

**MOSAIC**  
“Generosity”  
March 22, 2015

*“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ...And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.”*  
Acts 4:32-35 (NIV)

*“Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”*  
Acts 2:43-45 (NIV)

Remember the book of Acts is descriptive not prescriptive.

*“This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”*  
Acts 1:11 (NIV)

When the Holy Spirit shows up, generosity breaks out.

**How to make the most of your generosity:**

Learn to discern:

- What type person you are

2 ways to look at the hurt and needy:

- Bleeding hearts think everyone is an innocent victim.
- Hard hearts think we get what we deserve.

Bleeding hearts, beware:

- Some are never satisfied (Luke 7:31-35 • Luke 23:20-24)
- Of enabling dysfunction (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

Hard Hearts, beware:

- Making excuses because of lack of trust (Ephesians 4:18)
- Making excuses because of lack of funds (Proverbs 3:9-10)

Learn to discern:

- What type cause(s) you should support.

**As Christ follower, the Lord has asked me to give special attention to:**

- My family (1 Timothy 5:8)
- My church (Malachi 3:8-10; Luke 11:42)
- Widows and orphans (James 1:27)
- Missions (Romans 15:24; Matthew 28:19-21)
- The poor/needy (Galatians 2:10; Proverbs 19:17)

## Study Guide

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**Main Idea:** Generosity is not just a matter of money. It is mostly a matter of awareness that stirs your soul. It should be a reflection of the love that God has poured into your life that enables you to pour into others. Wisdom should be involved as much as your wallet, because your time or talents may be of more value to God's purpose than your money, and money could do more harm than good.

There is a key part to Acts 4:32-35; which is first part of verse 32. *"All the believers were one in heart and mind."* What difference do you think this makes?

Does this mean Christians should not give to anything but to other Christians or Christian Organizations?

There are five areas God asks us to give special attention to:

**Family-** *"Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."* 1 Timothy 5:8 (NIV)

**How does giving of your time and talent apply here?**

**Church** – *"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 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."* Malachi 3:8-10 (NIV)

**There is a "cause and effect" within these verses. Can you see it? Why is this test important to a Christian's growth?**

**Widows and orphans** - *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."*  
James 1:27 (NIV)

**The word "Religion" within the text is interesting. What do you think it means within the context of the verse? Why would our attitude towards God make a difference in this service?**

**Missions** – *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* Matt. 28:19-21 (NIV)

**Reflect on these verses. The Apostles were led by the Holy Spirit as to where they went to “make disciples.” Some stayed local, others traveled the world. Have you ever thought of where you would you go? Why do you think you are being led that way?**

**The poor/need** – *“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.”* Prov. 19:17 (NIV)

**Why is it important for us to have a fund like the Operation 1:17 offering or a Food Bank? How does this link back into missions?**

**Final Thought:** Too often we think of generosity as a single event when it should be a lifestyle. There are continuous opportunities in our lives to show generosity that will honor God in the most unexpected ways. We need to prepare ourselves for these opportunities, first by specifically praying that the Holy Spirit make us more aware of these opportunities. Next, we need to learn all we can about the best ways to help. Remember it’s not always about money; it’s about making a difference.

“Too many have dispensed with generosity in order to practice charity.” - **Albert Camus**

## **Family Focus**

This week we are talking about generosity. This is a tough concept for kids. Mine! Mine! Mine! is what we typically hear. Below are some Bible stories with the theme of generosity, along with questions you can use as a guide for family discussions. Choose one that is most appropriate for your children. Before reading aloud, take a few minutes to review the story. If the Bible passage is too complex for your kids, paraphrase the story yourself or use the summary provided under “key concepts.” The last example includes an activity to help demonstrate the concept.

### **Grace Like God’s Grace**

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7.

#### **Questions for discussion:**

Has anyone ever been generous to you when you knew you didn’t deserve it?

Do we deserve God’s forgiveness?

What is it called when we give to others when they don’t deserve it?

Would you share with someone who never shared with you?

Would God want you to?

