

CORNERSTONE

DISCIPLESHIP

GROUPS

MONEY & MISSION: THE DIVINE CONNECTION
PART 1 | PASTOR BARRY BURNS
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

Overview

Becoming a giver because God is a giver

Core Scriptures: James 1:5; Ephesians 5:1; 2 Corinthians 9:6–8

Overview

This session explores what Scripture reveals about the true nature of God as a giver, the connection between money and mission, and what it looks like for believers to imitate God's generosity as a lifestyle rather than an occasional act.

Main Takeaways

1. **God's true nature is generosity, not judgment.** The image of God as perpetually angry and looking for opportunities to punish us is contradicted throughout Scripture. He is described as one who gives liberally, ungrudgingly, and lavishly to those who ask.
2. **Giving is a godly attribute and a lifestyle choice.** Ephesians 5:1 calls believers to imitate God. Since God's defining characteristic in these passages is that he gives, imitating him means becoming a giver. This is not automatic. It is a deliberate, ongoing decision.

3. **Money and mission are inseparable.** Every act of kingdom work requires resources. When giving stops, mission is strangled. The enemy's most effective strategy against the advancement of the gospel is to shut off the supply of generosity among believers.
4. **The cross settled the issue of poverty and lack.** Just as Christ bore sin and sickness on the cross, he also bore poverty so that believers could be abundantly supplied. This is not a peripheral teaching but a direct implication of the atonement.
5. **Giving is not about losing something — it is about becoming something.** A lifestyle of generosity transforms the heart, aligns the believer with God's nature, and positions them to be used as an answer to someone else's need.

Discussion Questions

Opening

Before this message, how would you have described God's attitude toward you when you were struggling or in need? Where did that picture come from?

Section 1 — The Nature of God

James 1:5 describes God as one who gives to everyone liberally and without finding fault. How does that description compare to the image of God you grew up with or currently carry?

Pastor Barry made the point that God is not trying to get money from us — he is trying to get money to us. How does that reframe the way you think about financial conversations in a church setting?

Which of the following has shaped your view of God more: your life experience or the Word of God? What would it take to let Scripture have the final word?

Section 2 — Imitating God

Ephesians 5:1 calls believers to mimic God the way a child imitates a parent. In what areas of your life do you most naturally reflect your heavenly Father? In what areas is generosity still underdeveloped?

Barry observed that not every Christian gives, which means not every Christian is imitating God in this area. Why do you think generosity is one of the last areas where many believers surrender control?

What is the difference between giving as a transaction and giving as a lifestyle? Have you experienced both? What did each feel like?

Section 3 — The Lies That Shut Down Giving

Several lies were identified as the enemy's tools for cutting off the flow of generosity:

- Poverty and holiness are tied together
- Christians are not supposed to have anything
- Lack is good and abundance is bad
- Someone else will take care of it

Which of these lies have you believed at some point? How did that belief affect your behavior?

In most congregations, a small percentage of people carry the financial weight of the whole. How does that reality make you feel, and what responsibility does it place on each individual member?

How does shining the light of Scripture on these lies change the way you see your own finances and your role in the church?

Section 4 — The Cross and Abundance

Pastor Barry drew a direct parallel: just as Christ bore sin so we could have righteousness, and bore sickness so we could have health, he also bore poverty so we could be abundantly supplied. Does that parallel feel as natural to you as the others? Why or why not?

The point was made that you cannot give what you do not have. How does understanding God's provision as a means of enabling generosity change the way you think about pursuing financial stability?

What would it mean practically for your household to be a place where money comes in and goes out consistently in service of others and the kingdom?

Section 5 — Taking a Step of Faith

Barry closed with a challenge to begin giving something rather than nothing. What is one step you could take this week, however small, toward a more consistent lifestyle of generosity?

We heard the story of a man who could prove on paper that he could not afford to tithe, yet when he stepped out in faith, the 90% went further than the 100% had before. Have you ever experienced something similar? What happened?

What is the biggest internal obstacle between where you are now and becoming the kind of giver described in this message?

Practical Application

This week, take one of the following steps:

Meet a need without being asked. Identify one person or need you can meet with a financial gift this week, even a small one, and do it before anyone brings it to your attention.

Put the lies on paper next to the truth. Write down the lies about money and God that you have believed and, next to each one, write out what Scripture actually says in response.

Have the honest conversation. Talk with your spouse or a trusted friend about your current giving habits and whether they reflect the nature of God as described in this message.

Redirect one line in the budget. Review your monthly spending and identify one area where you can redirect funds toward generosity, whether toward the church, a ministry, or a person in need.

Come back for Session 2. Commit to attending next week, where the teaching continues with what happens supernaturally when believers choose a lifestyle of giving.

Closing

Sit with this question before closing:

When it comes to money, are you going by what your life experience tells you, or by what God's Word eternally declares?

Close your time together in prayer, asking God to transform not just behavior but the heart behind it, so that generosity becomes less of a discipline and more of a natural expression of who you are becoming in Christ.

News & Events

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- September 13 - Intro to Cornerstone Life
- September 20 - Communion
- September 27 - Guest Speaker, Jeremiah Johnson
- October 3 - Ladies Event
- October 24 - Harvest Party
- October 29-31 - Men's Advance
- November 7-8 - Guest Speaker, Chad Gonzales

