

Everyday Generosity

Acts 4

From creation to salvation (2 Corinthians 8:9) to new creation, history shows us that God is generous. The Bible also tells us understand everyday blessings as coming from Him too (James 1:17, 1 Timothy 6:17). He even blesses His enemies (Matthew 5:45)! Acts 4:32-37 shows us what can happen when God's people are led by Him and are being made more like Him.

Generosity and giving doesn't just mean money, it can also mean time, attention, energy, emotions, resources, experience, wisdom, ability, opportunity-creation.

Jesus motivated us by promising reward to those who give (Matthew 6:2-4). Here are 14 ways in which giving benefits us...

1. Giving means you're obeying God (Matthew 22:39, Luke 12:33, Deuteronomy 15:11).
2. Giving takes us out of ourselves and into the lives of others (2 Corinthians 9:13-14, Philippians 4:14-15).
3. Giving grows your faith (Malachi 3:10, 2 Corinthians 9:6).
4. Giving reminds us where everything we have comes from (1 Chronicles 29:14, Haggai 2:8, Matthew 25:14-30).
5. Giving honours God and acknowledges His rightful place in your life (Matthew 6:24).
6. Giving is a way we can interact with God (Matthew 25:31-46, Proverbs 19:17, Malachi 3:8).
7. Giving will help spare you from wasting your life (2 Corinthians 9:11).
8. Giving makes you part of the solution rather than part of the problem (Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 2 Corinthians 9:11).
9. Giving is better than receiving (Acts 20:35).
10. Giving helps free you from the trap of money (Matthew 6:21, 1 Timothy 6:9-10).
11. Giving gives you good answers for when God asks you what you did with your life (Romans 14:10-12, Matthew 25:21).
12. Giving sends riches ahead for eternity (Ecclesiastes 5:15, 1 Timothy 6:7, Matthew 6:19-20, 1 Timothy 6:18-19, Matthew 25:21, Luke 12:33).
13. Giving shows the world what you believe (Matthew 5:16).
14. God loves it when you give (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Link to King's Special Offering : <https://kingsedinburgh.churchsuite.co.uk/donate/fund/3zyohjgf>

Quotes

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc., is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditures excludes them." - C.S. Lewis

"I do not think I exaggerate when I say that some of us put our offering in the plate with a kind of triumphant bounce as much as to say: 'There—now God will feel better!' ... I am obliged to tell you that God does not need anything you have. He does not need a dime of your money. It is your own spiritual welfare at stake in such matters as these. ... You have the right to keep what you have all to yourself—but it will rust and decay, and ultimately ruin you." - A.W. Tozer, Christ The eternal Son

"True generosity isn't about trying harder; it's about letting go. If it feels like torture, we're doing it wrong. The adventure of generosity is just that - an adventure. We take bold, fearful risks, giving beyond what we thought possible, and along the way our faith is enlarged. Then we can take bigger risks. And so it goes on. Looking for the right move at the right time; listening for the Spirit's whispers; learning to flow with the heart of God." – Mark Powley, Consumer Detox

"It is disgraceful that ... while the impious [Christians] support both their own poor and ours as well, everyone sees that our people lack aid from us!" Julian the Apostate, Roman emperor who launched final wave of persecution against Christians, 361-363AD.

"Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity." – Simone Weil

Videos

Francis Chan: Giving Will Change Your Life: <https://youtu.be/Q5N2TYSdC0I>

Francis Chan: If Christians Were Truly Generous, What Would Be The Impact?: <https://youtu.be/h8EwH0Burlc>

Bible Project: Generosity: <https://youtu.be/62CliEkRCso>

John Mark Comer: Practice Generosity: <https://youtu.be/0GaaMUcEjaY>

For further reading

Money, Possessions and Eternity by Randy Alcorn

Questions for general discussion

- What helps you to notice God's generosity, in the everyday and history?
- Can you think of how you have been blessed by the generosity of others?
- How did you feel when Luke told us that Jesus gives us incentives to be generous by promising us rewards?
- What is the difference between giving as an obligation and giving as a joy?

Questions for personal application, perhaps in groups of two or three people

- Which of the 14 motivations Luke listed did you find most significant?

- How do we work out the tension between being “responsible” and being “radical”? Should we even try?
- What steps can you take now to start (or increase) being generous with your time, talent, and treasure?