



The Kind of Generosity God Loves

Leader Notes

Welcome to a new series! The title of it may look a little familiar to you, as it is a spin-off of GoFundMe- a popular website designed to create fundraisers. The purpose of this series is about our hearts being transformed in a way that reflects God's generous character. In addition, we are excited to be raising \$100,000 to help some local and global ministries! You can visit <https://highdesertchurch.com/gofundkingdom> to get more information on these ministries.

This week's discussion will be centered on the fact that God is generous and how we, as Christians, ought to be generous as we live out our faith. We hope that this series will be an encouragement to your group as we all seek to have our hearts, minds, and the way we live transformed to represent Christ well to our Oikos.

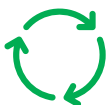


1. What stands out in your memory as the most generous act someone has ever done for you?

Although this is a simple ice breaking question, it is also good for us to recognize that generosity is virtuous. We are appreciative when someone is generous towards us, but sometimes cringe when we are challenged to be generous towards others. People often get uncomfortable when money is discussed and make claims that the church is always asking for people to give. To be clear, this series isn't about HDC needing money, it is about reflecting God's character. At HDC, we intentionally speak about finances only once every couple of years. This is far less frequent than God's Word speaks on the topic.



Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7.



2. How did Paul complement the churches in Macedonia? Why did he mention this to the Corinthians?

In this chapter, the apostle stirs up the Corinthians to make a collection for the Christians in Jerusalem. He first sets before them the example of the Macedonian churches, who had made a liberal collection. This was not the generosity of one church only, but of many, and so worthy of imitation. In 2 Corinthians 8:1, he shares of their generosity by illustrating the circumstances and condition they were in. They were not only in great affliction, but in deep poverty; and yet contributed with an abundance of joy, and in great liberality. They had hearts to do more than they were able, and what they did, they did of themselves without being asked and urged to it.

This was intended to motivate the Corinthian church as an example of Godly generosity. The Corinthians, in terms of worldly wealth, would have had more than the Macedonian churches. And yet, the amount that was given was not what Paul was necessarily commending, it was their heart. He was encouraging the Corinthian church to have the same joy in generosity.



3. In verse 5, what does it mean that they gave themselves, “first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us?”

The Macedonian church had the correct heart of generosity because they were committed to Christ and trusted the Apostles’ teaching. This is a simple question to answer, but it is an important detail to be aware of as you move to the next question.



4. What do we learn about their attitude in giving? Would you say your attitude generally reflects theirs?

Generosity is indeed a Godly characteristic. However, there are generous people in the world that are not Christian. There are several motives for non-Christians to be generous. They could be sympathetic towards a situation, want to see change in a community, or simply need a tax write off.

Unfortunately, some Christians give with this mindset as well, simply because they are not aware of why Christians are to be generous as prescribed in God’s Word. The Macedonian churches clearly understood that giving was more about who they were in Christ and as His representatives on this planet.

They had an incredible trust in God to provide for their needs, even when things seemed dire. Our attitude towards giving typically sours when opportunities to be generous conflict with our own perceived needs. They had an attitude of trust, and so must we.



Re-read 2 Corinthians 8:7.

5. What was Paul asking the Corinthians to do?

Is Paul being sarcastic here? Maybe. If the Corinthian Christians did indeed abound in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in love for Paul, they had just started to do these things. However, the Corinthian Christians probably thought of themselves as abounding in all those things. So, it is as if Paul is saying, “very well, I’ll take your word for it. You do abound in all these things. So now, abound in this grace also.”

Now, for the fourth time since the beginning of the chapter, Paul refers to giving money as a grace (grace of God... receive the gift... complete this grace). The fact that Paul uses the ancient Greek word, “charis,” to describe financial giving means a few things:

- 1- The ability to give, and the heart to give, is a gift from God. Giving is a work of God’s grace in us. When you see a believer who is truly generous, a great work of God has been done in their heart. We should never say, “well, they just want to write the checks and not*

get involved.” No, giving is getting involved, and it demonstrates a true work of God’s grace in the heart.

- 2- Our giving should be like God’s giving of grace to us: giving freely, generously, because we want to give. When God gives to us out of grace, the motive for His giving is in Him, not based in the one who receives. That is how we should give – because the motive of the love and generosity of God is so big in our heart that we simply must give.
- 3- Our giving, like God’s grace to us, should be offered without expectation of payment in return. God does not give to us expecting “payback.” We can never repay God. We can just serve Him and love Him in return.



6. What situations motivate you to be generous? What can hinder you from being generous?

The Macedonians’ response far exceeded that which Paul expected. Their love for God compelled them to take part in the collection Paul was raising.

You will often hear the phrase “give to God.” But how does a person give to God? God is unseen. If you were to throw cash or gold coins at the sky, they would most likely fall to the ground again. We give to God by giving to people. We love God by loving our Oikos. We serve God by serving His people. We give to God by supporting His workers and His church.

That should be the true motivating factor to being generous. However, the thing that hinders us the most from giving is when we let our own desires get in the way of God’s.



7. Sacrificial generosity is a key rhythm in our daily lives that fosters spiritual growth. What are ways we can be generous on a daily basis?

Again, generosity doesn’t always mean financial gifts. It is also characterized by the giving of our time and abilities. Give your group some time to discuss this and consider ways your group can work together to practice generosity.