



# A Roadmap to Generosity

Helping You Assess and Discern How  
to Grow in the Area of Generosity



**Crosspoint**  
Community Church



# A Taboo Topic

"I love going to Church XYZ because they talk about money a lot," said no one ever.

People generally do not like talking about money, particularly at church. But why is that?

Why is it that we are comfortable talking about all sorts of topics and details about our lives with the general exception of money? And why is it that a pastor up on stage talking about finances seems to make our skin crawl? How did something that can do so much good in the world become a taboo topic of conversation?

We believe that conversations about money are too important to ignore. And so did Jesus. Jesus talked about money. A lot.

For better or for worse, anyone who wants to be a functioning human in today's society has to learn to deal with money on some level. There's no question that how we approach our finances shapes us as people. The question is *how* it is shaping us.

As followers of Jesus, we believe that no aspect of our lives is outside the realm of our discipleship to Jesus—including, and perhaps especially, our finances. There's often a direct line that can be drawn between our hearts and our pocketbooks. In short, how we relate to our resources is part of our discipleship to Jesus.

God cares about how we relate to our money. And the good news is that God doesn't pull the levers of guilt and shame when it comes to our finances. God invites us to learn to relate to money and all of our resources in a way that brings about freedom, contentment, and joy. God's heart for each of us is that we, motivated by love, would learn to live generously loving lives for the sake of the world.

# A Matter of the Heart

The gospel of Mark tells us a story of a widow's offering in a beautiful demonstration of generosity and trust. In this story, Jesus was sitting with his disciples near the place where people came and placed their offerings at the temple. He observed many wealthy religious people leave large donations, but among the crowd he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins, worth only a few cents. *"Truly I tell you,"* he said, *"this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything - all she had to live on."* (Mark 12:41-44)

This story shows us that generosity is not measured by the amount given, but rather, by the heart driving the gift. Some of us can give a lot of money off the top without our hearts being engaged and with little sacrifice. But Jesus wants us to give sacrificially, from the heart, and in deep dependence upon God. In the end, Jesus tells us this poor widow gave more than anyone else.

All over the Bible we see this idea that generosity is something that God wants for us, not from us. God doesn't need our money or our things to accomplish God's work in the world. But God invites us to become a people who live generously and participate in God's work in the world. Generosity is one of the ways we join God's redemptive work.

# No to Materialism. Yes to Trust.

In order to live generously we will need to learn to loosen our grip on our material things. This will require us to learn how to say “no” to the consumptive impulse in a society that tells us we are lacking something we need and always need more. It will also require us to learn to trust the God of abundance who is more than capable of meeting our needs.

As we say no to non-stop consumption and say yes to trusting God, we begin to experience deep freedom and contentment. As we stop pivoting out of the fear of not having enough, we settle into a deep dependence on the God who provides. As we attend to our transformation in Jesus, we become more like Jesus who gave away his life in self-sacrifice, generous love.

We believe that a life of generosity leads to a life of contentment and freedom.

We also believe that a life of generosity is part of what it means to follow Jesus faithfully.

The apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 9:7 that *God loves a cheerful giver*. When was the last time you felt cheerful when writing a check? What would it look like for us to live as people who were cheerful and excited to talk about money because we saw the opportunity to step into deeper freedom and to join God’s work in the world?

We invite you to use this resource as a guide to help you reflect on how you relate to generosity.



# Prayer & Reflection Exercise

Take a moment to center yourself on Jesus before you dive into this exercise. Find a quiet spot where you can be still and without distractions. Take a few deep breaths as you become aware of God's presence around you.

# Prayer of Surrender

*God, as I begin this time of prayer, I ask that you would clear my mind of distractions that I might be able to focus on you. Help me to be assume a posture of surrender and openness to however You are leading me. I acknowledge that Your ways are best. So I invite You to reshape my heart so that my desires and longings may align with Yours. God, through this time, show me more of who You are - a generous Father who loves to give generously and abundantly to His children. Help me to grow as a generous disciple and reflect that generosity to the world.  
Amen.*

# Listening to Scripture

In 2 Corinthians, we find a message from Paul to the church in Corinth on what it looks like to cultivate a generous heart. The church in Corinth was founded by Paul during his second missionary journey. After leaving Corinth, Paul continued to write letters to the church there to help instruct them in the faith. In this passage below, Paul is writing the Corinthian believers to let them know that their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem were suffering a severe famine, and to encourage them to support them financially.

Take a few minutes to read through this passage prayerfully. Read it at least 2-3 times while trying to pay attention to how the Holy Spirit might be speaking to you. What words seem to jump out to you? What phrases do you feel drawn to focus on? This is how the Holy Spirit often gets our attention.

## 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

***Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written:***

***“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.”***

***Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.***

# Observe

— Take a few minutes to carefully examine the passage on the previous page.

What words or phrases stand out to you? Write them down.

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How does Paul connect generosity to trust in God's provision?

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What does Paul say about the importance of our hearts when we give?

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How does Paul instruct them to decide to give? Does he give them a specific dollar amount or percentage?

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What does God promise for those who give generously?

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# Reflect

Take a few minutes to reflect on how this passage might be connecting with your life.

Why do you think the words or phrases you wrote down stood out to you?

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Do you tend to give out of guilt and obligation OR do you give cheerfully and trustingly?

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Do you trust God to meet your needs? What fears and anxieties do you have that might keep you from living generously?

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Do you believe that everything you have ultimately belongs to God? If so, how deep is that conviction and how does it influence your generosity?

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How have you discerned how much to give away? Have you ever prayed and asked what God wants you to give away?

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# Act

Take a few minutes and discern how you are going to respond.  
Use the following questions to assess how you prioritize generosity. If married, go through these questions with your spouse.

How much might God want you to give on a regular and consistent basis?

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How might your stewardship practices need to change to be faithful to what God is calling you to give?

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In addition to giving to your church community, are there any people who God is inviting you to move toward with generosity?

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Beyond finances, how is God inviting me to be generous with my time and energy, skills and abilities?

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# Discuss

*If you are part of a small group, you can use these questions to guide your conversation together after doing the above exercise individually.*

What happened as you engaged this exercise? Where did you sense God at work?

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How do you feel about living generously? Is this something you actually want?

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What did you sense God inviting you to give in terms of time, talent, and treasure?

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Are there any specific people that you can bless as a group?

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# Pray

*Father God, as this time with you comes to a close, help me to take what I've learned into the rest of the day. Give me eyes to see how You're working in my life, calling me to the life of a generous disciple. Give me ears to hear Your voice, and to following Your prompting in my life. Help me to find my identity in You, that I might put aside the cares and luxuries of the world, and that I may overflow in generosity and love.*

