

# GENEROSITY & SACRIFICE

## A LITTLE ABOUT GENEROSITY & SACRIFICE

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Every time we flip on the radio, binge-watch TV, or scroll down our social media pages, it feels like everyone's chanting "More!" More money, a bigger house, the trendiest clothes, the wildest adventures. The message we get is that real happiness and security come from having the biggest, best, and latest of everything. But, this chase after more can pull us away from others, pushing us to focus too much on ourselves. It might make us believe that we should be building our own little world instead of contributing to the Kingdom of God.

This month, let's delve into one of the lessons from Jesus' life that counters this narrative of "more." Jesus taught us that it's actually better to give than to receive. The best way to live isn't by hoarding what we have, but by sharing it, even when it means making a sacrifice for others.

Paul put it beautifully: we should strive "to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share." Remember, we give from the heart, echoing the kindness we have received from Christ. We don't give out of duty, but out of love—for our neighbors, for each other. So, let's find joy in giving, because it truly embodies the spirit of Christ within us.

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KEY VERSES

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**Mark 12:41-44**

***Matthew 6:19-24***

***Luke 21:1-4***

***1 John 3***

***Matthew 25:35-40***

***1 Peter 4:10***

***2 Corinthians 8:9***

***Mark 8:34-37***

***2 Corinthians 9:7***

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**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.**

***C.S Lewis***

# SMALL TABLES

## TREKING TOGETHER

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### FORM

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WE ENCOURAGE THESE PRACTICES TO BE PRACTISED TOGETHER. IF POSSIBLE, FIND A SMALL TRUSTED GROUP OF PEOPLE OR EVEN JUST ONE OTHER, THAT YOU JOURNEY & WRESTLE THESE IDEAS, BIBLE VERSES AND PRACTICES WITH.

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***WE HAVE PREPARE WEEKLY VIDEOS TO HELP IN YOUR DICUSSION AND REFLECTIONS***

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# SMALL TABLES

## TREKING TOGETHER

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### WEEKLY CHALLENGE

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#### **WEEK 1 - A GENEROUS HEART**

WATCH VIDEO PART 1 & READ/REFLECT ON **MARK 12:41-44 & MATTHEW 6:19-24**

#### **QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:**

RECOUNT THE STORY AND MEANING IN YOU OWN WORDS FROM MARK 12

WHY IS JESUS WATCHING PEOPLE TITHE?

WHY DOESN'T JESUS CARE ABOUT THE AMOUNT?

WHAT DOES HE WANT HIS DISCIPLES TO TAKE FROM THIS STORY?

WHAT DOES HE WANT YOU TO TAKE FROM THIS?

WHAT GET IN THE WAY OR DISTRACTS YOU FROM THIS LESSON?

**PERSONAL CHALLENGE: PURCHASE A GIFT VOUCHER AND CARRY IT AROUND PRAYING WHO TO GIVE IT TO. YOU MUST GIVE IT AWAY THIS WEEK.**

#### **WEEK 2 - STEWARDING YOUR TIME & ENERGY**

WATCH VIDEO PART 2 & READ/REFLECT ON **LUKE 10:25-37 & 1 PETER 4:10**

#### **QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:**

RECOUNT THE STORY AND MEANING IN YOU OWN WORDS FROM LUKE 10

WHAT SOME REASONS A PRIEST AND LEVITE WOULD WALK BY?

LIST ALL THE GOOD REASONS THE SAMARITAN SHOULDN'T HAVE STOPPED?

WHY DID HE STOP?

HOW DOES THIS STORY CHALLENGE YOU?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO DIFFERENTLY, PRACTICE AFRESH?

**PERSONAL CHALLENGE: SET ASIDE 2 HOURS THIS WEEK AND PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER WHO TO SPEND IT WITH OR ON AS A ACT OF SERVICE.**





# SMALL TABLES

## TREKING TOGETHER

### **WEEK 3 - MANAGING YOUR FINANCES**

WATCH VIDEO PART 3 & READ/REFLECT ON **2 CORINTHIANS 9:7 & 1 TIMOTHY 6:10**

#### **QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:**

RECOUNT THE LESSONS IN YOUR OPINION AND OWN WORDS FROM THE VERSES

WHY IS MONEY SUCH A MAJOR TOPIC IN THE BIBLE?

DOES GOD NEED OUR MONEY?

WHAT ARE YOUR FINANCIAL PRIORITIES IF YOU WERE TO LOOK AT WHAT YOU SPEND?

DO THEY ALIGN WITH WHAT YOU BEEN LEARNING THIS MONTH?

