



+ **YOU**

Summer 2025

Character Counts

Sermon Title: Stewardship of the Heart

To be used with Session 5: Generosity

The Point: God's generous grace moves us to be generous.

Scripture: Matthew 10:8

Connection with the Study: To complement the Bible study "Generosity," this sermon focuses on why it is a privilege to exercise generosity. The underlying message of both Paul and Jesus was the understanding that everything we have is from God. This understanding leads us to give beyond our ability because we recognize that God owns everything anyway. True generosity is not a product of wealth, but of grace. We do not give because we have an excess of something, but rather because we have been given God's grace. God's grace is the catalyst for generosity. We give freely because we have received freely. It's not just about money. We have been given the greatest gift of all — Jesus Christ. So, our generosity is not about wealth, but about a transformed heart. When we truly understand how much we have received in Christ, generosity is changed from a burden to a glorious privilege.

Introduction: Earlier this year, a story went viral about a fast food worker in California who had been walking to work every day for months after his car broke down. When customers found out, they rallied together and surprised him with a car and thousands of dollars raised through a GoFundMe campaign. What stood out wasn't just the amount raised, but the hearts behind it. These weren't millionaires giving from their overflow. They were regular people moved by compassion and a sense of shared humanity.

That story is powerful, but for the Christian, generosity goes even deeper. It isn't just a random act of kindness—it's a reflection of the grace we've received in Jesus. In Matthew 10:8, Jesus said, "Freely you have received; freely give." That one verse challenges us to rethink what we hold onto. If we've been given everything by God, what could possibly be off-limits in our giving?

Generosity is not about how much you have in your bank account—it's about recognizing how much you've already received in Christ. Once that truth takes root in your heart, giving becomes a joy, not a burden.

1. We are generous because we have received everything freely. (Matt. 10:8)

For us to be generous, we must first come to understand exactly how much we have already received. Everything we have, including our salvation, spiritual gifts, and material blessings,

come from God. He is the source of everything good that we possess. We did nothing to earn it and can never hope to repay it. He simply blessed us abundantly with the gifts.

Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us that we have been saved by grace through faith and our works had absolutely no bearing on receiving the gift. Salvation is not a paycheck you earn for good behavior; it is a gift. The same can also be said about our talents, opportunities, and even the breath in our lungs. When we recognize that all we have is from God, it changes our entire attitude toward being generous. Our perspective shifts from viewing generosity as losing something to passing on what was never really ours in the first place. That's why Jesus told His disciples to give freely — to be good stewards of what God had blessed them with. We are called to be conduits.

2. We are generous because we reflect the heart of our Father. (Matt. 10:8)

God's nature is to be a giver. From the very beginning, He has made it a habit to pour out His blessings on His people. Starting with giving the first family a beautiful garden in Eden, to blessing the Israelites with manna in the wilderness and down to giving the whole world the blessing of His only Son (John 3:16), God has, by nature, been giving freely and abundantly to His people.

As God's children, we are called to reflect His character. So as He freely gives, we are to follow the example and give freely out of what we have received. This isn't just about money — it's about our time, hospitality, love, and service. The philosophy of the world is to hang on tightly to resources, but the people of God should be different. We should be known for our open hands and generous hearts. Proverbs 11:25 says, "A generous person will be enriched, and the one who gives a drink of water will receive water." In other words, when we give, we are not left empty. As we give freely, God continually blesses us. It may not always be material; the blessing could be in joy, spiritual fruit, and deeper fellowship with Him. If we live our lives with a stingy personality, it's probably because we have not fully realized the true generosity of God. Contrariwise, when we live in the knowledge of His abundant grace, generosity will be a natural process for us to exhibit.

3. We are generous because the gospel calls us to a mission. (Matt. 10:8)

Jesus gave this command to His disciples as He sent them out on a mission. Their generosity wasn't random; it had a purpose. Their mission, as specified by Jesus, was to proclaim the kingdom of God, heal the sick, and serve the needy. The knowledge that God would provide for their needs was the thing that kept them going. In the same way, our generosity is not just about charity; it is about advancing the gospel. We generously and freely give to support missionaries at home and abroad, to plant churches, and to service the needs in our local communities — all with the ultimate goal that people will come to know Christ.

Paul instructed Timothy to let them do good, to give, to share, so that they may store up for themselves eternal riches (1 Tim. 6:18). Our generosity builds up treasure in heaven, not here on earth. Every dollar that we give and every act of service done is an investment in eternity. It is simply a matter of perspective. When we focus on earthly rewards and decide to hoard

things for ourselves, we close off the blessing channel that God wishes to use. However, when we give freely, we actively and joyously participate in His mission to reach the lost.

Conclusion: Jesus issued a very simple yet powerful command in Matthew 10:8. Give freely because you have received freely. God's grace is the foundation of our generosity. We can joyfully give because we have received everything freely. We were blessed and because we are called to reflect the character of our Heavenly Father, we give generously because He set the example. And we give because the gospel calls us to a mission that is bigger than ourselves.

If we struggle with generosity, let's not continually force ourselves to give more or do more, rather reflect on how much you have already received from God which cost you nothing. You have what you have entirely due to the extravagant grace of God. The more we meditate on His grace, the more generosity will naturally flow from our lives.

Trust God with an open hand today. Ask Him to reveal opportunities to reflect His generosity in the home, church, workplace, and community. As we give, may we experience the joy of living out the gospel in a tangible way.

Jeff Dabbs is Senior Pastor of Spring Creek Baptist Church in Rome, GA. He lives in Rockmart, Georgia with his wife Kristi. They have two children and two grandchildren.