

Two weeks on culture: Desire to Operate | Are & Do | Invitation | Relationship = Christ – People

Culture Generosity – Same principle invitation: Disciples = Invite courageously – Give generously

Money = Touchy | ‘I’ll trust you to teach me about eternity, but leave my money alone’ | **Can’t**

Stewardship falls under shepherding | **Pastors are under-shepherds for our Perfect Shepherd**

• Not going get: Guilt into giving = Unbiblical | Promise of return = Heretical | Amount = Legalistic

Not ‘how far behind budget’ speech | **ATONOMOUS** | **Fill a hole – Climb a mountain** | **THANK YOU**

• Are going get: Scripture | God speaks through His Word and brings conviction through His Spirit

A core text that we believe lays out the New Testament principle for giving & giving generously

Context: Paul...Exhorting Church in Corinth | 1 Cor. 16:1-4 | Take up an offering for Jerusalem Church

• Jerusalem = 3x Poverty – Persecution – Famine | Macedonians | Generosity breeds generosity

• Corinthians = Not prepared – resources not sent | **Us...ministers die on short-term excitement**

Paul: Strange that we Christians need encouragements to give, when God has given so much to us

Big Idea - Giving isn’t something we do...it is something we are | **READ**

Paul did not see anything wrong or unspiritual about asking people to give to the mission

• He did not tell them how much – but he did expect them to give to the mission | **WHY?**

Giving is an obedience that pleases the Lord | **Any obedience...blessing** | **3 blessings come generosity**

1. **Generosity Reflects and Refines Our: Mentality (6-7)**

Start a culture of generosity – Step off platform right direction | **4 Mentalities of God-honoring giving**

a) **Sacrificial** – ⁶ **whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly, & whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully.**

• Metaphor – Farmer with seed: Eat it – Store it – Plant it | Give it up - ‘Bountifully’ = Big Harvest

b) **Prayerful** - ⁷ **Each one must give as he has decided in his heart,**

• Spiritually Sought & Materially Manifested | Thoughtful vs Impulsive | Rational & Emotional

c) **Willful** - **not reluctantly or under compulsion** | Hardest and most freeing about generosity...why?

• Think as a compulsory activity (law) | **Church environment...taxes** | Not an act of love

No longer a response to God’s, but a means of earning God’s grace | **Not earned...given**

d) **Cheerful** - **for God loves a cheerful giver.** | Not sad – mad – grudgingly givers | Happy | Motivation matters

Farmer - Motives do not matter – Sows seed & weather: Reap a harvest for profit – pride – pleasure

Not how we give – We give not to receive but as a response | **Each one is a response to the Gospel**

Sacrifice – Cross | **Prayerful & Willful** – Gethsemane | Hebrews 12:2 – Joy that was set before Him

Essential mentalities giving...gets even better...giving has purpose...Scriptural expectations

2. **Generosity Reflects and Refines Our: Expectations (8-11a)**

God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way,

When we put money toward something, we expect something to happen (**vending machine**)

So what should our expectation be when we give? It depends a lot on how we view our giving.

3 uses – save, spend, invest | **Save = Later usage** | **Spend – Budget** | **Invest –Return**

• Most of us functionally put our giving into “spend” category – **Church Bill** | **Not wrong...better!**

○ Good stewardship dictates = minimize expenses – pay the least possible to get what we want

• Instead, we need to start looking at our generosity through an investment lens.

○ Because good stewardship = maximize investments

Not: How much do I have to give...fulfill my obligation | **How much can I give...maximize my return**

Defining ‘return’ is vital – Lots wrong (Prosperity – Guilt Tithing) – Generosity...expected returns

• **Contentment:** *God is able to make all grace abound to you, so having all sufficiency in all things at all times,*

○ there are 4 “all”s in this verse and they all point to God’s ability to provide for our needs.

○ What does God provide? All grace, all sufficiency, in all things, at all times

Paul saying, Giving displays trust | God will provide you with what you need...In all things. At all times

• **Righteousness:** *“He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”*

○ Psalm 112, and the “he” here is anyone who follows God.

○ Those who freely and cheerfully give will see their righteousness endure

○ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. - You can expect a harvest of righteousness!

○ Sow submission to God’s instruction & sow generosity - can anticipate harvest righteousness.

• **Multiplication:** Theme woven through: you may abound in every good work...He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed...You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way. **Promise clear: God will multiply the seed of the generous giver** | **HBC – TIME**

Multiplied: Opportunities – Leaders – Resources – Discipleship – Churches – Outreach

Paul – This = Return investment...better than getting more material wealth for your material wealth

That’s what you get...what is the final result?

3. **Generosity Reflects and Refines Our: Worship (11b-15)**

which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹² For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. ¹³ By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, ¹⁴ while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Remember...Corinthians were collecting to help the church in Jerusalem with an urgent physical need

God uses gifts for so much more - God doesn’t need our money - Uses generosity in powerful ways

Generosity transforms God’s church through:

• **Gratitude:** ...which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.

○ First thing generosity produces in church - Thanksgiving to God | **We (Staff) thankful to God**

Don’t underestimate this power - Our generosity stimulates worship, and worship is everything

From my home to two locations and three services – Baptisms – Staff – Ministries | **PRAISE GOD!**

• **Witness:** By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ...

○ Giving’s natural outflowing of our confession of Gospel – Generosity’s witness to God’s gospel

• **Unity:** *and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.*

Paul says the church in Jerusalem will long for & pray for the church in Corinth because of this gift

• Radical statement - Jerusalem Christians were Jews | Corinthians primarily Gentiles

○ Nothing to do each other – What changed? The Gospel - They’re longing & praying each other!
God uses our tangible, material generosity to accomplish his spiritual purposes for the church!

So what does it look like for us to build a culture of generosity?

Some of you when you hear this are thinking, “ok that’s all great. Now give me the number”

• Is it 10%? Pre-tax or post? Tax Return? Can I deduct my expenses? Only to the church?

1. The fallen condition of the human heart will always seek a religious answer

2. It’s not about equal giving it’s about equal generosity

3. God purchased 100% of your life to accomplish 100% of His Purposes | **What’s the number?**

I can’t give you a number because that’s not how God has set up the New Testament principle

• A culture of generosity is not some percentage to God and the rest for me

• A culture of generosity says, God has given me life and freedom, I will invest every resource I can into growing his kingdom and multiplying his worship.

And because the church is the epicenter of God’s worship here on earth and the institution tasked with proclaiming his Gospel, that’s where my investment needs to start

I’m not going to give you a number – Jesus paid for and because the entire satisfaction of the Law

• **I urge you – Shepherding your soul - Take what God has said and think...already done offering**

• How you can maximize your investment into God’s kingdom, expecting the harvest of contentment, righteousness, multiplication...looking forward to seeing God use your resources for the growth of his kingdom & the glory of his name – Sacrificial | Prayerful | Willful | Cheerful

DECEMBER – Not looking to fill a hole – Plan for opportunity | **Big Ask someday** | **25K above budget**

Final verse of Paul’s exhortation here says, **Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!**

The first, greatest gift ever given to God’s people was God himself, through the sacrifice of Christ.

We’re going to take time to remember that sacrifice now...Communion...