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU WISH TO CHANGE ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MONEY?

**PERSONAL CHALLENGE: THINK ON SOME MONEY YOU ARE CURRENTLY SAVING - WHETHER NEEDED OR JUST DESIRED. ASK GOD HOW HE WOULD HAVE YOU USE THAT MONEY?**

### **WEEK 4 - BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING**

WATCH VIDEO PART 4 & READ/REFLECT ON **JOHN 3:16, EPHESIANS 2:8-9, MATTHEW 7:11**

#### **QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:**

DOES YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD FEEL LIKE A FATHER OR GENIE?

WHAT HAS GOD BLESSED YOU WITH THIS WEEK?

WHAT CAN YOU TAKE FROM THIS PRACTICE THAT WOULD GROW GENEROSITY IN YOU?

**PERSONAL CHALLENGE: THINK OF ONE OF YOUR GIFTS/ SKILLS OR ABILITIES - ASK GOD HOW YOU COULD USE THAT TO SERVE ANOTHER THIS WEEK?**

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

We're embarking on a journey to cultivate a lifestyle rooted in generosity. We'll be focusing on a few integral aspects: our heart, our time and energy, and our finances. These are the gifts we've been granted, waiting to be shared if we're open to it. However, to truly feel the satisfaction and joy that comes with generosity, we must first comprehend and appreciate what we've already received from God.

## Growing a Generous Heart

The foundation of true generosity and sacrifice lies in our hearts. This involves willingly opening our hearts to God and to the people around us, living by the principle of 'loving others as we love ourselves'. This kind of love kindles a desire to give to others, even at a personal cost - even when our generosity isn't reciprocated, even without acknowledgment, even when it's challenging.

Having a generous and sacrificial heart means actively embodying the ethos of 'considering others as more important than ourselves'. Recognizing the extent of God's generosity towards us is crucial in shaping this perspective. His gifts - of love, grace, and salvation - epitomize generosity.

During this season, I urge you to engage in reflective prayer. Seek God's guidance to widen the scope of your heart, allowing it to be more receptive to the people and their needs around you. Request His help in amplifying your generosity.

In this journey, it's also crucial to recognize any apprehensions we might have about opening our hearts to others. Let's ask God for the courage and strength to conquer these fears. By understanding the magnitude of God's generosity towards us, we can start embodying a joyful spirit of Christ-like generosity ourselves.

- **Daily Reflection:** Spend some time each day in prayer and meditation, focusing on God's generosity towards you. Reflect on His love, grace, and the ultimate gift of salvation. Let these reflections fill your heart with a profound sense of gratitude.
- **Prayer for Openness:** In your daily prayers, ask God to open your heart wider to the people and needs around you. Pray for an increased capacity to be generous in response to the overwhelming generosity you have received.
- **Conquer Fear:** Acknowledge any fears you may have about opening your heart to others. In your prayers, seek God's strength and courage to overcome these fears, enabling you to extend generosity without reservation.
- **Practice Gratitude (Practice Stacking)** Cultivate a regular practice of gratitude, acknowledging the gifts you've received from God and others. Consider "practice stacking", integrating gratitude into another daily habit like having your morning coffee or during your commute. This habit can serve as a daily reminder of the generosity you've experienced, and inspire you to extend that generosity to others.

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

## Giving Your TIME / ENERGY

We've all got the same 24 hours in a day. What makes the difference is how we choose to spend it. Growing Generosity means consciously making room in our bustling schedules for others. It's a sacrifice, indeed, because once given, that time can never be reclaimed. Why not ask God to guide you on who you should be investing your time and energy in?

- **Try identifying areas in your life where you could scale back to make more room for others. It could be watching less TV, spending less time on hobbies, or setting stricter boundaries to avoid working after hours.**
- **Use this newfound time to truly be present with someone - it could be a family member, a friend who doesn't share your faith, or someone who could really use a hand.**
- **Consider using some of this time to give blood, help a friend move, or simply make a phone call to someone in need. Remember, every act of generosity, no matter how small, can make a significant difference in someone else's life.**

## Managing Your FINANCES

Jesus often warned His followers about the love of money. He cautioned us because of how swiftly it can ensnare our hearts, minds, energy, time, and passion. However, when used wisely, our finances can become a powerful tool to bless others. Here are some thoughtful and practical ways you could use your resources to extend your generosity.

