

GENEROUS

I give intentionally to further God's kingdom



Developing rhythms
in my relationship
with the church

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Being generous is about so much more than money. We are generous with our time, with our words, with our stuff, and with our influence, just to name a few things. Generosity is a rhythm of looking for practical ways to bless others in the name of Jesus. In a culture that is focused on how much we can get, the follower of Jesus looks to give to others instead. The motivation and the goal differs from charity done in a secular environment. We are motivated by a God who gives us so much, and the goal is to ultimately help people get connected to Jesus. When we are financially generous in our church, we are able to do more together than what we could on our own.

PRACTICES

PRIORITY GIVING: A simple practice is to start by prioritizing God by giving our first and best to God's work through a local church. "First" means before we know if we'll have any left over, and "best" means it reflects a true financial priority in your life. What's important as you start this rhythm isn't the amount, it's that you start on the journey of prioritizing God and His work in your life. Prayerfully set a goal you'd like to reach, then begin giving something regularly (weekly or monthly).

SHARE: What do you have that you could share with people around you? Maybe you have a skill that could benefit someone. Maybe it's a machine or tool that is not common. Some choose to open their home to others. Some loan out a cabin, tickets to an event, etc. The key is to find something you can intentionally and generously share with others without expecting anything in return.

STOP, LOOK & LISTEN: We live our lives at a fast pace and keep very busy. Slow down and look at the people in your circles through the lens of how you might help them, or who may have a need of some sort. Listen as people talk. They often they leave clues where they're just waiting for someone to ask follow up questions. As you see some opportunities (you won't be able to meet them all), take them before God and find ways you can generously connect with someone. If they don't know Jesus, use it as an opportunity to tell about a God who gave generously to you, so you are generous with others.

DIG IN

Read Genesis 4:1-5

There are two different approaches to giving in this passage. They flow from two mentalities: scarcity and abundance. Cain had a scarcity mindset which believes all I have is limited, and if I don't take care of myself, no one else will. It says he gave, "in the course of time" which means he waited to make sure he had enough for himself and then gave. Abel was living with an abundance mindset that believed God was the provider and that he could trust God. Abel gave his first and his fattest, meaning before he knew if there would be a second born, he chose to give to God. Do you find yourself more inclined toward scarcity or abundance?

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9; 9:1-15. Record some observations and reflections from both the attitudes and actions demonstrated in these texts:

Many of the texts we look at are applied to our commitment to our local church. This is powerful as it speaks to our love for God's people and demonstrates what we can do together beyond what one person can do. In order to live a lifestyle of generosity, in addition to our generosity in our church, , we must begin to see people and needs differently. Read this famous parable Jesus told and record what you learn about a generous lifestyle.

Read Luke 10:25-37

Observations:

With which character in the story do you most identify?

With which character would you like to identify? What would need to change?

RESPOND

Of the three practices (Priority Giving, Share, and Stop, Look & Listen) which feels most natural to you? Which stands out as an area for growth? If a practice is natural for you, take it to the next level. If a practice is an area where you would like to grow , make a plan to read more about it, and seek out others who do it well or have incorporated it into their lives. Then, actively and intentionally try out that practice for a month. Write down how you have seen God working in you, and others, as a result of anticipating God's movement through the practice.

Reflect on your fears and concerns around this topic and confess them to God. Ask for His help as you step forward in obedience. This topic has incredible power to break chains that have held us back for years, but starting requires us to courageously and wisely take a risk for God.

Identify and carry out two acts of generosity towards someone in your life in the next two weeks.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Giving to God: The Bible's Good News About Living a Generous Life by Mark Allen Powell

I Like Giving: The Transforming Power of a Generous Life by Brad Formsma

FOR KIDS

It's Not Fair!: A Book About Having Enough by Caryn Rivadeneira



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