

Authentic Generosity

SESSION 3



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BIG IDEA

Authentic generosity comes from a revelation of God's extravagant generosity toward us.

KEY SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 9:5–8* — *Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation. But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.*

MESSAGE SUMMARY

This week we examine what it means to practice authentic generosity in a culture increasingly shaped by greed.

Pastor Mark contrasted true, cheerful giving with obligatory or transactional giving, reminding us that the very nature of God is generosity and that believers are called to reflect that nature.

This challenges us to move beyond reluctant obligation toward a posture of joyful and abundant giving. This includes the practice of tithing, giving out of a heart transformed by the revelation of God's own extravagant generosity toward us.

1) Authentic generosity makes you happy.

The opposite of generosity is not merely stinginess but greed, and our culture today actively cultivates a greedy mindset.

There is a meaningful distinction between obligatory giving, transactional acts of generosity, and being a genuinely generous person.

Giving produces joy in the giver, as confirmed both by Scripture and by social research.

2) Authentic generosity makes you flourish.

The agricultural principle of sowing and reaping applies directly to giving: those who give bountifully will reap bountifully.

God's very nature is generosity, demonstrated supremely in the gift of his Son and in the provision of life, the earth, and its resources.

3) Authentic generosity makes you into a tither

Tithing represents 10 percent returned to God from what he has already given, and Malachi 3:10 presents it as the one area where God invites believers to test his promise.

God's ultimate interest is not money but the human heart, and where a person places their treasure reveals where their heart truly is.

ICEBREAKER

What is your practice of tipping at different businesses?
How do you feel when you are presented with the different amounts that you should tip?

OR

Have you been scammed or know someone who has? Why did you fall for it?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The opposite of generosity is greed. Greed permeates our culture. **What examples of greed in our culture bother you the most?**

2. Pastor Mark mentioned 3 types of giving:

- a. Obligatory giving
- b. Transactional giving (*i.e. to alleviate guilt or to receive more from God*)
- c. Being a generous person

Have you been the recipient of one of these types of giving? How did it feel?

3. Giving is an act of worship. We see that in the verse below.

Deuteronomy 26:10 — “... and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O Lord, have given me.” Then you shall set it before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God.

Have you ever thought of giving as an act of worship? Why or why not?

What from Pastor Mark’s message has changed how you view giving as worship?

What could you do to help remind yourself that when you give to God you are worshipping Him?

4. 2 Corinthians 9:6 reads *“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”*

Reaping and sowing is a universal concept in the areas of ethics, finances, farming, etc. **Can you think of a time where you reaped what you sowed?**

5. God is the one who first gave to us. He not only gave us life, salvation, etc. but also the ability and power to gain wealth. The abundance He provides for us reflects who He is as the ultimate giver.

Deuteronomy 8:18 — And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

What comes to mind when you consider what God has given to you? Does this impact how generous you are towards others?

6. In Malachi 3:10 (below), God challenges his people to try (test) God in the area of tithing:

*“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,*

*And try Me now in this,"
Says the Lord of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it."*

The pattern we see in Scripture is giving the tithe (10% of your income) to your local place of worship. **What is promised for the person who tithes to the Lord in this manner? How might you test God with your finances?**

7. Jesus taught that where your treasure is, your heart will follow (Matthew 6:21). **How has this been evident in your experience?**

Think of an area of your life in which you can grow in generosity (time, talent, treasure). **What would be a practical first step in this direction?**

ACTIVATION

2 Corinthians 9:7 — *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

We can lead our hearts towards becoming more generous people. **In the space below, write what God is challenging you to “purpose in your heart” to be more generous to Him.**

TAKE IT HOME

1. This week, be alert to God’s generosity toward you. Consider creating a list of blessings to look back on when you are struggling with generosity.
2. Ask God for opportunities to practise authentic generosity.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

What do the following verses say about how we should look at money? Does this challenge how we look at the finances God has given to us?

On Priorities and Contentment

1 Timothy 6:10 — *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Matthew 6:24 — *No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*

Ecclesiastes 5:10 — *He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity.*

Hebrews 13:5 — *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

On Wealth and Wisdom

Proverbs 13:11 — *Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, but he who gathers by labor will increase.*

Proverbs 22:7 — *The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*

Proverbs 3:9 — *Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase...*

On Giving and God's Provision

2 Corinthians 9:7 — *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

Philippians 4:19 — *And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*