

Generosity

vs. Stinginess

Generosity is demonstrating the nature of God by wisely reinvesting the resources that He has entrusted to us.

Who gave more than everyone, yet less than anyone? **(Mark 12:42-44)**

Generosity follows the laws of the harvest.

The more we sow, the more we reap.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 2 Corinthians 9:6

The hand that gives, gathers.

To give out of desire for praise is vain. To give out of necessity is pain. To give out of love joyfully is great gain.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Luke 6:38

Generosity begins with the seeds of faith, increases with the trials of hope, and blossoms with the fruit of genuine love.

"A man there was, and they called him mad; The more he gave, the more he had."
—John Bunyan

Definition

Loving: Biblical word, "Charity"—giving to the poor and needy

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? 1 John 3:17

- It is not possible to have love without generosity, but it is possible to have generosity without love.

If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:3

Sowing: Generosity follows the laws of the harvest. The more generous we are in sowing, the greater will be our harvest.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 2 Corinthians 9:6

Honoring: “to place value upon.”

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"-which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Ephesians 6:1-3

- We honor our parents by giving to their needs. We honor civil authorities by paying our taxes. When we give to the poor, we honor the Lord and He promises to repay.

He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done. Proverbs 19:17

- Generosity is not just giving, it is giving abundantly.

Distributing: Another Biblical word describing generosity is distributing, in the Greek, *koinoneo*, which has the rich which has the rich meaning of fellowship among believers.

- We are to distribute (*koinoneo*) to the necessity of the saints.

Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Romans 12:13

- All believers are members of one body. Therefore, when we give to other members we are actually benefiting ourselves. Paul explains that as we meet their needs now, our needs will be met in the future.

At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality 2 Corinthians 8:14

Grace: The word grace is also related to generosity.

- Paul used this word in praising the Gentile believers for their liberal distribution of gifts to the saints in Jerusalem and to all men. He went on to explain that it was through God's grace that they had the means to give and that their giving was an expression of that grace.

*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. **2 Corinthians 9:8***

- Those who received the gifts praised God for the grace that prompted them. They prayed for the givers and desired "the exceeding grace of God" which the givers possessed.

*And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. **2 Corinthians 9:14***

Stewardship: The concept of stewardship is also involved in generosity.

- A steward is one who is entrusted with the assets of the master and is responsible to make wise investments with them. A wise steward understands that the assets he has under his control do not belong to him and should be returned to the master with increase.

Jesus gave a parable of wise stewards who doubled the resources entrusted to them. They were praised. A third steward returned what he was given and was condemned.

The Rewards of Generosity

Many people refuse to be generous because they falsely believe that what they give, they lose. Yet the opposite is true. Those who are generous receive far more than they give and in a wide range of areas.

1. A bright countenance

*"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! **Matthew 6:22-23***

A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him.

Proverbs 28:22

*In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. **Matthew 5:16***

2. A Special Love from the Lord

"God loves a cheerful giver"

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

- The qualities and motivations of a cheerful giver are described in this passage: One who purposes in his heart to give, not "grudgingly, or of necessity."
- God gives back to us through His love. The Greek word for cheerful is *hilaros* and means "prompt, willing, joyful, and hilarious."
- Lacking money is God's "school" to teach us the importance of being generous when we abound.

*At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality **2 Corinthians 8:14***

3. The Fear of the Lord

The fear of the Lord is the continual awareness that we are in His presence and that He watches over all that we think, say, and do.

Three levels of the fear of the Lord.

1. ***Fear of punishment for wrongdoing*** in His presence.
2. ***Fear of damaging His reputation***
3. Fear of ***endangering an intimate relationship with Him***

*Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life. **Proverbs 22:4***

Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the

LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always. Deuteronomy 14:22-23

4. Treasures in Heaven

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21

- Heaven was given to the Rich Young Ruler if he would exercise generosity.

Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Mark 10:21

- In this world, it is not what we take up, but what we give up that makes us rich.

One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth. Proverbs 13:7

5. Victory over the "root of all evil"

- Generosity breaks the bondage of greed and overcomes the love and worship of money
- The love of money gives us the illusion that our life is made up of the things that we possess
- It also makes us idolaters when we expect from money what only God can provide, such as security, peace, and joy

6. Escape from lusts and sorrows

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6:9-10

"We make a living by what we get; we make a lie by what we give."

—Sir Winston Churchill

The Motivation of Generosity

- Whatever we have is not the result of our own ingenuity, but the result of God's generosity.

*You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. **Deuteronomy 8:17-18***

- Because God gave us our wealth, He can also take it back.

*"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." **Job 1:21***

- If we are generous in giving back to God, He protects and increases our wealth. However, if we do not honor God with our increase, we are actually taking what rightfully belongs to God, thus robbing Him. He then allows our wealth to be devoured by situations and circumstances beyond our control.

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—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 you will not have room enough for it.

*I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. **Malachi 3:8-11***

- An even greater motivation for generosity should be to gain more of Jesus Christ and to experience more of His power. It was for these goals that Paul "suffered the loss of all things."

*What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ **Philippians 3:8***

Steps for Generosity

Dedicate all resources to God—money, time, possessions, and strength.

Practice personal frugality—spending as little as we can on ourselves so that we can have as much as possible available to reinvest in ways that will bring multiplied returns.

Give as God directs— The goal of generosity is to demonstrate the love of God so that others' will be drawn to Him.

- When a person in need receives an anonymous gift that meets the need, God is glorified and the giver is in line for eternal rewards. But if we give for the purpose of public praise, we receive the praise of people, but lose out on the greater rewards that come from God.

*But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. **Matthew 6:3-4***

- Generosity is the result of focusing on God's riches rather than our resources.

For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

Psalm 50:10 (KJV)

Spare or Share?

- If we give grudgingly, wondering how much we can spare, we will never have the joy of discovering how much we can share. **(2 Corinthians 9:7)**
- Generosity is God's highway to prosperity. Stinginess is our pathway to poverty.
- Generosity is paying on the debt of love that every believer owes to the Lord.

*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. **Romans 13:8***

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare."—C. S. Lewis