



## Generosity

Adapted from "Demands of Discipleship" series by Dennis Marquardt.

The term "stingy Christian" is nothing more than a contradiction. Christ Himself showed a generous spirit in everything He did. The Old Testament demanded that believers were kind and generous to the poor and needy. The spirit of generosity comes from the Spirit of Christ.

God desires Christian men to scatter seed generously. Consider the following story:

While in Canada, I visited one believer who operated a large grain farm. His spread included some twenty-five hundred acres. I asked him how he planted the seed. He reached in a bin and pulled out an ear of corn. Then he proceeded to pop out the kernels one by one as he walked along, demonstrating the planting process. Do you believe that? No, sir! That's not what he said nor is it what he did. He showed me a distributor that was some thirty feet wide. "We take that double tandem truck, fill it with certified seed, back it up to the distributor, open the slots, and pour in the seed." He went on to say, "If you're ever going to be cheap, don't be cheap with the seed." One bushel of seed invested yields thirty bushels of grain harvested in a good year. Thirty to one--not a bad return, if you are ready to believe and willing to invest. God says, "believe me, trust me, try my plan, prove my ways, and see the kind of harvest I will give." So Paul guarantees this principle of truth in the scripture with the promise, "and God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). All grace, all ways, all sufficiency, all things! There are four promises in one breath. Knowing it is one thing, believing it is quite another.<sup>1</sup>

The Scriptures teach us to be generous in every aspect of our lives. The world discovers the power of Christ when they see the image of Christ stamped in our lives. As men, we cannot enter a real relationship with Christ and then display a stingy heart. The paradox of being a generous giver is that we end up with far more than we ever give.

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<sup>1</sup> James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), 463.

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## COURAGE

**C1:** Read and answer or discuss the following.

**2 Corinthians 9:1–15 (ESV)** Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them. But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction. The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

- Paul urges the Corinthians to be prepared to give. How can you be prepared to give when called upon?
- How is there a difference between giving out of your extra as opposed to giving out of what you need to live?
- What does it mean to you to be generous in your giving?

**C2:** Read and answer or discuss the following.

**Luke 6:38 (ESV)** 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.

- What does this Scripture mean to you?
- Before coming to Christ, how would you rate your giving practices? After coming to Christ, has your giving practices changed and if so, how?
- Have you ever thought that all you have comes from God?
- Is it harder for you to give financially or your gifts and talents? Why?
- Write down two or three ways how you can increase your giving to the Lord's work?

## STRENGTH

**S1:** Read and answer or discuss the following.

### **2 Corinthians 9:1–15 (ESV)**

- From these verses, where do you find the strength to be cheerful givers?
- Paul shares that you must give as you purposed in our hearts. Where do you stand in your heart toward giving?
- How can you be prepared to give when someone is in need?
- Do you believe that God will supply all your needs if you love Him? Write out a time when God supplied your needs.

**S2:** Read and answer or discuss the following.

### **Luke 6:38 (ESV)**

- Describe the difference between giving financial help verses physical help? Which one is easier for you to give? Why?
- When was the last time you gave out of your own need verses giving out of your extra? What was the result?

- Why is it so hard for a man to give financially and physically to those in need?
- Have you ever been jealous of those who have more financially than you?
- How can you strengthen your belief that you need to be generous givers to the work of the Lord?
- Over the next ninety days, develop a strategy to give more than you are currently giving, financially and physically to the work of the Lord. What happened as your giving increased?

## ENDURANCE

E1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

### 2 Corinthians 9:1–15 (ESV)

- Paul told the Corinthian church to be prepared to give. How are you preparing to give and increase your giving each year? Write out a strategic giving plan for the coming year.
- If you were to teach someone else about giving to the work of the Lord, what would you teach them?

### Luke 6:38 (ESV)

- As a believer in Jesus Christ, do you understand how generous Jesus was by going to the Cross? How can you take His example of giving His life for you as an example of how you must be generous in your giving?
- If someone were to look at your checkbook or bank account, what would your giving reveal about you?
- What are some ways to give beyond giving money?

**E2:** Rate yourself using the following rate schedule:

- 1- Not Very Giving
- 2- Somewhat Giving
- 3- Slightly Giving
- 4- Moderately Giving
- 5- Very Giving

- Tithing to your local church
- Giving to those in need
- Using your gifts and talents in the service of the Lord
- Increasing your giving of time and resources to the local church community
- Reaping what you sow
- Being a cheerful giver

Write out a plan to improve in each of these areas in the next ninety days.