



THE COMMUNITY

Growing in Generosity

What Do I Need to Know?

2 Corinthians 8:1-4 and 9:6-7 | 1 Timothy 6:17-18 | Proverbs 3:5-10

Generous, joyful giving is a powerful practice which unleashes many blessings from God and offers us the peace of mind that we are obeying Him. It also provides us the opportunity and privilege of watching God work through us to build His Kingdom. Let's see what the Bible has to say about giving.

The passages used in this study will highlight the importance of having a right heart attitude about giving and then living out that heart attitude in practice.

What's the Big Idea?

God calls believers to be wise stewards of money. Giving is a demonstration of our faith in our loving heavenly Father. When we give, we show that we are trusting Him to meet our needs for the future and to further God's kingdom and work in the world.

What's the Problem?

Because we are made in God's image, we have the desire to give; however, many of us do not experience all God has for us in the adventure of giving. Perhaps we don't fully understand what the Bible teaches about giving. Or we may have become so entangled by previous financial choices that giving is very difficult or seemingly impossible for us.

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What Are the Questions?

Launch

Video: In Google Search, type in “God’s Pie.” Watch 3 minute video clip.

1. What are some of the practical challenges and heart issues that keep people from being generous givers? What about you?
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Explore

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-4

2. As you read 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, describe the circumstances, heart, and actions of the church in Macedonia. What contrast do you see in verse 2?

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

3. Discuss how it relates to this topic of growing in generosity.

Read 1 Timothy 6:17-18.

4. Discuss what this passage says we should and should not do with wealth and why.

Read Proverbs 3:5-10

5. What is the main point of this important passage? What is the specific application in verses 9 and 10 of the general idea in verses 5-8?

In Summary

6. After looking at all these passages, summarize in your own words why personal financial generosity is a life-giving habit/practice.

Apply

Set a target amount or percentage of your income to give and begin working towards that giving goal:

- Begin by giving something (literally any amount) towards God’s Kingdom – perhaps to your church and/or to your current ministry. You can even start with a dollar!
- Develop a long-term plan to give generously and sacrificially.

Remember: Keep collecting your financial data in your notebook.

What’s Our Response?

Giving money away will further expand God’s work and bring blessings back to us in different forms and in unexpected ways.

NOTES:

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What Are the Answers?

1. What can keep us from being generous? Explore as a group the potential answers to this question. Then let everyone engage on the second question. This topic of giving may be uncomfortable at first, but talk about the heart issues and how giving changes us to become generous with our material possessions, our time, and our talents.

2. The churches in Macedonia were under severe trial and in extreme poverty (2 Corinthians 8:1-4). Their heart attitude can be seen in their begging to give more money to help the believers in Jerusalem, though they had little themselves. Their actions were to initiate with Paul to be allowed give to the needs they had heard about, and then to give lavishly to those needs. The contrast is seen in their abundant joy and rich generosity versus their great poverty. (See also Philippians 4:14-19 as another example of people in poverty giving so the gospel could go forward.)

3. Let everyone engage with this question. The following are some truths to point out from studying 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. We reap what we sow and in the manner in which we sow. To sow, in this case, means to plant a seed in order to grow a plant of the same kind. We will only see a plant grow that is of the exact seed (beautiful or ugly!) which we have sown, and in the amount which we have sown. Also we can freely, cheerfully give whatever amount we decide to give, without feeling guilty; God will put vision on our hearts to give to what He is doing. God loves a cheerful giver! (See also Galatians 6:6-10 regarding sowing and reaping.)

4. In 1 Timothy 6:17-18, we see that we are not to be prideful or to fix our hope on riches. Instead, we are to hope in God, who abundantly provides all that we need. We are to be rich in good works, generous, ready to share. We must always be on guard against materialism. Why? Because riches could disappear in an instant! Here we are challenged to have an eternal perspective as we store up for the future to provide not only for ourselves, but also for the kingdom.

5. In Proverbs 3:5-8, the main idea is to trust in God with our whole heart, to humbly acknowledge God's leadership in all areas of our lives. He is wise; we are not to trust only in our own understanding. We must turn away from evil and let Him show us what steps to take. Proverbs 3:9-10 instructs us to honor the Lord from the first part of our wealth and not from what is left over. As a result, God will abundantly provide for us. This does not mean that we are exempt from difficulties or challenges, and we may still experience financial hardships. But He will meet our needs. His blessings coming back to us may be in the form of having peace of mind, knowing we've honored Him.

6. Give your group members time to think this over, look back at verses if they want to, and write out a few phrases or sentences that express what meant the most to them. Then let them share with each other, so that they may more easily apply these important principles of stewardship to their lives.

Memorize

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce.

Proverbs 3:9 (NLT)



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