

Series: The Generosity Factor

Speaker: Dr. Bill Patterson



## Today's Scripture

2 Corinthians 8:1-7 NIV

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. <sup>2</sup>In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. <sup>3</sup>For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, <sup>4</sup>they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. <sup>5</sup>And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. <sup>6</sup>So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. <sup>7</sup>But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.



Stages of motivational development in biblical giving



## Soul Food

### GOING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

You are encouraged to read verses before and after the selected passages.

**Sunday:** Matthew 6:19-24 Your heart is where your treasure is.

**Monday:** 2 Cor. 9 6-15 God loves a cheerful giver.

**Tuesday:** Psalm 37:21 The righteous give generously

**Wed:** Psalm 116:12 Gratitude is the attitude you start with.

**Thursday:** Malachi 3:7-11 God's view on tithing.

**Friday:** Mark 12:41-44 She gave her all.

**Saturday:** Mark 15:42-47 He did it for love.

### Today's Response

Before God I recognize that I am at the \_\_\_\_\_ level of giving. I desire to move to the \_\_\_\_\_ level of giving.

In response to my love for Jesus I want to:

- Serve
- Increase my giving
- Give a special gift
- Pray

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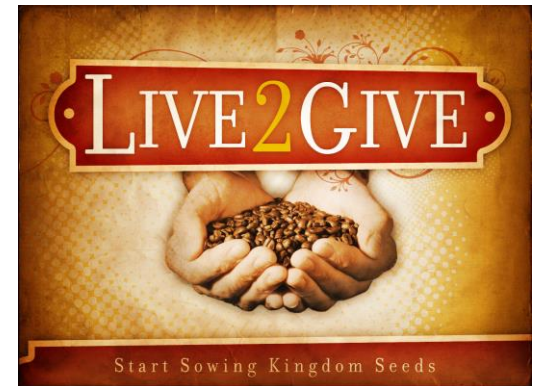
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November 15, 2020

Sermon Notes



Big Idea: There are many motivations in our response to God's generosity.

**This week's memory verse:**

Matthew 6:21 NIV

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

James 1:22 (NIV)

## Your Life in Light of the Word

Why do you think the topic of finances is such a delicate issue for North Americans?

Why does Jesus point out that where our treasure is that will be where our heart is as well? What are the implications of this statement (Mt. 6:21) for many Christians?

Why is financial giving a good barometer of our spiritual status?

Why does the Bible start at the level of gratitude for the basic motivation for giving to God's work through the local church?

What does the practice of withholding money from God's work through the local church say about a person's spiritual health?

How does Malachi 3:7-11 shed light on today's topic?

What is it about the Cross that inspires gratitude that motivates people to give to God?

Describe a person you know who has given in obedience to the Lord. Did she/he tithe, give a free will offering or give sacrificially? What was the impact of their giving?

How can Trinity Church become better at helping people see their lives changed by Christ?

Personal reflection: Which level best identifies your motivation for giving? What would be necessary for you to move up one level?

### *Praying God's Word ~ 2 Corinthians 8:1-7*

- Ask God to help you respond biblically to severe trials in your life.
- Ask God to help you become a more generous person.
- Ask for a biblical perspective on your possessions.



## Treasure in Heaven

Our Daily Bread

When I was growing up, my two sisters and I liked to sit side-by-side on top of my mother's large cedar-lined chest. My mom kept our wool sweaters in it and handiwork that was embroidered or crocheted by my grandmother. She valued the contents of the chest and relied on the pungent odor of the cedar wood to discourage moths from destroying what was inside.

Most earthly possessions can easily be destroyed by insects or rust, or can even be stolen. Matthew 6 encourages us to place a special focus—not on things that have a limited lifespan but on those that have *eternal* value. When my mom died at fifty-seven, she had not accumulated a lot of earthly possessions, but I like to think about the treasure she stored up in heaven (vv. 19–20).

I recall how much she loved God and served Him in quiet ways: caring faithfully for her family, teaching children in Sunday school, befriending a woman abandoned by her husband, comforting a young mother who had lost her baby. And she *prayed*. . . . Even after she lost her sight and became confined to a wheelchair, she continued to love and pray for others.

Our real treasure isn't measured in what we accumulate—but in what or whom we invest our time and our passions. What "treasures" are we storing up in heaven by serving and following Jesus?

*Dear Father, help me to choose to invest my life in things that are eternal.*

**Our real wealth is what we invest for eternity.**