

**I WAS BROKE – 90 Day Giving Challenge Message**  
**Our Generous Church**  
**1 Timothy 6:17-19**

I think that all of us WANT to get BETTER at some things in this life. We want to be better SPOUSES and PARENTS. We want to have a better JOB, and then get better at DOING that job. We even want to get better at our HOBBIES [Golf?]. People spend outrageous amounts of money to better themselves at a million different things. God made us this way, and it is a GOOD thing to GET BETTER. But there is ONE HABIT of life that I bet that some of you have never committed to as a goal for your own personal improvement. Those that have gotten better at this particular “skill” have literally CHANGED THE WORLD. There are whole communities of people that are alive today because of these improved individuals. **Their glorious skill is the habit of GENEROUS GIVING. 2 Corinthians 8:7 NIV**

**7 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.**

**[Refer to those that committed to the 90-DAY GIVING CHALLENGE: BRAVO!]**

Generosity is – for some – a LIFESTYLE. They live to be generous. And their generosity has a lasting and wonderful impact on the world around them. When that habit of gracious generosity is begun by FAITH it has an impact on the KINGDOM OF GOD in ways that we CAN SEE all around us (and in ways that we CANNOT see until we get to heaven!). But the SKILL of GRACIOUS GENEROSITY is one that must be CHOSEN as a COMMITMENT. Our wealth will often be our greatest BARRIER to generosity! **1 Timothy 6:17-18 NIV**

**17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.**

In this life, you can put your hope in WEALTH, or you can put your hope in GOD. But you cannot do BOTH! You see, generosity is actually an ACT of FAITH. I want us to see how this act of faith can GROW over time in distinct LEVELS of commitment.

### **5 LEVELS OF GENEROSITY**

**POTENTIAL GIVER** – Everyone has the POTENTIAL to impact the Kingdom through participating in God’s work and seeing the growth that comes through giving.

### **KEY TRUTHS:**

**\*Everyone CAN give. NOT everyone WILL give!** [In fact, statistics prove that the lowest income earners in the U.S. are the highest level of givers in the U.S.!]

Ken Sterns, the author of “With Charity for All: Why Charities Are Failing and a Better Way to Give,” writes that in 2011, Americans with earnings in the top 20% of income levels contributed, on average, 1.3% of their income to charity. Those at the bottom 20% donated 3.2% of their cash to charity—more than

double of what their more-wealthy counterparts donated. [From Fox Business Report – by Kate Rogers]

**\*There are UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS for those that learn to be generous!**

**Acts 20:35 NIV**

35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

-The life of the RECEIVER is certainly impacted. [Little Blue Houses in Jamaica]

-The Kingdom of God will EXPAND.

-But the life of the GIVER is also greatly impacted! **"MORE BLESSED . . ."**

\*The first BENEFIT of giving is experiencing FREEDOM from BONDAGE to OUR WEALTH!

**\*KEY WARNING for the POTENTIAL GIVER: POTENTIAL has NO POWER if it is not PUT into ACTION!**

**EMERGING GIVER** – This is someone that has taken the exciting first step towards worshipping and growing through generosity.

**KEY TRUTHS:**

**\*Generosity is an act of WORSHIP even before it is an act of BENEVOLENCE.**

-Worship is EVIDENCE of where you place your HOPE! [1 Tim. 6:17]

**\*The Spirit of God PROMPTS generosity as we LOOK BEYOND ourselves!**

-Generosity often begins when God opens our eyes to NEEDS around us.

-Generosity is a NATURAL expression of the love of God! [Jamaica=Practical love]

**\*Growth happens when TAKE the FIRST STEP of generosity: Give SOMETHING!**

-Worship is not worship without an action of sacrifice.

-What has your worship EVER REALLY COST YOU?

**KEY WARNING for the EMERGING GIVER:** The FIRST STEP of generosity is always the most difficult because it is INITIAL ACT of TRANSFERRING your HOPE AWAY FROM WEALTH and TOWARDS GOD. Make the transfer!

**CONSISTENT GIVER** – This is someone ready to be more intentional in their giving. They have made an assessment, and are DETERMINED to start consistently showing generosity.

