



SUPER JOY - A STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS (Week 15) - Why Your Giving Matters

The Apostle Paul has just told the Philippians that he has learned through his relationship with Christ how to be content in whatever circumstances he finds himself. Whether he is abounding or finds himself in abject poverty, he has learned to be content.

Then he continues:

Philippians 4:14

14 Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.

We share in each other's troubles out of kindness.

Luke 6:35

35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

So, if we're to be kind and lend to our enemies, how much more to our brothers and sisters in Christ?

- **The nature of God's kindness and love | more like diamonds rather than pavement**

Again, if we're to be kind and lend to our enemies, how much more to our brothers and sisters in Christ? Because they are spiritually related to us.

God is never kind to people because they deserve it. And neither should we be.

Ephesians 4:32

32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Now, this is a kindness and generosity that is specific to the Christian's relationship to Christ. It is unique in this sense, because Christian kindness and our generosity is centered in the gospel. God has been kind to us, most notably demonstrated in the cross of Jesus Christ. We have experienced God's kindness.

However, since we are all created in God's image, human kindness is built into the system, regardless of whether we believe the gospel or not.

Proverbs 11:17

**A man who is kind benefits himself,
but a cruel man hurts himself.**

Now that is true regardless of whether someone is a Christian or not. Even the most secular thinking person in the world will admit that when you show kindness to others they show kindness in return. This is why the dumbest thing to do when you're experiencing a customer service issue is to get angry with the person helping you. You'll get a lot farther with kindness.

Philippians 4:15-17

15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.

As Paul was going around starting churches and training disciples, they supported Paul financially along with some of these other churches. Today, this would be equivalent to having a church planting fund where we support other new churches.

Because the mission of making Christ known is a partnership that we have with each other. It's a group effort, each part of the body doing everything a Christian is called to do. This sounds like there's a lot involved. It's as simple as Christ being the center of your life.

If Christ is the center of your life you will pray. And if you pray, you will pray for those who are far from God.

If Christ is the center of your life, the One who came to seek and save those who are lost, mission will be at the forefront of your thoughts.

“Are you kidding me? I've got a job and kids and a house payment and this spouse to take care of...” I hope you consider your children part of that mission field. If you do, mission will be at the forefront of your thoughts because you're concerned about the salvation of your children.

Now, if this is at the forefront of your thinking regarding your children it should also lend your thinking to consider even those outside your immediate family.

16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

Paul doesn't seek the gift, but he seeks the fruit that their giving represents. It shows their heart as it shows our heart. Every time you give, you reveal what matters to you. Look at your receipts. They will tell you what matters most to you.

Look at your calendar. Time, talent, treasure is about how you're spending your life. So when you examine your calendar, Sunday — Timmy's soccer. Monday — Timmy's dentist. Tuesday — Timmy's practice. Wednesday — Timmy's back rub.

It can reveal what we're investing our life in, which shows us what our life revolves around.

Matthew 6:21

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

I think one of the greatest challenges of Christian parenting is not worshipping our children. By that I mean, our children and their activities become the center of our lives. Whatever your life revolves around is what you worship.

- **Children and church — At some point, most Christian parents face the child who doesn't want to go to church. We worry that if we force our children to go to church that it will do more harm than good.**
- **The nephew**
- **Things that your child cannot opt out of show their value. Anything that is optional is unnecessary. That's why it's optional.**

- **If something is mandatory, it shows that it has more value than whatever would take its place.**
- **To make something optional is to presume upon it.**

Romans 2:4

4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

God's kindness leads somewhere the same way that becoming a Christians leads to be joined to a body of believers. This idea of being a Lone Ranger Christian is not a New Testament concept.

This is why I will say without apology that Christians who are not engaged with a body of believers are living in disobedience to the Word of God.

Philippians 4:18

18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Notice something here. Paul equates their giving with giving to God. Ultimately, what we give is given to God. Even if it involves another party or the church itself, the giving is to God. So, the withholding is also withholding from God.

Job 6:14

“He who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty.

When we are neither generous or kind it is because 1) we have forgotten kindness shown to us and 2) we have forgotten God’s kindness.

2 Chronicles 24:22

22 Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. And when he was dying, he said, “May the Lord see and avenge!”

How soon we forget. The thing is, we don’t show kindness based upon some sort of tally or score. We show kindness because God shows us kindness.

It’s the same with giving. We don’t give with some country club mentality that our giving is our membership dues entitling us to x number of visits from the pastor. We give because He gives. We don’t even give to get. We give because He’s giving.

2 Samuel 9:7

7 And David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always.”

This is David showing kindness to someone just because of who he was related to. How much more will God show kindness to us because we have been adopted as one of His children.

Ephesians 2:4-7

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

The gospel shows us many things about God and one of them is that God is kind to His enemies. Once we place our faith in Christ, we are no longer His enemies. Before we know Christ we are surprised that God is kind to us because deep down we know we don't deserve it. Once we know Christ we should believe God is kind to us. And He continues to be kind to us.

- **Christmas — “You actually bought this for me.”**

Philippians 4:19

19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Our giving is a direct reflection of our trust in the character of God. If we trust God will supply our every need, then we will be generous. If we doubt God will supply our every need, we will not.

Again, giving is related to our view of God.

Philippians 4:20-23

20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. **22** All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

*Dear Center Church family,
We cannot put into words the appreciation we have for each and everyone of you for your gracious donations to our family. Our girls had such an amazing Christmas because of all of the amazing gifts that they received. The overwhelming joy that we saw on our kids' faces when they saw all of the gifts under our tree and as they were opening them all up was absolutely priceless.*

Alison has already started shopping and has already doubled her wardrobe with all of the gift cards to her favorite stores. Haylee could not contain her excitement when she saw the chocolate pen, baby alive and all of the arts and crafts supply's, and Jillian almost lost her mind when she opened the baby dolls and all of the princess and Shopkins stuff. The gas card and Stater Bros card are such a blessing that Ray and I never expected.

The words "thank you" just don't seem adequate enough to express just how

thankful we are. I hope you really know just how much it meant to us that you were all willing to take the time and money to help people that you have never met or only saw a few times on Sunday morning.

From all of us from the bottom of hearts, thank you, thank you, thank you.... a million times thank you.

*Sincerely,
The Scott Family
(Ray, Jennifer, Alison, Haylee & Jillian)*