honest? Agree or disagree and why? Do you think we can grow spiritually while we are knowingly dishonest with ourselves or God?

The Outer Illness (Pages 151-156)

7) **Page 152:** Why do we tend to think the worst of others? What does the author suggest we do instead of that? Does that sound realistic to you?

8) **Page 155:** The author says that verses 16-18 are a model prayer for us to follow. Do you agree or disagree and why? Also, should this model prayer be prayed publically or privately?

A Prayer Answered (Pages 156-157)

9) **Page 156:** If God says no or not now, is that a real answer to prayer? How do you feel when it seems as if God is answering your prayer that way?

A Real Sick Prayer (Pages 157-162)

10) **Page 162:** The author says the real object of God's work in our lives is not to make us healthy, wealthy and wise, but to make us like Christ. Agree or disagree and why? How do all our prayers relate to God's goal?

Chapter Eight: Life is Tough & Then Ya Die! (Ps. 39)

Opening Discussion Question:

Is it possible for someone to try too hard to be good? Can you be so concerned about not doing anything wrong that you don't do anything right either?

Life is Tough (Pages 164-169)

1) Page 165: The author quotes the Bible about not being over wise. What does that mean to you? How is it possible to be too wise?

2) Page 168: David says he began to pray when his heart grew hot. Have you ever had an experience like David did here? What does it mean to have your heart grow hot? What does it feel like? Should you call a doctor?

And Then Ya Die (Pages 169-173)

3) Page 169: If someone is afraid to die does that show they lack a proper perspective on life? When you seriously think about your own death, how does it make you feel?

4) Page 170: How can I begin to see both my life and my problems from God's point of view? In terms of eternity are my problems really that small?

5) Page 171: The author says looking at huge mountains helps him to understand just how small both he and his problems really are. What helps you to understand how great God is and how small you are?

6) Page 172: In spite of our being so small, God loves us and gave his only Son for us. How does that make you feel? What does that say about how great and powerful God really is?

But There Is Hope (Pages 173-182)

7) Page 173: David asks "What do I look for?" That's a great question! What are you looking for in life? Are you looking to God for your meaning and help, or to something or someone else?

8) Pages 174-175: Do you agree with the author that we can destroy relationships with others when we put too many expectations on them? Have you ever felt someone was asking more from you than you could give them? How do we solve this problem?

9) Page 179: Do you think that idolatry is a real problem for us today? What is an idol and how does idolatry operate in our lives? Do you have any idols that keep pushing their way into your life? If so, how do you fight them?

Chapter Nine: Body Building Praise! (Ps. 30)

Opening Discussion Question:

How much of your prayer life is given to praise? Do we usually spend more time asking God to help us and others, or praising him for who he is and what he does?

Remember What God Has Done (Pages 184-188)

1) Pages 184-185: David thanks God for what he done for him in the past. How often do we thank God for what he's done? Is it important to do that, or should we just be forward looking? Why look to the past?

2) Page 187: David also thanks God for things he's either currently doing or *will do in the future!* How often do we praise God for what he promises to do but hasn't yet (2nd coming, etc.)? Is that difficult for you to do?

Cry Out For God's Help (Pages 188-193)

3) Page 188: The author says God delights for us to pray to him. But why? If God has an eternal plan why should we pray? Can we make a difference in what God does through our prayers?

4) Pages 191-192: What kind of "blessed subtractions" do you need in your life? The author lists three areas where God may need to subtract things from you for your own good. Discuss them:

- People
- Places
- Things

Understanding God's Discipline (Pages 193-196)

5) Page 194: David says that while sin angers God, his anger lasts only for a moment. How do you feel about God being angry? Does this contradict the New Testament when it says, God is love? Have you ever thanked God that his anger only lasts a moment and has been paid for by Jesus on the Cross?

Don't Get Cocky! (Pages 196-197)

6) Page 196: Is it possible to get over confident in our spiritual lives? Have you ever done that? Are there certain areas in your life that you tend to get cocky about and then pay for it?

