



GENEROUS LIFE



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GENEROUS LIFE

Adult Leader Guides





ADULT LEADER GUIDES

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Adult Leader Guide Session 1

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

2 Corinthians 9:6-8; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7; Mark 10:17-27

Main Point

True generosity connects us with a God who is joyfully generous toward His children.

Getting Started

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

Begin by discussing the different organizations or causes that people in your group support financially. Consider why you choose to support these particular organizations.

What would happen in our homes, our workplaces, and our friend groups if we stopped giving?

Giving is part of our everyday lives, yet seldom do we consider how much giving impacts everything we do. So many charitable organizations that conduct groundbreaking research are supported by donations. Giving helps people attend college or travel on mission trips. In theory, we understand the blessing and the necessity of giving, but in practice, our lives sometimes fall short. Today we will look at the blessing of giving in our lives and will come to understand how true generosity connects us with a God who is joyfully generous toward His children.

Discussion

Have a volunteer read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8.

Make a list of principles and promises related to giving that you have observed reading this passage. Why do these particular principles and promises stick out to you?

Motives for giving vary. What is the result of giving reluctantly or because someone pressured you to do so?

How did Paul instruct the Corinthians to give cheerfully?

Paul helped the Corinthians gain the proper perspective on giving. They needed to move from thought to practice; from good intentions to meaningful actions. Paul hoped to lead the Corinthians to give as a ministry and to set a positive Christian example. He wanted them to grasp that those who give more receive more, that giving comes from the heart, and that we should be cheerful as we give. To achieve all of this, Paul appealed to the gospel: because God has been generous with us, we can be joyfully generous to others.

Have a volunteer read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7.

What obstacles were the Macedonians willing to overcome to be generous? What giving principles and promises did they embrace?

What did God give to the churches in Macedonia? How does this relate to the actions of the churches in verse 2?

What difficult circumstances did these churches have to face? In spite of their circumstances, what was revealed about their character?

How could a group of people have a wealth of generosity and abundant joy in the midst of affliction and extreme poverty? It was only by the grace of God. The church in Macedonia became an example of how God's grace leads us to an open-handed view of money and possessions. Better than most, the Macedonians understood that everything they had came from God, and their giving allowed them to be participants in the grace of God they had received.

Like the Macedonians, have you ever given and later felt compelled to give more? What do you think led to that compulsion?

Have a volunteer read Mark 10:17-27.

The man known as the “rich young ruler” stands in stark contrast to the generosity of the Macedonians.

What does it mean to be rich? Would you define yourself as rich? Why or why not?

This gentleman desired security in his relationship with God. What do you make of Jesus’ response? Why do you suppose Jesus talked specifically about money as opposed to a moral issue such as anger, lust, judgment, or gossip?

Compare and contrast the giving experience, the giving process, and the giving outcome of the Macedonians and the rich young ruler.

What obstacles to generosity did the rich young ruler face? What generosity obstacles are you facing? Why is it often quite challenging for people who have much to give much?

Is this story an indictment against being rich? Why not? What is the moral of this story?

Wealth is about more than money. Wealth includes having food, shelter, healthcare, clean water, and most importantly, access to the gospel. By any stretch of the imagination, we are wealthy people. Jesus encountered a very religious man who was very wealthy by worldly standards. He believed he had obeyed the law of God perfectly, yet he was not disciplined enough in his belief to respond to Jesus with his possessions. Following Jesus demands that we give Him every part of our lives, including our money and possessions. The more we comprehend God’s generosity to us in Christ, the more joyfully generous we become.

Application

Our aim is to understand more deeply God’s joyful generosity toward us.

On a scale of 1-10 (1 being the least likely and 10 being most confident), rate your level of generosity. How would you rate your current level of financial generosity based on your capacity?

What is one small, concrete step you can take to grow in your level of generosity?

What is the role of individual giving in the mission of the church? What do you imagine the church is unable to do right now but would be able to do if everyone gave generously?

GENEROSITY PRAYER

“I thank God who has blessed me in all ways, at all times, with more than I need. Lead me to live generously, share joyfully, and look expectantly toward my future.”

LOOKING AHEAD

In this series, we will take a look at four different kinds of givers and their biblical heroes.

THE BEGINNING GIVER

DESCRIPTION: “I am beginning my giving journey.”

BIBLICAL HEROES: Zacchaeus and the boy with fishes and loaves

THE CONSISTENT GIVER

DESCRIPTION: “I am giving at least once a month.”

BIBLICAL HEROES: Cornelius and Mary

THE EXPANDING GIVER

DESCRIPTION: “I am giving beyond my tithe to the vision of my church and needs I encounter.”

