



Part 2: “Understanding Biblical Generosity”

What is Biblical Generosity?

1. Biblical generosity is a _____ of spiritual growth that God wants us to pursue – 2 Corinthians 8:7
2. Biblical generosity is _____, _____, _____ and expressed in _____ – 2 Cor. 8:1-7; Matt. 25:31-40; 2 Cor. 9:7; Luke 10:25-37
3. Biblical generosity comes with a _____ – Acts 20:35b
We receive the blessing of:
 - 1.) _____ others – which keeps us less self-centered
 - 2.) _____ others – which keeps us from loving money
 - 3.) _____ others – which keeps our focus on the gospel

This week read Days 8-14 in the devotional, “7 Keys to Open-Handed Living in a Tight-Fisted World” (download the app – “joyful giving”)



Growth Group Study Guide for January 15th – 22nd

Getting Started

Group Discussion #1: Share a time when you or your family were in need (either now or when you were growing up) and God used the generosity of someone to bless you. How did this impact you?

From Sunday's message...

Group Discussion #2. How is generosity a journey and not a one-time or periodic act?

Group Discussion #3. What can be the results of generosity when it is practiced in community?

Digging Deeper

1. Read Acts 20:32-35. Here in Acts 20 the Apostle Paul is getting ready to sail to Jerusalem toward uncertain circumstances that will certainly include more persecution. He met with his dear friends, the elders of the church at Ephesus, to give his final farewell, confident that they would not see each other again on this side of heaven. After blessing them, he reminded them of his labor among them over a three-year period in which his actions were above board in every respect. He had supported himself and his team through his own hard work. He also worked to support the needy and poor and then he reminded them of something Jesus said, an oft-forgotten truth that Paul used to guide his life and encouraged the Ephesians leaders to use as a guide as well – *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

We noted on Sunday morning that this is the promise of generosity. God promises blessing not when we receive anything (though we are certainly blessed when that happens), but rather when we choose to give and be generous to God and others. Let's look at several reasons why this is true...

- 1.) **Giving reflects God's character**- We observe God's giving nature throughout the Bible. Read each verse below and jot down what it says about the nature of God:

John 3:16 _____

Romans 5:8 _____

Romans 8:32 _____

1 John 4:9-10 _____

The point is that we are generous, and we give because God is generous and in doing so we reflect His character.

- 2.) **Giving is commanded** – We sometimes think that God's commands are burdensome, but in reality, God's commands are life-giving and freeing, and designed for our good. People can twist God's commands and turn them into legalism or to manipulate others. But that misrepresents our Lord and the purpose of His commands. Generosity is something God wants us to do because it properly reflects Him. What do these verses command in regard to giving/generosity?

Exodus 25:2 _____

Deuteronomy 15:10 _____

Romans 12:8 _____

2 Corinthians 9:7 _____

- 3.) **Giving makes you happy** – Most people in our society equate being happy with purchasing things and spending money. In God's kingdom the opposite is actually the truth. Happiness comes when we are generous. This is the point of Jesus' word in Acts 20:35.

Group Discussion: Describe a time when you were generous and the joy you felt as a result.

- 4.) **Giving improves your health** – Modern studies have revealed that generous people are generally healthier. Generosity actually benefits your blood pressure, reduces stress, increases life expectancy, lowers the risk of dementia, lessens anxiety, and reduced heart disease. Who knew, right?!

Group Discussion: Share why you believe generosity has such a positive impact on our physical health.

- 5.) **Giving expresses trust in God** – Read Matthew 6:25-34.

One of the most important truths to embrace in regard to generosity is the reality that God is our provider. What does God promise to do when we prioritize Him and His kingdom? _____

And since this is true what is the command Jesus gives in light of God's promise? (vs. 34)? _____

In this passage we see that God knows what we need, knows we need food, water, shelter and clothing. He knows everything! Therefore, since this is true, and since we know it is God's will that we live and grow in generosity, then we also know that our God can be trusted to be our provider. Every time we give, whenever we are generous in some way, we are exercising faith in our God that no matter how much of His resources we funnel on toward others, He has the capacity to refill those resources and meet all our needs as well.

Wrapping Up

In his Bible commentary, Pastor Tony Evans writes, "Indeed, in God's economy you will be more blessed if you're a spiritual conduit rather than a spiritual cul-de-sac. God wants to work through you so that you will be a blessing to others. If you have the capacity to address a need (with your money, time, or your encouragement), be used by God to give to and meet that need. God will return the favor."

Close in Prayer

Ask God to help each of us to continue to grow in generosity and to grow the spirit of generosity in our church family.