How To Make Praising God A Lifestyle (Pages 199-201)

7) Pages 200-201: Discuss each of the four ways the author says will help us live a lifestyle of praise:

- Look Back
- Look At
- Look Right
- Look Ahead

Chapter Ten: Thunder and Praise (Ps. 29)

Opening Discussion Question:

When you see God's power in nature does it make you feel closer to God, or make you want to praise and pray to him?

Join in the Praise of God (Pages 204-207)

1) Page 204: How often do you think of praise as a solitary endeavor? Yet David here speaks of it as something done in a crowd or a congregation? Do we praise God enough in our worship services?

2) Page 205: The author speaks of "empty praise." What is it, and do you agree that there's too much of it in the church today? Have you ever found yourself giving "empty praise" to God?

3) Page 205: In place of empty praise, what does the author say God wants from us? How specific do you tend to be when you praise God?

4) Page 206: All praise is worship, but all worship is not praise. Agree or disagree and why?

The Reality of God Behind His Power (Pages 207-209)

5) Pages 207-208: Do you think that old Yam is in a jam now that God's power is on display? None of us worship Yam, but do we have other things that seek to steal praise away from God?

6) Pages 208-209: When you see the destructive power of nature, do you ever stop and praise God for his power? He is greater than any force of nature, how often should we be praising him for that?

Believe or Not, God is In Control (Pages 209-211)

7) Page 211: When your life is in chaos and everything seems to be out of control, do you have a difficult time believing God is in control? Do you stop and thank him for being in control, in the midst of the raging flood? Do you think we praise God enough during our difficulties?

Let God's Power Make You A Fierce Disciple (Pages 212-214)

8) Page 212: Does it seem like a contradiction to be fierce and a Disciple at the same time? Do you want to be a fierce Disciple of Jesus?

9) Page 213: Disciples of Jesus have the Spirit's power in their lives, how often do we give thanks for that? We should be thankful, confident people, thanks to knowing His Power is in our lives. Are we, and if not why not?

10) Page 214: A good closing prayer, "Come O Word of God and fill us with your power and peace today. Amen."

About the Author:



After 36 ½ years in the local ministry Louie Marsh is attempting to start a new ministry of teaching the Bible both at home in the USA and around the world. He is currently working on plans to return to Asia or Africa to teach as well as seeking opportunities to teach here in the States.

Louie is focusing his teaching ministry on Discipleship since Jesus' last command was to "go make disciples."

What is Discipleship? How does it work? Why is the church so often failing to produce real Christ-like Disciples? These are some of the questions he hopes to address as he continues teaching whenever and wherever God allows him.



How You Can Help

There are many ways you can help his ministry, here's just a few:

- **Write a Review** – now that you've read *Getting Real*, you can be a big help to Louie if you'll write a short review of it on Amazon.com and/or Barnes and Noble.com. Please be honest about what you think, if you think it sucked just say so! You'll have to have an account on both sites, then just go the *Getting Real* page and click on the write a review link. The more reviews the more interest a book usually receives as it shows shoppers it's actually being read.
- **Invite Louie to teach or preach** – Louie is always looking for opportunities to teach a seminar or to preach at worship services. If your church, or one that you know about, needs it's pulpit filled, please let them know about this ministry.
- **Pray** – nothing even comes close to the power of prayer. Please pray for Louie and his ministry.
- **Get on the mailing list** – if you'd like to be on Louie's e-mail newsletter list, just e-mail him at gunghoson@gmail.com and let him know.
- **Financial Support** – if you'd like to help financially support his ministry, or just want more information about it, use the e-mail address above to contact Louie.

Affiliation:

Louie is currently affiliated with Ripe For Harvest Ministries. RFH is a non-profit organization that seeks to help people who are called by God to serve Him. They give all their affiliates the freedom they need to pursue their God given dreams while providing them with the tax exempt status and bookkeeping help they need. RFH is a member of the National Association of Evangelicals and the Evangelical Council for Fiscal Accountability, so you know your financial gifts will be handled correctly.

