

How to Become Generous

Most of us believe in generosity. But believing in generosity is different from actually being generous. How can we become generous, giving what we have to God with open hearts and open hands? We become more generous by learning to give consistently, sacrificially, joyfully, and wisely.

The last 4 weeks of this Every Knee series, we've talked about the question:

WHY we should become generous and joyful givers?

Recall: there are a lot of wrong answers people sometimes give to that question:

- **So God will let me into heaven or love me more?**
 - o No! Heaven and God's love are free gifts that Jesus already earned for us - GOSPEL
 - o All we must do to receive eternal life and become God's children – just believe!
 - o No money is ever required for salvation!
- **So God will reward me with more money?**
 - o No! God did not promise to reward our generosity with wealth in this life
- **Because God needs my money?**
 - o No! God created all things – so all things already belong to Him
 - o He needs nothing from us.

So, what are the correct reasons to be generous and joyful givers?

- **because giving is worship and God is worthy of our worship**
 - o When we give time and money to God and what God loves we are worshipping God
 - o = worship every bit as much if not more than singing songs
 - o When we look at all things in this world: nothing more worthy of worship than Jesus
 - o He not only created us... He sacrificed His life so we could have eternal life
 - o We give to Jesus because Jesus is worthy of all we are and all we have!
- **because giving is how we invest in eternity**
 - o You can't take your money with you... but you can send it ahead by giving it to God
 - o Whatever you give to Him you invest in eternity – you store up as treasure in heaven
 - o Giving to God is the single best financial investment we can make in this life
- **because we are rich and rich people should be generous**
 - o If we have more money than we need for food, clothing, shelter... we are rich
 - o That means... most all of us are rich!
 - o These riches God has given us make us responsible to use wealth to bless others
 - o That's how wealth works: you are blessed to be a blessing
- **because giving breaks our idols**
 - o We are all tempted to worship money and the things it can buy
 - o We make idols of our possessions, our bank accounts, our salaries
 - o How do you break these wealth idols... you give your money to God and other people
 - o When you give it away, you break its hold over your heart – crushes your idols

My hope: these truths have convinced you that generosity is worth the price

- I hope you feel motivated to grow in your generosity!

So assuming you desire to become more generous... HOW do you actually do it?

- Most of us don't want to be stingy and selfish – we want to be generous
- But it's hard when faced with the temptations and responsibilities of this life

So this morning I want to give you 3 very practical steps to grow your generosity

How to become generous:

1) give consistently

- **Things we do routinely get easier!**
- **That's why the Bible challenges us to make giving a routine in our lives**
- Read 1 Cor 16:1-2
- Goal: for giving to become such a normal, routine part of life that we do it the rest of life
- ... and become better at it year after year
 - Start small - if all you can give is a few dollars a week, that's great!
 - But make it a routine and you'll see your generosity grow over time
 - It will become easier to dedicate your resources to Jesus if you'll do it consistently

2) give freely

- Read 2 Cor 9:7
 - Giving that honors God is giving that's done willingly
 - Not because someone made you or guilted you into doing it
- **That's why at no point this morning have I used the word "tithe"**
 - = an Old Testament law that Israelites were to give 10% of income to the temple
 - Not repeated in church age for a reason: we live in age of grace, not law!
 - Our relationship with God characterized by grace & freedom, not law & obligation
- **Here's the problem with setting rules like you must give 10%...**
- **Rules tend to stifle joy and inflate either pride or guilt**
 - When you try to keep a rule: either feel prideful you kept it or guilty you didn't
 - God doesn't want pride or guilt invading our generosity
 - He wants us to give out of joy – out of desire
- **Give however much you want – for some < 10%, for others >, even much more!**
 - Hopefully the reasons for generosity we've covered last 4 weeks have grown your desire to be generous to God and to what God loves
 - So give as you feel led – don't worry about what anyone else gives
 - No need to compare – no law to measure up to
 - Your commitment is between you and God
 - And he wants you to give cheerfully and freely, not out of obligation or guilt
- The goal: worship God joyfully with our money because He is worthy, not because we have to

3) give wisely

- **Read Rom 16:19**
 - wisdom = skillful living
- **How do we apply wisdom to giving? Look for a good ROI = Return on Investment**
 - If you run a business: want to invest in activities with highest possible ROI
 - want to make the most possible profit from each dollar you invest
- **God wants us to use same logic when it comes to our giving**
 - Obviously not looking for earthly ROI: God hasn't promised to give you more money
 - Look for heavenly ROI: what can I do with my money to make biggest impact on eternity
 - Think about outcomes: what will help the most people find and follow Jesus
 - Because that's what matters most in eternity
- **So, what investments have the greatest eternal ROI?**
 - what are the best things to generously give towards?
 - The Bible gives us 2 answers to that question...

