



Excelling at Generosity

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November 1, 2015

1 Timothy 6:17-19 NLT

Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

We are _____!

Generosity is using our resources of wealth, time and ability to benefit others.

Generosity... is how we experience _____.

No one can promise you that a life lived for others will bring you a deep sense of satisfaction, but it's certain that nothing else will.
~ Hugh Mackay

The hallmark of Christians in the first century was not their wealth. They had none. It was not their theology either. Their beliefs were so odd, religious people couldn't understand them. What gave them leverage was their inexplicable compassion and generosity. They had little, but they gave. They received little compassion, but they were willing to extend what they had to other people. They were impossible to ignore.

~ Andy Stanley

Generosity... changes _____.

Generosity... is becoming aware of needs in two directions and then being willing to respond.

1. To the least of these

And the King will say, "I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!"
Matthew 25:40 NLT

2. To our brothers and sisters in Christ

For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself.

1 Corinthians 11:29 NLT

Our main excuse: I don't _____.

For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

2 Corinthians 8:12 NIV

The central question of Generosity is _____.

Generosity... means changing how we _____ the world.

One of the biggest problems in many poverty-alleviation efforts is that their design and implementation exacerbates the poverty of being of the economically rich - their god complexes - and the poverty of being of the economically poor - their feelings of inferiority and shame. The way that we act toward the economically poor often communicates - albeit unintentionally - that we are superior and they are inferior. In the process we hurt the poor and ourselves.

~ Steve Corbett and Brian Pikkert
When Helping Hurts

Generosity... is about what we do as individuals and also what we do as a church.

Generosity... requires a lifestyle lived with _____.

Look for _____ and live like them.

I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:8-9 NIV

Generosity... results in _____.

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 NLT

We are blessed in order that we might _____.

And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say,

"They share freely and give generously to the poor.

Their good deeds will be remembered forever."

For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.

Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God.

2 Corinthians 9:8-11 NLT

**We want to move beyond trying...
to training ourselves to live a life of generosity.**

How can I give this week?

Facebook Group - www.facebook.com/groups/Staalliance

Small Group Questions

Excelling at Generosity

1. Have a few people read 1 Timothy 6:17-19 from different translations. How do you feel about the idea that you are rich compared to the rest of the world? Is that how you would see yourself normally?
2. A large part of the thrust of this part of the Good Life sermon series has been, as Paul said, about learning to "not put their hope in wealth." Chat about the moments in your life when you have seen this principle most clearly.
3. Pastor Matt talked about wealth being money and stuff, time and skills and gifts. Which of these do you find it easiest to be generous with? Which do you find it least easy to be generous with?
4. Paul redefines what it means to be rich when he says "be rich in good deeds." Do you think this is a valid measure of riches? How would you measure yourself on this scale?
5. Paul says we should be "generous and willing to share," what does this mean for you? Spend some time chatting about people who you would see as "generous and willing to share". How do you feel about them? What is it about them that means you describe them in that way?
6. Read the quote from Andy Stanley. Where do you think that we as a church, and you individually most clearly express generosity and compassion? Where do you think we could improve?
7. Have a few people take turns reading 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 aloud. Stop after each few paragraphs and reflect as a group on anything that stands out to you. Take particular time as you read Chapter 9:6-15.
8. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says - *Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* As you have explored the call to generosity, take some time for listening prayer to ask Jesus, "How do you want me to give in the coming week?" Share with each other your sense of what Jesus might be saying and start next week's group by sharing how it went.