



Biblical Foundations

The World's Greatest Donor

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 8:9 (NIV)



Milton S. Hershey was born in 1857 to Henry and Veronica Hershey on a family farm in Derry Township, Pennsylvania. Because of his father's unsuccessful business ventures, the family frequently moved from one location to another. This resulted in a challenging educational environment; young Milton attended seven schools in eight years.

At fourteen, Hershey began an apprenticeship with a confectioner in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Later, he moved to Colorado to learn the art of making caramels. In 1886, Hershey brought his candy-making skills to Lancaster, where he started the Lancaster Caramel Company. The business took off, and in four years he became one of the leading producers of caramel in the United States.

In 1893, Hershey attended the Columbian exposition in Chicago, where he discovered the art of making chocolate. Buying all the manufacturing equipment from the expo and moving it to his caramel factory, he began making chocolate. Eventually, he perfected his recipe for milk chocolate.



Hershey moved the Hershey Chocolate Company back to his hometown of Derry Township. Surrounded by dairy farms, the area provided a ready supply of milk to manufacture of his chocolate.

As he developed his chocolate business, Hershey placed a high value on his employees. He believed he should treat them fairly and compensate them generously. He began to build an entire town designed for the care and well-being of his employees and their families. The town included homes, parks, churches, recreation facilities, and a trolley system.

Over time, he added a community building, a convention hall, a swimming pool, numerous schools, and an amusement park. In 1909, he started the Hershey Industrial School for Orphan Boys, which eventually expanded to include girls as well. The town came to be known as Hershey, PA.

Before his death, he founded the M. S. Hershey Foundation and the Hershey Trust Company. He donated the majority of his wealth—\$60 million—to the School Trust for the ongoing operation of the Hershey school for orphans. (That's today's equivalent of \$1.8 billion!) He did this with no publicity or fanfare. Those funds have now grown to more than \$16 billion, and the school continues to provide homes and education to orphans, with over 2,000 currently enrolled.

Milton Hershey's story pictures tremendous generosity. Many other people throughout history have also displayed amazing generosity. But there is one whose generosity outshines them all: Jesus.

Jesus is fully God, and, as such, he enjoyed all the advantages of divinity. He was unencumbered by time, space, and power. His knowledge, understanding, and wisdom had no limits. He enjoyed full union and fellowship with the Godhead. Not only does he own all the wealth of the universe—he created it all.

When the Son of God became man, our supreme authority became a servant. The giver of life



surrendered his own life at the hands of an ungrateful humanity. He suffered one of the most painful, shameful deaths imaginable. He had the most to lose, and he gave up everything.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.

—Philippians 2:5–8 (NASB)

The world's greatest donor sacrificed everything—for you and for me. The reason? “For your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9 NIV).

What a gift! Let us never lose sight of the immense love of our Savior demonstrated by his extreme sacrifice.