1) Give to those in need

- **Includes the poor and vulnerable – read James 1:29**
 - “visit” = invest time & money into their lives to care for them; lift them up
 - We are morally obligated to help the poor and vulnerable
 - Either directly or by supporting a charity that cares for them
- **Includes family who are in need – read 1 Tim 5:8**
 - Including your biological family: siblings, parents, grandparents, relatives
 - called by God to help them in some way when they’re in need
 - Also includes our spiritual family: fellow Christians
 - James warns: if we see fellow believer in need of food and clothing
 - If we give them nothing we have sinned and will be judged
- So wise giving includes, number 1, giving to those in need.
- Now you should know, there are ways to give to people in need that are truly helpful to them – that honor them and help them move towards self-sufficiency. But there are also ways to give that are not helpful to people in need – that fuel ongoing dependency and bad choices.
- Giving to those in need takes great wisdom and skill! Fortunately, we have incredible resources in this church and in this town to help you make the biggest possible positive impact through your charitable dollars. Come talk to any of us on staff, or to one of the charitable organizations in town we work with like Habitat for Humanity, SOS Ministry, the Bridge Ministry, APO or Hope Pregnancy centers. We’re here to help you make your gifts really count in someone’s life forever.

2) Give to make disciples

- Jesus left us 1 mission to complete while He is away: the Great Commission – Mt 28 “Go and make disciples of all nations”
- That’s the purpose of every church, ours included – we’re here to help people find and follow Jesus – we’re here to make disciples of Christ
- And you are wise with your money when you give towards that goal – making disciples
- So let’s get practical – how do you give to make disciples? 2 ways
- **Give directly to missionaries** – give your money to missionaries you know and trust who are taking the gospel throughout the world
 - If you don’t know any missionaries but want to support someone, come talk to any of us on staff and we’ll help connect you with a missionary somewhere in the world you care deeply about. I’m sure they’ll want to have you on their prayer and support team!
- **Give to your local church**
 - Galatians 6:6
 - Let me be perfectly clear: I am not asking you to give money to me! Nothing you give goes directly to me!
 - What this verse is challenging us all to do, myself included because this church is where I and my family are taught and fed as well, is for all of us to give to the church where we are discipled.
 - If you’re just visiting this morning and Grace is not your home, then don’t give here – give to your home church where you are discipled.
 - If Grace is your home church, then please do give to Grace, just like I do, so Grace Bible Church can continue to disciple followers of Christ here and throughout the world.

And that leads me to the particular opportunity we have this morning.

- Out of all that you give to those in need, to your family, to charity, to missionaries...
- If you call Grace Bible Church home, we also want to challenge you to give to this church as part of this EVERY KNEE initiative.

Why? Because we truly believe that giving to Grace Bible Church is an ideal way to make the maximum possible positive impact on the world for Jesus Christ!

- **Let me just remind you of what God has done over the last 50 years through you church**
 - Started with just 10 families in 1965
 - Grown to over 5000 worshippers at 3 campuses, plus the Mandarin campus which has now spun off into its own local church
 - About half of the worshippers are college students (A&M and Blinn) being equipped and then sent all over the world to help people find and follow Jesus
 - 161 of those college graduates have remained here and joined our Fellows Program for a year or two to be trained in full time ministry, theology, missions
 - Over 160 long-term missionaries from Grace are currently serving all over the world
 - They've planted over 1500 churches around the world
 - Our sermons have been downloaded in over 150 countries
 - Over 134,000 users accessed our website in 2017
- **Why do I tell you all that?**
 - Because when my wife and I think about where to give our own money to make the biggest possible impact for Jesus – Grace Bible Church is hard to beat!
 - And I'm not saying that to make myself look good – I can't take credit for these stats – these have been building for 50 years – the impact of this church is far bigger than any one person – it's the cumulative result of tens of thousands of people transformed by the grace of God who dedicated their lives to helping this church reach the world for Jesus Christ.
 - There's been an incredible ROI of all the time and money given to Grace over the last 50 years.
- **And we believe that will continue through this Every Knee initiative as we commit ourselves to what God is calling us to do next:**
 - Continue the ministry we do every day
 - Build the Creekside campus
 - Prepare for a 4th local campus
 - Begin working towards planting more university/family churches throughout the US and the world