

This is Who We Are Part 1

We Are Generous!

Intro: *We are beginning a new series today focused on our core value **We practice gratefulness and generosity in everything we do.** This is all about you walking in God's very best for your life and generosity has always been His plan. This has been modeled by our founding pastors, Amy and I and our leaders since day one. This house is generous. This is who we are.*

- Many people in the world think they are generous because they give something but giving and being generous are two different things
- In the US, most Americans don't think they are rich, but we are. Most think they are generous, but we are not.
- If you drive a car: top 6-9% of wealthiest people in the world. (Ex. We drive in those cars to restaurants where we might have to wait a few minutes to be seated. They text us on our handheld computers/watches, people serve us food then, clean our plates. We drive home, press a button and a door opens, we pull into the house for our car. Some people have multiple houses for their cars. The house is temperature controlled; the toilet has a button that takes your waste away (almost 2 billion don't have this). We have so much.
- The average American gives 2.8% away. Make 100K or more give 2.6% away. This doesn't honor God. This IS Not what we do.

GENEROUS: arranging my life around the thrill of being used by God to make a difference.

2 Corinthians 9:7-9 NLT

7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." 8 And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need, and plenty left over to share with others. 9 As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever."

- Notice He doesn't say "decide to give" he says, "decide how much." Our capacity might change, but our obedience doesn't.
- The world cries SCARCITY!! Heaven declares God's PROVISION. I don't get my cues from the world. I get them from the Word.

Philippians 4:19 (KJV)

But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

- This is the constant attitude of my heart. When the world's system changes, I'm generous. When there's war or rumors of war, I'm generous. When I'm feeling pressed financially, I'm generous. Why? Because God never stops being generous. He alone is

my supply. I might have to arrange or steward things differently, but I will find ways to be generous. It's who He is and It's who He made me.

Generosity is who we are, not something we do.

Isaiah 32:8 (NLT)

But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity.

How do we stand firm in generosity?

Deuteronomy 15:7-8

"If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs."

1. Deal with a selfish heart.

Deuteronomy 15:9

"Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the Lord against you, and it become sin among you."

- God calls selfish thoughts wicked thoughts!
 - The next year was the year of Jubilee (every 7 years, we should reimplement!!) so he thought he might not be able to collect this debt.
- Why did God create giving?
 - It's a gift to work selfishness and greed OUT of our lives!
 - God did not create giving for His sake but for our sakes! (He doesn't need our money!)
 - This is why "giving to get" is so dangerous...it works selfishness right back into our lives. Can you imagine God saying, "All my people have caught the vision of getting!"?

We are born takers. We are born again givers.

- It's true that when we give, we receive,
 - This is a benefit but not the motive!
 - We have to teach our children to share (We are all born "takers")
 - Men never grow out of not wanting to share their food:)

2. Deal with a grieving heart.

Deuteronomy 15:10

"You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand."

- We shouldn't give and then grieve over what we could have done!
 - Selfishness attacks us before we give,
 - Grief attacks us after we give. (Is God pleased if after we give we regret it?)
- We don't give what's ours, we return what's His!
 - Psalm 24:1 The earth is the Lord's and everything in it!

Ex. *Have someone bring me \$100 bill that I gave them before church started. It's not difficult for them to give me what was already mine.*

- God IS our source! Not our job, and not the government!
- Not only does the tithe belong to God! It ALL belongs to Him!

3. Develop a generous heart.

Deuteronomy 15:14

"You shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. From what the Lord has blessed you with, you shall give to him."

- God said He wants us to not just give enough but to be generous!
- Keep your heart submitted to Jesus. Stay soft hearted. (Judas was around Jesus but not submitted)
- Hang out with generous people. You become what you behold.

Context of "heart-generosity"

Luke 6:30-36 (TPT)

³⁰ When someone comes to beg from you, give to that person what you have. When things are wrongly taken from you, do not demand they be given back. ³¹ However you wish to be treated by others is how you should treat everyone else. ³² "Are you really showing true love by only loving those who love you back? Even those who don't know God will do that. ³³ Are you really showing compassion when you do good deeds only to those who do good deeds to you? Even those who don't know God will do that. ³⁴ "If you lend money only to those you know will repay you, what credit is that to your character? Even those who don't know God do that. ³⁵ But love your enemies and continue to treat them well. When you lend money, don't despair if you are never paid back, for it is not lost. You will receive a rich reward and you will be known as true children of the Most High God, having his same nature. For your Father is famous for his

kindness to heal even the thankless and cruel. ³⁶ Show mercy and compassion for others, just as your heavenly Father overflows with mercy and compassion for all."

- Generosity is a flow
 - He is kind to the unthankful and the evil! That's us! While we were sinners, Christ died for us
 - God wants us to be generous AS He is generous! Rivers, not reservoirs, conduits, not cul-de-sacs.

4. Develop a grateful heart.

Deuteronomy 15:15

"You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today."

Remembering fuels generosity.

- Forgetting fuels stinginess and entitlement
- If we allow God to remind us that we were slaves and everything that we have is by His grace, it will help us to be grateful and generous.
- Making this commitment isn't hard when you remember.

Where do I start?

Isaiah 32:8 (NLT)

But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity.

LIVE IT:

1. Begin the 90 Day Tithe Challenge. This isn't a tool to get something from you. It will help you experience God's best.
2. Listen to the Holy Spirit for when He wants you to give this week and obey, allow generosity to flow