

GOING DEEPER STUDY (August 31, 2025) PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Are you a generous person? What evidence is there of your generosity ... or lack of? The larger questions ... why should we be generous? What makes one person generous and another not? Science provides no real answers. Evolutionary theory offers little help. The best both can do is suggest that we are hard-wired for generosity because it benefits us, it helps us survive. Is our generosity self-serving? Is it the result of impersonal amino acids (the building blocks of life) working to promote our survival? One study states that, "Generous behaviour increases happiness, but the neural underpinnings of this link are unknown." (*National Laboratory of Medicine*) Is that (our survival and happiness) why we're generous? Maybe ... or ... possibly, generosity is embedded in how God made us. He created us for rich, overflowing, relationships: with Him, and with others. He designed us to live generously, freely, to give more than we take in. When a person meets Jesus they re-discover generosity, and it begins to grow in them. One who rejects Jesus and yet is generous is tapping into to Someone deeper than they know. That explanation is more appealing, and more consistent with how I have experienced this world, and what I've seen in my own life. Jesus people are generous people ... or more accurately ... we are becoming, day by day, more generous BECAUSE we, day by day, are more aware of how generous God has been, and is, with us.

Ordinary People Extraordinary Lives: A Generous Life (2 Samuel 9:1-13)

"¹And David said, 'Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?' ²Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, 'Are you Ziba?' And he said, 'I am your servant.' ³And the king said, 'Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?' Ziba said to the king, 'There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet.' ⁴The king said to him, 'Where is he?' And Ziba said to the king, 'He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.' ⁵Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar. ⁶And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, 'Mephibosheth!' And he answered, 'Behold, I am your servant.' ⁷And 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.' ⁸And he paid homage and said, 'What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?'

⁹ Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, 'All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. ¹⁰ And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall always eat at my table.' Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. ¹¹ Then Ziba said to the king, 'According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do.' So Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons. ¹² And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants. ¹³ So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet." (ESV)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. Why did David ask about survivors of Saul's house?
2. How did Mephibosheth respond to David's invitation?
3. What did David do for Jonathan's son?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

4. What does, is there "anyone left of the house of Saul" mean?
5. What does, "he ate always at the king's table" mean?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

6. Who is the most "generous" person you know? What are some examples of their generosity?
7. Describe a time someone was generous to you? What did they do, and how did you respond?
8. Would you describe the world we live in, and the city we live in, as generous? Why or why not?
9. What prevents some from being generous?
10. What is the opposite of generous? What would that look like?
11. Why should a person be generous?
12. Describe two instances when you felt you were generous?
13. Has God been generous to you? If yes, what does God's generosity look like? If no, why not?
14. How can you be generous this week? And the weeks after ...

As you spend time praying, remember that prayer is meant to be a natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Thank God for His generosity. Ask God to help you keep in mind all of His kindnesses to you. Ask God to help you to be generous to others. God will help you, because He loves you and His generous love is all you need, all that any of us needs.