

SERMON SERIES: *Less Is More*

SERMON TITLE: *How To Grow In Generosity*

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

## **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.

## **How To Grow In Generosity:**

### **#1 Growing in generosity requires VISION.**

- We need eyes to see what generosity is and why it is desirable.
- We find a vision for generosity in:
  - God's Word (Acts 2:44-45)
  - Jesus (2 Cor. 8:9)
  - Generous people ( 2 Cor. 8:1-2)

### **#2 Growing in generosity requires COMMITMENT.**

- We must commit our life, including our resources, to God. (2 Cor. 8:5)
- We must commit our life to God's family. (2 Cor. 8:5, Acts 4:32,34-35)

### **#3 Growing in generosity requires God's GRACE.**

- God's grace enables us to avoid the trap of failure that leads to shame and success that lead to pride.
- Grace separates Christianity from the other religions of the world.
  - Christianity is good news of grace and not merely good advice.
- "Grace is God acting in our lives to accomplish what we can't accomplish on our own."<sup>1</sup>
- Chainsaw analogy
- God's grace sustains us on the journey of generosity and ensures it is successful. (2 Cor. 9:8)

### **#5 Growing in generosity requires INTENTIONAL EFFORT.**

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<sup>1</sup> *The Kingdom Life: A Practical Theology of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation* by Dallas Willard p. 69.

- The good news in regards to our spiritual growth is not that we don't have to labor, but rather, we labor with grace, which is how we know that our labor is not in vain. (1 Timothy 4:7, Philippians 4:12, 2 Peter 1:5-8)
- Practical steps we can take to make every effort to grow in generosity with the grace that God supplies.
  - a. Keep returning to the vision.
  - b. Take inventory of your resources.
  - c. Start giving what you have.
  - d. Create margin in your life so that you can give more.
  - e. Be accountable.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, how would you define generosity and explain its value?
2. Outside of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, what passages of Scripture can you think of that would help a person see what generosity is and why it is valuable?
3. How did Jesus exhibit generosity not just in his death but in his life?
4. When was the last time someone was generous to you?
5. Have you committed all of your life, even your resources to God and his family? Why or why not? How does committing to both make us generous? The cost of disobedience is always more than the cost of obedience. How might that apply in regards to whether or not we have committed all of our resources to God and his family?
6. How does God's grace enable us to avoid the trap of failure that leads to shame and success that leads to pride in our spiritual growth?
7. Grace is God acting in our lives to accomplish what we can't accomplish on our own. Share some accomplishments in your life that you know would have been impossible on your own.
8. Why is Christianity good news and not merely good advice?
9. In life do you generally feel like you're trying to cut down a massive redwood with a chainsaw that is not running or with one that is? Why or why not?
10. Describe a time in your life that you grew the most spiritually. What ingredients were present?