

Generosity

Proverbs 19:17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

A Teaching Outline



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Generosity

1 Timothy 6:17-19

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

You will not lose your reward.

Matthew 10:42

And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

How much we love God can be measured by how well we treat others. Jesus' example of giving a cup of cold water to a thirsty child is a good model of unselfish service. A child usually can't or won't return a favor. God notices every good deed we do or don't do as if he were the one receiving it. Is there something unselfish you can do for someone else today? Although no one else may see you, God will notice.

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Acts 20:35

In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Paul was a tentmaker, and he supported himself with this trade. Paul did not work to become rich but to be free from being dependent on anyone. He supported himself as well as others who traveled with him (he mentions this in some of his letters; see Philippians 4:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 2:9).

Give out of the kindness of your heart.

2 Corinthians 9:13

By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission flowing from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,
Give out of the kindness of your heart.

Paul wanted his readers to be generous on every occasion. As he appealed to the Corinthians to give sacrificially to aid the Jerusalem congregation, he reminded them that God is the source of everything good.

Believers are called to be generous because of the example of the Lord of life. A stingy Christian should be an extinct species. Generosity proves that a person's heart has been cleansed of self-interest and filled with the servant spirit of Jesus himself. That is why acts of generosity result in God being praised.

He who gives freely grows richer.

Proverbs 11:24

One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.

We become richer by being generous. The world says to hold on to as much as possible, but God blesses those who give freely of their possessions, time, and energy.

When we give, God supplies us with more so that we can give more. In addition, giving helps us gain a right perspective on our possessions.

We realize they were never really ours to begin with, but they were given to us by God to be used to help others. What then do we gain by giving? Freedom from enslavement to our possessions, the joy of helping others, and God's approval.

The same measure you give, it will be measured back to you.

Luke 6:37-38

“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

A forgiving spirit demonstrates that a person has received God's forgiveness. Jesus used the picture of measuring grain in a basket to ensure the full amount. If we are critical rather than compassionate, we will also receive criticism. If we treat others generously, graciously, and compassionately, however, these qualities will come back to us in full measure. We are to love others, not judge them.

Give as you decide in your heart.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
Be a Blessing and Be Blessed.

A giving attitude is more important than the amount given. The person who can give only a small gift shouldn't be embarrassed. God is concerned about *how* a person gives from his or her resources (see Mark 12:41-44).

According to that standard, the giving of the Macedonian churches would be difficult to match (8:3). God himself is a cheerful giver. Consider all he has done for us. He is pleased when we who are created in his image give generously and joyfully. Do you have a difficult time letting go of your money? It may reflect ungratefulness to God.

God gives you power to get wealth.

Deuteronomy 8:18

You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, which he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

In times of plenty, we often take credit for our prosperity and become proud that our own hard work and cleverness have made us rich. It is easy to get so busy collecting and managing wealth that we push God right out of our lives. But it is God who gives us everything we have, and it is God who asks us to manage it for him

Give to the poor and God will repay you.

Proverbs 19:17

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD,
and he will repay him for his deed.

God values all of us, whether we are poor or rich. When we help the poor, we honor both the Creator and his creation. God accepts our help as if we had offered it directly to him.

Defraud not anyone.

Luke 19:8

And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.”

Zacchaeus must have been a very crooked tax collector. After he met Jesus, however, he realized that his life needed straightening out. By giving to the poor and making restitution—with generous interest—to those he had cheated, Zacchaeus demonstrated inner change by outward action. Following Jesus in your head or heart alone is not enough. We can show our faith by changed behavior.

Leaders should set an example of giving.

David gave leadership gifts.

He understand the importance of integrity (“I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”) He expected others to sacrifice as well – and they did.

He is not shy or vague about his own personal commitment of gold (three thousand talents) and silver (seven thousand talents) and the effect is all the leaders of families and commanders and officials gave willingly toward the work.

Solomon gave extravagant gifts.

I call this the extravagant giver. Everything they do is large and more often than not extraordinary in size and quality.

As well, it is rarely (if ever) anonymous or even quiet. People of unusual gifts are often exaggerated in their expression of them.

God gave Solomon a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore.

He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. Men of all nations came to listen to his wisdom and his fame spread to all the surrounding nations.

And when he gave? It, too, was part of his fame. He didn't hide it or shy away from recognition. In fact, it is just the opposite. He built a Temple and a Palace that was unlike any other in their splendor.

Elisha understood the plight of the widow.

The prophet's response to the plight of the widow was not a gift of money but the gift of an opportunity to create a short term and profitable business to support her family.

He commanded her to get all her neighbors involved in the venture ("not just a few") by their giving her their empty jars. She then sells the oil to pay her debts and is able to live on what is left. That's innovative and cooperative and we know people like this.

The Wise Men gave gifts to Jesus.

Some of us are team givers as they were. We prefer working with others but we also have a unique contribution. The wise men shared the risk and they stayed together to accomplish their mission. As well, like the widow, they made their gift and released it. There is no account of their calling back to Mary and Joseph a year later to find out how their gifts were being used or to see how Jesus was growing as a result of their gifts. They came, contributed and departed.

Zaccheus restored four times what he had taken.

The “wee little man” is an interesting blend of exuberance and precision. While his life has been changed, his attention to detail has not. He does not say he is going to give it all away out of gratitude. Instead, he says he will give half of it – leaving himself the balance. As well, he does not say he will repay ten times but four times. He has a number in mind that does not allow his exhilaration to get out of control. His new generosity has structure – and limits.

The Widow gave all she had.

I doubt any of us would have encouraged her to give to that ministry had we known what Jesus knew about the flawed leadership, the organization’s lack of vision and their misuse of money.

Instead of being an example of gullible giving she is an illustration of that giver who gives and truly releases the gift. They have the increasingly rare ability to trust that somehow God will use a flawed institution and still provide for them.

Barnabas sold a field and gave the money to the apostles.

The account of the early Church in Acts tells us how they sold possessions and took care of each other. It does not say they sold all their possessions. One of them, Barnabas, sold a field and brought the money to the apostles.

Barnabas did not sell everything over which he had responsibility. More importantly, he was gifted with recognizing and supporting new talent and giving them the credibility they needed to get started. Two of his “investments”, Paul and John Mark, turned out to be remarkable in their “return” for the Church.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart, please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

New American Standard Bible

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

Thank you!