

WEEK THREE

DAY ONE

The Miracle of a
Generous Heart
Daily Devotionals

Prepared by: Andrew Cox
for October 18, 2021

A HEART OF GENEROSITY

Read Philippians 2:1-10

Before we get into what God's word has for us today, let's look at what the word generous really means. The English word generous comes from the Latin word "generōsitās" which means "someone showing a readiness to give more of something, such as money or time, than is strictly necessary or expected." But when I think of what it means for someone to be "generous" I just think it's a person who throws their own needs to the side and goes above and beyond what is expected of them. Now that we understand the word Generous, let us talk about what it means for us as the Church body to have a biblical Heart of Generosity. Paul, in his letter to the church in Philippi, addresses in Philippians 2 what it means to have humility. In verses 3-4 he says this,

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

These two verses showed true biblical generosity; to truly be generous, you must count yourself as less significant as others. You may be asking, "But what does 'count yourselves as less significant' look like?" I think the best example of this is what Jesus our Savior did for us on the cross. As Paul says in verses 7-8,

"but [He] made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

This is so powerful, church family! Jesus literally emptied Himself, or in better words, took the lowest position He could just so that He could save us. This shows us what it truly means to have A Heart of Generosity.

So, what to do now? Well, now that we have seen the example that Christ has set for us, I challenge you to live the same way; count yourself as nothing so that you can put your friends, families, and your church needs before your own and imitate what Jesus has done for all of us.

WEEK THREE

DAY TWO

The Miracle of a
Generous Heart
Daily Devotionals

Prepared by: Jonathan & Christina Pettit
for October 19, 2021

JOY IN GIVING

In verses 2-5 of 2 Corinthians 8, Paul points to the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia:

"..that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave voluntarily, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God."

Through God's grace, joy was so abounding in this body of believers that they were literally begging for the opportunity to give.

Is this the overwhelming attitude towards giving? It could be, but there is a precursor to experiencing this level of generosity as verse 5 tells us, "they first gave themselves to the Lord." When legalism and selfishness is removed from our motives in giving, the opportunities we have to share the resources, time and abilities we have will be everywhere we look. When our aim is to glorify God and give with no expectation of acknowledgement or receiving anything in return, His grace and love is apparent in our own lives as well as to those receiving the gift. Even though we may not see it firsthand, our generosity can be an outward and tangible display of the love we have for our neighbors, whether here or abroad, and used to lift up our brothers and sisters in the faith.

Throughout Paul's writings, we find multiple accounts of God's grace producing generous, content, and cheerful givers. Are you lacking in joy? Beg God to provide opportunities to give generously of your time, abilities, and finances.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Thank you for the joy found in giving. Please increase in us a spirit of generosity that we would actively seek out opportunities to give of ourselves and glorify You.

WEEK THREE

DAY THREE

The Miracle of a
Generous Heart
Daily Devotionals

Prepared by: Stacey Loll
for October 20, 2021

MITE-Y TRUST

"And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And He called His disciples to Him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." Mark 12:42-44

Every time I read these verses, I experience such emotion. People are coming to the temple and many are contributing, some great sums. Then, this little woman walks in and gives EVERYTHING she had, ALL SHE HAD TO LIVE ON. Jesus tells His disciples that they gave from abundance but she gave from her poverty. In other words, they gave some, enough to feel good about their offering but no sacrificial giving. Yet, she GAVE ALL she had to LIVE on.

That is commitment, conviction, surrender, trust!

Things to consider:

1. **When was the last time I felt great conviction?**
2. **Did I obey Christ in that conviction?**
3. **Have I surrendered ALL or am I still holding on to a few things?**
4. **Is it a trust issue, lack of commitment, or is it my selfishness?**

Prayer: Father God, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for verses that remind me that the whole universe belongs to You. All that I have is a gift that You have entrusted me to steward well. Father God, continue to draw me near, create in me a heart for you and a trust and conviction to be like the widow in these verses. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

WEEK THREE

DAY FOUR

The Miracle of a
Generous Heart
Daily Devotionals

Prepared by: Gene Blair
for October 21, 2021

GENEROSITY: IS IT CATCHING?

**"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion,
and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." II Corinthians 9:11**

Lately we're hearing a lot about wealth, shared prosperity, the debt ceiling, and a higher minimum wage - all hot topics. One we don't hear as much is generosity. True, generosity news is occasionally tagged on as a feel-good story concluding nightly news, or at Christmas when news is slow, but generosity makes headlines a lot less than murder. So where does that leave generosity? In the hearts of families and individuals, where it belongs. Randy Alcorn in *The Treasure Principle* speaks of generosity as "joyful giving." When you are out to eat with another person or couple and the dinner bill comes due, who do you enjoy more: those who try to pay your bill and make sure to tip the wait staff 20% or more, or the one who scrutinizes the bill, complains, and tips the minimum? One is obliged to pay his share, and one revels in paying his share and more. That's what joyful giving looks like.

