



Who We Are

Part 4 - We Are Generous

Discussion Guide

We all consider ourselves unselfish and open-handed. We may give a larger tip than required, occasionally put a can in the food drive, or bring the officemates a round of coffee. We might even give away the clothes we've outgrown. But are we really generous? The early Church believers were united and together in one accord. Because of their deep commitment to one another, they shared their possessions, and no one had any need. Let's study what the Bible says about the grace of giving and how to excel in this grace.

Jump Start

1. Share a time where you gave at a level that you think was way beyond your comfort zone and financial ability. How did it make you feel?
2. **Read [2 Corinthians 8:1-2](#)**. Paul says that God had given the churches of Macedonia something. What is it and what do you think this means? What was their situation, and did it have an impact on the outcome? Did it lead to their generosity? Or were they generous in spite of their situation?
3. **Read [2 Corinthians 8:3-5](#)**. Have you ever experienced a rush of generosity during a difficult financial season? What prompted your urge to share? If you gave "beyond your means," what empowered your ability to share? Do you remember if you gave to intentionally to help believers, or just someone in need?
4. **Read [2 Corinthians 8:6-8](#)**. In this passage, Paul is no longer speaking about the Macedonians: he is directly challenging the Corinthian believers. He has been spurring them on by telling them how faithful the Macedonian church has been. What is he telling the Corinthians to do now? How is he encouraging/challenging them?
5. We can tell ourselves we are generous. And we can reinforce it by comparisons, saying, "I'm the only one I know who gives to the church." Or "I'm the only one who ever brings goodies in for the office." Or "We bring a few bags of groceries to the food area every week." Now **read [2 Corinthians 8:9](#)**. What is the ultimate comparison that Paul makes? How do you measure up to that generosity?

6. Final Thought: If you are truly generous, allow God to examine your heart and motives. Allow Him to lead you to new opportunities to share this grace of giving you have been given! If generosity is hard for you, and especially if you are struggling financially, talk to God about it. Ask Him to bless you with His grace, to stir up the spiritual gift of giving, and to provide you with opportunities (large and small) to bless others. Remember to ask for His provision for your family. Stop at the **Next Steps** area to speak to a team member about how you can serve “the least of these.”

Deeper

1 Kings 17:7-16 (ESV)

⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to him, ⁹ “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.”

¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” ¹¹ And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” ¹² And she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.”

¹³ And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.’”

¹⁵ And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days.

¹⁶ The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

7. Why do you think Elijah was sent to a poor woman, instead of a rich merchant or local official, for provision and hospitality?
8. What do you gather about the widow’s mindset when we first meet her?
9. Read verse 14 again. Have you ever been in that low place? Have you ever had a personal promise from God? Is it easy to hear and receive His promise in the midst of your trial(s)?

Malachi 3:7-12 (ESV)

⁷ From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’

⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹ I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to

bear, says the Lord of hosts. ¹² Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts.

10. What does God say about the tithe? What does He say about “robbing” Him and the curse that refusing to tithe brings? What about the blessings?

Challenge: Where are you with tithing and generosity? Test God in this.