#### **Key concepts:**

When we give to others, even when we think they don’t deserve it, it is called grace. God demonstrated grace when He sent Jesus to die so our sins could be forgiven. It is called grace when God forgives our sins, even though we deserve to die for our own sins. We practice grace when we share God’s love with others through forgiving them. It is important to excel in faith, in speech and knowledge and in love, but it also important to excel in the grace of giving. Giving can be giving money, but it can also mean sharing what we have and sharing God’s love by forgiving those who have hurt or upset us.

### **A Generous Promise**

Read Ruth 2 and Deuteronomy 24:19-22.

#### **Questions for discussion:**

How did Boaz obey one of God’s Old Testament commands regarding generosity?

How was Boaz generous to Ruth and her mother-in-law?

How did God choose to bless Boaz for his generosity?

#### **Key concepts:**

Boaz was a successful farmer. He had much land, hired hands and animals. He noticed a woman picking up the grain that was left over after the harvesters had been through the field. He instructed the harvesters to be generous and leave extra grain for the woman. He did not even know that she was a potential wife. God chose to bless the generosity of Boaz by giving him the young, beautiful woman as his wife. Boaz was just being generous – not expecting anything in return for his kindness – but God chose to bless Boaz with a wife. God promises to reward generosity (Proverbs 14:21).

### **But It's Not Fair**

Read Matthew 20:1-16. Then tell this “modern” story about a similar situation, or make up a story of your own that your children will relate to:

One Saturday, Dery's dad needed help cleaning the garage. It was nine in the morning and Dery agreed to work until noon for \$5. Halfway through the morning, Dery's brother Keaton offered to help, too, so their dad invited him to come and join in the work.

By lunchtime, all the work was done, and the dad called the boys to the table. “Thank you, my son, for helping” he said to Keaton and handed him \$5. Dery was watching and was surprised that Keaton got paid \$5 for only working half of the time.

“Surely Dad will pay me more than \$5,” he thought.

But when Dad turned to Dery, he handed him a \$5 bill, too. Dery was about to complain, but then he thought that it would be better to be quiet. He knew he had been given the amount he had agreed to work for. If his dad wanted to be generous with Keaton's pay, who was he to complain? After all, there had been many times his father had been generous with him, too.

### **Questions for discussion:**

What would you do if the same thing happened at our house?

How do you feel when someone else gets more than you do?

What does Jesus say about those who are always looking out for what others get instead of appreciating what they were given?

### **Key concepts:**

God wants us to be content with what we have rather than complaining and looking at how generous He has been to others. As long as we are comparing what we have to what others have, we will never be content.

### **Greed is not Godly**

Read Acts 8:9-24.

### **Questions for discussion:**

What did Peter and John have that Simon the Sorcerer wanted?

Why did Simon want it?

What did Peter say to him?

Do you think God would forgive Simon if Simon asked Him to?

### **Key concepts:**

Simon was attracted to the power that Peter and John had through God and the Holy Spirit. He wanted it because he thought that he could make money by laying his hands on people and filling them with the Holy Spirit, too. Peter told Simon that he had the wrong motivation for wanting the power of the Holy Spirit. We don't know for sure if Simon repented, but we know that if he did, God would graciously forgive him and change his heart

## **Gimme My Share! (with activity)**

Read Luke 12:13-21.

### **Questions for discussion:**

Why did the man come to Jesus?

What did Jesus say about wealth in verse 15?

What happened to the rich man who stored up things for himself?

Do we have anything stored up in our house that we could give to someone who needs it?

### **Key concepts:**

A man came to Jesus, hoping that Jesus would make his brother share his inheritance with him.

Jesus told him a story about a rich man who had such a large harvest from his crops that he had to build more storehouses to hold all his grain and his many possessions. Then God said to the man that his life would be taken from him that night. Jesus ended the story by saying, "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

### **Goal: Practice generosity.**

**Activity:** After reading the story, ask your children what the rich man could have done with his extra crop and extra possessions. Explain that it would have pleased God if he had chosen to share it with others who needed it. Spend some time thanking God for all He has blessed your family with. Finish by asking, "What do we have extra that we could share?" Discover what you have extra, package it up and search out a place in your community to donate it.

Some examples include:

food – take some food to the Food Bank,

clothing – pack up clothes that have been outgrown or not being worn, and give them to a charity or needy family,

blankets and other household items – many inner-city ministries make home starter kits for those in need,

toys – many organizations collect toys for underprivileged children.