**KEY TRUTHS:**

**\*Giving becomes consistent when it is seen as a COMMAND to be OBEYED as well as a BLESSING to be OBTAINED!**

-Giving can become ADDICTIVE FUN! God's commands are not JOYLESS duties!

**\*Wisdom instructs us to ASSESS the WAY that we give and the PLACES to WHICH we give!**

-Just because giving makes us FEEL good does not mean it was a WISE choice

[Tragedy of OLDER PEOPLE that get SCAMMED by con artists.]

\*Don't allow your giving to always be EMOTIONALLY MOTIVATED by CRISIS.

**\*Consistent giving is a LIFESTYLE that begins with a resolute COMMITMENT.**

-This can be a SPONTANEOUS decision, but it will require PLANNING and God-given DISCIPLINE if you desire for it to last.

**\*KEY WARNING for the CONSISTENT GIVER:** You must not allow consistency to be driven by EMOTION or even by the R.O.I. (Return on Investment) that you see in finances alone. God's blessings on generosity come in many forms other than just money! [Health, Spiritual Growth, Peace, Joy of seeing others blessed, etc...]

**TITHE GIVER** – This is someone that has seen the blessing that comes with generosity, and is ready to commit to the TITHE (10%) that scripture asks of believers. **Malachi 3:10 NIV**

10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

**KEY TRUTHS:**

**\*Generosity is its own best advertisement! It is not hard to see the BLESSINGS and BENEFITS of giving! But you will only see them AFTER you give!**

**\*Tithing is an act of OBEDIENCE that is built on a wise and equitable principle: PERCENTAGE GIVING!**

-Percentage giving is an EQUAL SACRIFICE no matter what your income is.

-Percentage giving can be PREPARED FOR and PLANNED.

Remember, your money is not the SOURCE of God's work, but it can be a RESOURCE for God's work.

**\*KEY WARNING for the TITHE GIVER:** Don't look at the 10% that you give to God as something that you are giving TO God; look at it as something that you are giving BACK TO God! He is the One that gave you 100% of all that you have in the first place. You are just giving him an offering of THANKSGIVING for all that he has ALREADY given to you!

**EXTRAVAGANT GIVER** – This is someone that realizes that the tithe is just the MINIMUM that the Word of God has instructed them to give, and they have been encouraged and enabled to give more for the Kingdom.

**KEY TRUTHS:**

**\*Tithing is like the "TRAINING WHEELS" of giving. [Tithing Vs. Grace Giving]**

**\*Tithes AND Offerings are the consistent forms of giving found in BOTH the New and the Old Testaments!**

**\*Extravagant givers are people that are learning how to be PROGRESSIVE givers!**

**-PROGRESSIVE GIVING is the wisest and most exciting way to GROW your FAITH!**

An extravagant giver is constantly giving God opportunities to DEMONSTRATE his presence and his purpose in the lives of those near and far.

**\*Every time you give to God, God will INCREASE your ABILITY to give more (either financially or by some other aspect of resources).**

### **2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-11 NIV**

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

\*Extravagant giving opens up for us the ability to ENJOY LIFE in a way that we simply cannot experience without generosity! **1 Timothy 6:18-19 NIV**

18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and **to be generous and willing to share.** 19 In this way they will **lay up treasure for themselves** as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may **take hold of the life that is truly life.**

\*God's promises to those that are generous are promises for THIS LIFE as well as for the life TO COME! [Luke 18:29-30: "... houses, and lands with tribulation."]

\*The ULTIMATE rewards that we receive for extravagant giving are laid up for us in heaven in the form of CROWNS that we will cast at Jesus's feet and LEVELS of RESPONSIBILITY (these crowns SYMBOLIZE leadership responsibilities) that we will be granted for our faithful service on earth!

**KEY WARNING for the EXTRAVAGANT GIVER:** Keep your eyes on the ONE that gave EVERYTHING for you so that you do not lose your PROPER MOTIVATION for giving. Your ability to give is CREATED and SUSTAINED by the One that gave FIRST, GIVES MOST, and WILL GIVE FOREVER at the LAST! Praise Jesus!

Let's pray.