- **Start by asking God to illuminate a financial need around you.**
- **Consider forgiving a financial debt that someone owes you, if it's appropriate.**
- **Try carrying around some extra cash in your pocket with the explicit intention of using it to bless someone unexpectedly. (plan for generosity)**
- **You could sponsor a child overseas or support a cause you believe in.**
- **Pay for the order of the person behind you in the drive-through line as a surprise act of kindness.**
- **Remember to tithe regularly to your local church, thus contributing to its mission and the community it serves.**
- **Invite someone out for a meal or treat them to a coffee. It's a simple gesture that not only addresses a physical need but also fosters connection and community.**

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

## Blessed to Be a Blessing

Consider Scrooge's transformation in 'A Christmas Carol'. He didn't start giving because he thought he would gain something in return. He changed because he realized his life of constant consumption and accumulation was lonely, destructive, and ultimately unfulfilling.

In the same way, our journey towards generosity isn't about expecting rewards from God. Rather, it's about understanding and embracing the intrinsic value and joy of giving. The act of giving itself is the reward. Cultivating a generous heart, regardless of the size of our gestures, is a deeply enriching and satisfying way to live.

God doesn't owe us anything more. He's already gifted us this beautiful world, life itself, and His own Son on the cross. His generosity will continue, not because we've earned it, but because it's His nature to give. In response, we give not to receive, but because He first gave us everything.

To keep this perspective front and center, here are four strategies to help us remember that we are blessed to be a blessing:

- **Reflect on God's Generosity Daily:** Make it a practice to meditate on God's unparalleled generosity each day. This reflection will help put our own acts of giving into perspective.
- **Scripture Meditation:** Meditating on Bible verses about God's generosity can help reinforce our understanding that our giving is a response to His ultimate gift.
- **Share Your Generosity Stories in Community:** This isn't about bragging or letting your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Instead, much like Jesus used stories to teach His disciples, we can share our experiences of generosity as a form of discipleship. By sharing our stories in a humble and honest way, we can collectively celebrate generosity and perhaps find a common cause that our group or community can support together. Remember, it's not about glorifying ourselves but about encouraging one another and giving glory to God.
- **Participate in Communion:** Taking part in communion serves as a poignant reminder of the depth of God's generosity. It recalls the sacrifice of Jesus, who didn't just give a part of himself but gave all - his body and his blood. Each time we participate in this sacred act, we are reminded that our call to generosity is inspired by a God who gave everything for us. This reminder can embolden us to share freely and joyfully with others.





# FAMILY PRACTICE

## Family Generosity

One significant way to embrace generosity as a family is to assess our luxuries and see where we could make sacrifices to help meet the needs of those less fortunate. This is a practical way to teach our families that, as followers of Jesus, it's not only okay but also noble to make sacrifices for others.

Let's sit together as a family and deliberate on how we can live a bit more 'simply' so that others may 'simply live'. Discuss as a unit which cause you'd like to support. Perhaps you'd like to sponsor a child, contribute to a food bank, donate to a charity, assist a mission organization, or address a local need.

To financially support your chosen cause, consider what sacrifices your family could make. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Temporarily suspend a subscription for a month.**
- **Plan a low-cost meal once a week for a month (e.g., oats, rice).**
- **Agree on a three-minute shower rule to save on power bills.**
- **Encourage everyone to do extra chores to save money.**

The essence of our generous action is echoed in 2 Corinthians 8:9: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." As followers of Jesus, let's nurture family practices where generosity and sacrifice are a part of our daily lives, just as they were for Him.

Our motive? "We love because He first loved us." This is the heart of a generosity-filled family.



# DISCIPLESHIP TOOL

## THE 3 Rs

Here is a basic conversation tool you can use for your discipleship relationships. Using the 3 Rs you can be a disciple that makes disciples.

### RELATIONSHIP

As Jesus invited the disciples to walk with Him so we invite others into our lives. Sharing our life with one another grows deep connections for lasting change, by living vulnerably and authentically with one another.

*Suggested Qs: How has your week been? What has been a high and low moment in your life recently? Where have you seen God at work lately?*

### REALIGN

Transformation in our lives happens best when we align our lives with God's good and perfect will. To become like Jesus we need to realign our minds to the truth of the Bible and be shaped by the Holy Spirit. This could be through a book, verse, or trek practice.

*Suggested Qs: What do you think God is saying to you in this moment? What does scripture say about this? What do you find challenging/encouraging from this passage?*

Helpful tool: Jesus had 3 core relationships that he made a priority. (His relationship with God the Father, His community and the Lost). Q. Which Relationship is God challenging you to make a priority at the moment?

### RESPONSE

To be transformed we need to respond in obedience to Jesus' invitation to walk His way. We don't do this alone but can support one another through encouragement and prayer.

*Suggested Qs: What are you going to do about what God is saying? What is your first step? How can we support and pray for each other?*