

SERMON SERIES: *Less Is More*

SERMON TITLE: *Why Be Generous? Part 1*

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 9

What is Generosity?

Generosity is willingly and joyfully giving out of your surplus of resources to meet another person's need as an act of devotion to God and his people.

#1 Generosity PLEASES God.

- 2 Cor. 9:7

#2 Generosity SHOWS others what God is like.

- In the community of the Godhead, there was an other-centeredness. Each person giving to and promoting the significance of the other persons.
- We were made in God's image to experience God's generosity and to reflect his generosity by being generous towards others.
- The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate display of God's generosity towards us. 2 Cor. 8:9

#3 Generosity leads others to PRAISE God.

- The Corinthians participation in the collection for the church in Jerusalem would lead to the Jerusalem church praising God. 2 Cor. 9:12-13

#4 Generosity is CONTAGIOUS.

- Paul used the initial desire of the Corinthians to give to the collection for those in Jerusalem to spur the Macedonians to be generous and then used the Macedonians generosity to motivate the Corinthians to finish the giving that they started. 2 Cor. 9:1-2, 2 Cor. 8:1-7

#5 Generosity leads to EQUALITY in the body of Christ.

- The pride in our hearts desires inequality with us on top.
 - C.S. Lewis:

Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. If someone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest.

- The church should be a countercultural community of equality.

#6 Generosity OPENS people's hearts to the Gospel.

- In his book *The Triumph of Christianity*, American sociologist of religion, Rodney Stark, notes that one of the main reasons for the spread of Christianity was the care they provided one another and outsiders irregardless of social class or standing.
- John 13:35

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you're a parent, how has your children's generosity pleased you? How has their stinginess displeased you? How might our giving change if our ultimate motivation is to bring pleasure to God's heart?
2. Have you had any experiences with Christians that have been a poor reflection of the generosity of God? Explain. Have you had experiences with Christians that have been an accurate reflection of the generosity of God? Explain. Would you say that our culture generally views Christians as generous? Why or why not?
3. Give an example of someone's generosity towards you expanding your view of the goodness of God and led you to praise Him.
4. Who has inspired you to become more generous?
5. Why do you think Paul was so concerned about equality in the body of Christ?
6. Have you ever seen or heard of generosity opening a person's heart to Jesus? If so, explain.
7. Which reason for being generous resonates with you the most?
8. As a result of your group's discussion, is there anything that you sense God prompting you to do?