Willard and Sheppard in *Contagious Generosity* define generosity as "a lifestyle in which we share all that we have, all that we are, and all that we will ever become as a demonstration of God's love and a response to God's grace." Generosity implies stewardship, which acknowledges that: God is the owner of everything, what we have was given by God, and our resources should be invested in His kingdom. Alcorn quotes a wealthy man who changed his attitude toward giving. "It was realizing God's ownership," he said. "Once we understood that we were giving away God's money to do God's work, we discovered a peace and joy we never had back then when we thought it was our money!"

Alcorn tells a story about minister-theologian John Wesley. A distraught man rode up to him shouting, "Mr. Wesley, something terrible has happened. Your house has burned down!" Wesley weighed the news, then calmly replied, "No, the Lord's house burned to the ground. That means one less responsibility for me." Wesley wasn't in denial, he merely affirmed the reality that God owns all things and we are simply His joyful stewards. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthian church (quoted above), talked about spiritual as well as material blessings that would free Christians to give the most valuable gift of all - ourselves! Wouldn't it be wonderful if generosity was contagious, if it spread member to member until it engulfed our whole church? What if our church's people were known throughout Walker County for their joyful giving: to needy people, ministries, missionaries, even other churches, so that our community, as Paul said, thanked God for us? Dare we consider so ambitious a vision? Dare we consider anything less?

For reflection: Are there people who thank God for your generosity?

WEEK THREE

DAY FIVE

The Miracle of a
Generous Heart
Daily Devotionals

Prepared by: Betty Gorrell
for October 22, 2021

"TRUST, TRY AND PROVE ME"

Webster's Dictionary defines generous as "free in giving or sharing." The apostle Paul when writing to Timothy said, "Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share." (I Timothy 6:18)

In the Broadman Hymnal, page 393, we find a hymn entitled "Trust, Try and Prove Me" by Lida Shivers Leech. In the words of the hymn, we find a promise from our Lord:

**"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,
All your money, talents, time and love,
Consecrate them all upon the altar,
While your Savior from above speaks sweetly,
Trust Me, try Me, prove Me saith the Lord of hosts, and see
If a blessing, unmeasured blessing,
I will not pour out on thee."**

When we stop to consider how we need to bring everything - money, talents, time and love - and give them to Jesus, we often hesitate at giving it all! But each of us can stop and find ways to share our money through giving to our church and other charities, our talents and time through serving in different areas of our church and community, and our love by sharing God's Word and love with others!

When we trust Him, we will find Him tried and proven as He pours out those blessings on us!

WEEK THREE

DAY SIX

The Miracle of a
Generous Heart
Daily Devotionals

Prepared by: Jessica Reyes-Olinski
for October 23, 2021

THE FAILING SPIRIT

“Answer me speedily, O Lord; My spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, Lest I be like those who go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You.” -Psalms 143: 7-9

Wow, having the courage to be generous with your resources is hard. When that paycheck comes in, and your mind immediately goes to bills, savings, upcoming expenses, it's hard to prioritize tithing and giving. Taking it a step further, being generous with your house, your car, your time is also a difficult task to put on the forefront of your mind. It all becomes a back-burner thought to the Immediate Now.

Sometimes, our spirit just... fails. We find it hard to have the faith to know that our resources are not ours but the Lord's, and that we are simply just the stewards of the vast wealth he's given us to take care of preciously. But brothers, sisters, take heart. This is not a task that we can do ourselves, and God has never demanded us to do so. Instead, He has asked us to lean on Him, to trust in His wisdom, to lift our finances, services and time to Him and He will take care of us. I've found myself in those moments of doubt, of wondering whether or not I should push forward, that if I ignore the desire to control everything in my gut and give it all to the Lord, He, without question, has always provided. Now please do not misinterpret; I always make sure that we have our bills and necessities covered. But that's the beauty of being generous - everything you can give is something the Lord can multiply. Jesus took the small generosity of the boy with the two fish and five loaves and multiplied it to feed thousands. The Lord took a small shepherd boy, his voice and desire to share God's heart and made him a king of a great nation.

The Lord can take whatever you give willingly to Him and make it something miraculous and beautiful for someone else. How precious is it when we show Jesus' loving kindness to others and it blesses them tremendously?

And when that doubt begins to creep in, telling you it's a waste or you need to focus on taking care of your own first, or even telling you that you cannot afford to be generous, remember to pray. Remember to seek the Lord when the enemy is near. Ask Him to renew your spirit as it fails, and He will always provide. He will cause you to hear His loving kindness in the morning. Trust in Him, and I promise He will take even the smallest of gifts, as long as it is with a loving heart, and make it something beautiful.