BIBLICAL HEROES: The Good Samaritan and David

THE EXTRAVAGANT GIVER

DESCRIPTION: “I am living a radically generous life with all of my resources.”

BIBLICAL HEROES: Barnabas and the widow



GENEROUS LIFE

Adult Leader Guide Session 2

MY FIRST STEPS

Luke 19:1-10; John 6:1-13; Acts 10:1-8; Luke 8:1-3

Main Point

An encounter with the generous Jesus leads to a life of consistent generosity.

Getting Started

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

If you grew up in church, what are some of the first times you remember giving an offering or tithe of some kind?

If you do not have a background in church, when did you first give a gift paid for with your own money?

Does generosity come naturally to you, or does it take more effort? Explain.

Giving is not something that comes naturally to most of us. We work hard for our money, so we want to keep it to ourselves. Giving is a habit, and like any other habit, it has to be learned. Those who have less stress about giving are likely those who were taught to give as children. Maybe you gave part of your allowance or some money you got from your parents to put in the offering plate at church. Maybe you bought a present for a sibling or a friend with your own money. Either way, these moments make an impact and communicate the importance of giving. Encountering generosity is a crucial first step in becoming consistently generous.

Discussion

Have a volunteer read Luke 19:1-10.

Recall a time in your life when you have been eager or excited about an event. What creates anticipation? Why do you believe Zacchaeus was so eager to encounter Jesus?

How did meeting Jesus change Zacchaeus's attitude toward people and possessions?

How has meeting Jesus as Savior changed your attitude toward people and possessions? Can you give specific examples? How soon after meeting Jesus did this take place?

After a personal encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus pledged to give half of his possessions to the poor and to pay back four times the amount he extorted. Zacchaeus was determined to do far more than the law demanded. He was a changed man, and his generosity reflected it. Grace allowed Zacchaeus to begin his journey as a giver.

Have a volunteer read John 6:1-13.

What do you believe was the “test” referred to in verse 6?

How do you feel knowing that Jesus may give you a surprise test on a given day, all while knowing what He has in store for your future?

Beginning givers are those just starting on their journey of giving. The gospel writers do not tell us much more about this boy other than he had five loaves and two fish that he willingly gave to Jesus. We aren't completely sure why he is alone and what he intends to do with these fishes and loaves. Let's suppose he was sent to town to gather groceries for his family. We can also assume that his family members were busy working to help the family get by.

Why do you suppose the boy relinquished his resources? Do you think it was easy? Do you think he felt good about it? What might have held him back or created an obstacle to his giving?

Did he have a choice? Do you think he experienced joy and received a blessing? How do you think his life was affected moving forward?

What generosity principles and practices do you see as similar between Zacchaeus and the young boy? What differences?

This child gave what he had, and though it did not seem like enough to the disciples, it was more than enough for Jesus. Stewardship is a lifelong practice that begins where we are. As we learn about giving, we are able to see how Jesus takes a gift of any amount and puts it to work in His kingdom. We may never know exactly where our gift goes, but we can rest confidently knowing that the kingdom of God is being built. God's faithfulness to build His kingdom creates obedient, consistent giving within us.

Have a volunteer read Acts 10:1-8 and Luke 8:1-3.

Regarding Cornelius in verses 2-4, what connections do we observe between a thriving prayer life and a generous life?

Cornelius' faith had a positive impact upon himself, his family, community, and work environment. What practices other than prayer and generosity do you suppose he expressed to live such a consistent life? How does giving increase with spiritual maturity?

Luke 8:1-3 describes the early followers of Jesus. What did they receive from Him? What did they give back to Him?

If you were to create a list of the attributes of a generous follower of Jesus from these texts, what attributes or characteristics would you include? What lessons do you take away that help you grow into a consistent giver?

Cornelius was a prominent man, both socially and financially. He was also a devout, respectful, giving, and prayerful man. Though not a Jew, he was a worshiper of God. A centurion would have commanded around 600 soldiers and would have been paid very well. Cornelius' prayers and acts of charity prompted God to act in his life the same way the goodness of God prompted the women in Luke to respond to God with their generosity.

Application

Our aim is to begin our giving journey and grow into consistent givers.

Beginning a journey of giving starts when we put some restraints on our spending. Where can you cut some spending in your own budget to prepare yourself to give more?

How can you contribute to and promote a culture of generosity in your home? Why is it important to develop generosity in your home early on?

What is celebrated is repeated. Understanding how crucial giving is to living as a Christian. As we become more consistent in our giving, how can we joyfully hold one another accountable?

GENEROSITY PRAYER

"I thank God who has blessed me in all ways, at all times, with more than I need. Lead me to live generously, share joyfully, and look expectantly toward my future."

The Beginning Giver

DESCRIPTION: "I am beginning my giving journey."

BIBLICAL HEROES: Zacchaeus and the boy with fishes and loaves

GROWTH STEPS

1. I will resist spending all I earn so that I can be better prepared to give.
2. I will ask God to make me generous as He is generous.
3. I will respond to a need when I become aware of it.
4. I will set up my digital devices to be prepared to give as God prompts my heart.

The Consistent Giver

DESCRIPTION: "I am giving at least once a month."

BIBLICAL HEROES: Cornelius and Mary

GROWTH STEPS

1. I will take a money management class this year.
2. I will lead my family to grow in generosity.
3. I will get involved in a small group to understand how I can live generously toward others.
4. I will set up a monthly recurring gift.



GENEROUS LIFE

Adult Leader Guide Session 3

COUNT ME IN

Luke 10:30-35; 2 Samuel 24:18-25; Acts 4:36-37

Main Point

True generosity moves beyond a focus on the minimum.

Getting Started

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

What is an organization or cause you regularly support or would love to support financially?

How does giving financially provide support that words of encouragement and promotion on social media do not?

Tithing is the basic level of obedience expected from every follower of Christ, but that doesn't mean that our giving stops with tithing. The Bible is full of examples of people who gave far beyond what was expected of them. When we passionately seek opportunities to invest in the kingdom through our giving, we have moved from expanding our giving to extravagant giving. When these givers hear about needs in the church and in the world, they respond and passionately seek the chance to give to the work of God.

Discussion

Have a volunteer read Luke 10:30-35.

How does verse 33 describe the emotion the Samaritan had for the wounded Jewish man? How did being alert lead to action for the Samaritan?

What did the Samaritan do to help? Do you think this was excessive? Why or why not? For whom would you go to this length to show care?

What did it cost the Samaritan to care for the injured man? Why does love call us to obedience?

When you read through the parable of the Good Samaritan, how does he model the same heart as the believers Paul wrote about in 2 Corinthians 9:1-5?

When Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan, his audience would have been shocked by the inclusion of a Samaritan in this story. Samaritans were ritually unclean and despised by the Jewish people. Yet, he was surprisingly generous to a wounded traveler. Jesus used a story about an outsider to teach us to slow down, open our eyes, soften our hearts, and extend our wallets.

Have a volunteer read 2 Samuel 24:18-25.

David's giving had a purpose far beyond one man making a personal sacrifice to God in worship. What were the long-term benefits others would receive because of David's personal and generous gift?

This wasn't David's only legacy giving experience. See 1 Chronicles 29:1-6. What other legacy impact do you see David experiencing? How did his generosity affect Solomon and the other leaders?

Re-read David's words in verse 24. Why was it important to David to sacrifice in giving instead of letting Araunah provide for him?

How did the Lord respond to David's giving? What joy does God take in our giving?

Once we begin giving, we should move from being consistent givers to expanding givers. Expanding givers give beyond a tithe to the vision of the church and the needs they encounter. As God changes our hearts, He increases our ability and desire to give, and we give with greater frequency and regularity. In this practice, we learn that giving should cost us something and increase our faith. As we trust in God, we move from expanding givers to extravagant givers.

Have a volunteer read Acts 4:36-37.

Barnabas sold a field that would have been of some value to him. What would be a comparable source of generosity for you?

What are the benefits to building God's kingdom instead of our own kingdom? With which was the early church most concerned?

What similarities and differences do you see between the hearts of Barnabas in these verses and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)?

Is expanding or extravagant giving limited to those with a certain level of income, or is it for everyone? See Luke 21:1-4.

Read Proverbs 11:24-25 and Luke 6:38. What are the similarities between these two texts? How can living generously with grace and forgiveness fuel financial generosity in your life?

Barnabas was not concerned with building a kingdom for himself, but with building God's kingdom. Barnabas went on to become a pillar of the early church and a traveling companion of Paul. But as we see here, Barnabas was committed to the church with his wallet as well as his life. Barnabas was an extravagant giver, and God was able to use him to do incredible things. In Luke 21:1-4, we also see that extravagant giving is not based on the amount but the proportion of the gift. You don't have to be wealthy to be extravagant in your giving.

Application

Our aim is to move from tithing givers to expanding and extravagant givers. Here are some items to begin praying about. Talk through these with the group and with your family.

How well informed am I about my giving opportunities?

What adjustments in my earning or spending do I need to make so I can be ready to give beyond my tithe as the Lord leads?

What am I most passionate about? What need or ministry can I easily focus my giving toward?

Over my lifetime, what long-term generosity impact might I have? If I created my personal generosity dream life, what would it look like?

What steps can you make this year to begin to make a higher priority of this legacy lifestyle?

GENEROSITY PRAYER

"I thank God who has blessed me in all ways, at all times, with more than I need. Lead me to live generously, share joyfully, and look expectantly toward my future."

The Expanding Giver

DESCRIPTION: "I am giving beyond my tithe to the vision of my church and needs I encounter."

BIBLICAL HEROES: The Good Samaritan and David

GROWTH STEPS

1. I will seek to discover the needs in the world and areas of ministry I am most passionate about so that I can focus my prayers and generosity.
2. I will begin praying bold generosity prayers and start stretching my faith and giving amount.
3. I will take the time to talk to my pastor about ways my passion for generosity can have the greatest kingdom impact.
4. I will surrender my career to God by writing a deed of ownership for my future and giving it to God.

The Extravagant Giver

DESCRIPTION: "I am living a radically generous life with all of my resources."

BIBLICAL HEROES: Barnabas and the widow

GROWTH STEPS

1. I will engage in the habit of prayer and fasting throughout the year to better hear God's voice on the direction of my generosity.
2. I will see new resource opportunities as possible new generosity opportunities, raising my standard of giving, not living.
3. I will spend time weekly studying the promises of God regarding my resources.
4. I will identify a financial number to give annually that would represent a true sacrifice of faith.



GENEROUS LIFE

Adult Leader Guide Session 4

NO HOLDING BACK

2 Corinthians 9:9-15; 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

Main Point

We achieve our “dream life” when we live in the freedom of giving.

Getting Started

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

If you had a blank check to use in any way you wished, what would you do with it?

Is there any level of giving that is off-limits to you? Is there anything you wouldn't give away? If so, what would you hold back?

If you were being honest, you might admit that you think people who give without holding back are “a little off.” We may even think that these people are not wise; their actions don't make sense to us. Yet in terms of our relationship with Christ, we have no right to hold anything back, including our finances. Think back to the blank check. For the Christian, a blank check is what Jesus requires of our lives. We are called to give up everything to follow Him. The blank check is his to write, and it can be written for anything he chooses. Because Jesus gave and didn't hold anything back from us, we don't hold anything back from Him.

Discussion

Have a volunteer read 2 Corinthians 9:9-15.

How does generosity fuel righteousness in your life? How does generosity reflect the righteousness of Jesus?

What does God promise to supply you with when you are generous? Why does He do this?

List the results of generosity. Who does it benefit? What results does it create?

What does the gospel tell us about God's generosity toward us? How does that free us to be generous with what God has given us?

God freely gave up His only Son on the cross for our sins. This was not something that we deserved. If God gave us what our sins deserved, He would send us to eternal punishment. Furthermore, we will never repay God for this gift. When we see how generous God has been toward us through the sacrifice of His Son, we will not be able to help but refocus our thinking about our money and resources. The death and resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate picture of generosity, and it should motivate us to give without holding anything back. Doing so is a tremendous means of pointing people to Christ.

Have a volunteer read 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19.

The lack of personal contentment and fight with greed is no new struggle. Why are these issues a common thread in the human experience for thousands of years? What lies do we believe or false dreams do we chase related to these two issues?

Is money a bad thing or a good thing? What makes money such a powerful issue for good and bad in the world?

What can you begin to do in your life this week to see God as the Creator of money and how He intends to bless your life with it (vv. 17-19)?

What four commands do you see in verse 18? Give one example of how you can pursue each command this year?

What is meant by life that is truly life in verse 19? Do you think you are experiencing it? Why or why not? What do we commonly exchange for this kind of life?

Contentment isn't based on what belongs to us, but to whom we belong. Without a desire to be more and more like the One who created us, we won't experience contentment. If we want to experience real life, the life of contentment, we must learn to give. Take a step away from the materialism of our age by renewing your commitment to be a giver—only then can you lay hold of real life and inner contentment.

Application

Our aim has been to live generously, share joyfully and look expectantly toward our future.

Read Proverbs 8:17-21. What do these verses promise those who treasure the Lord above all else?

Of the five types of givers we have studied (beginning, consistent, tithing, expanding and extravagant), which one best represents where you are today?

What will you do this year to grow toward becoming the generous person God desires you to be?

What are a few concrete things that God can do if you increased your giving? What could the Lord do if our entire church family increased their giving?

GENEROSITY PRAYER

*"I thank God who has blessed me in all ways, at all times, with more than I need.
Lead me to live generously, share joyfully, and look expectantly toward my future."*

