

“A Life of Generosity and Love”

1 John 4:7-11

What obstacles prevent us from fully pursuing a lifestyle of being other-centered?

God’s generosity and love towards us must change our mindset.

1. God’s generosity (Matthew 20:1-15)
 - a. Generosity comes out of:
 - i. Abundance – giving out of excess – His resources are not limited (Eph. 3:20-21)
 - ii. Compassion
 1. Seeing and meeting needs
 2. Desiring to lavish blessings on undeserving people
 - b. Generosity is for the benefit of others
 - i. We benefit from God’s generosity
 - ii. We are a conduit of that generosity to others (Gen. 22:15-18)
2. God’s love
 - a. Love is rooted in the character of God (vv. 7-8)
 - b. Love is demonstrated in sacrifice (vv. 9-10)
 - i. Christ to us – denying his own rights and privileges
 - ii. Christ for us – dying for us that we might live
 - c. Love is experienced in God’s pursuit of us (v. 10)
 - d. If we identify ourselves as recipients of this great love we must reflect that love
 - i. A sacrificial, proactive, other-centered love and lifestyle
 - ii. Love means reorienting our priorities so that others might benefit

[Application] In our scarcity mindset we often demand; we think we deserve; we act entitled.

1. When we act like the 99% we naturally become self-focused
2. When we realize the abundance we have, through God’s generosity towards us – spiritually and materially – we must become other-centered.
3. The love and generosity of God must reorient our mindset – (1 John 4:11)
 - a. Where is this difficult for you in your life?
 - b. What things are you holding on to tightly?
 - c. What would it look like to limit ourselves so that others would be blessed?
 - d. Where do we need to see the generosity and love of God, demonstrated in the work of Jesus Christ, overwhelm us, change us, and reorient us?

God’s generosity and love compel us to act.

1. What is it that we cannot do if God is behind it, in the middle of it, and leading the way?
 - a. Romans 8:31-32
 - b. Scarcity says “we can’t.” Generosity and love say “show me how.”
 - c. We continue to do the work God has called us to do.
 - i. Reach – engage in relational communities of grace and truth and to entice others to join us.
 - ii. Serve – look for opportunities to help others in our church, in our community, and in our world.

[Application] Hosting dinner sign ups

2. How can we begin to figure out where to serve/reach?
 - a. What are the unique needs and opportunities where God has placed us?
 - b. What are the unique resources and capabilities that God brings together in us?
 - c. What most animates and energizes our leadership?
 - d. These questions begin to make sense of why we are doing what we are doing. Why we are spending our time and our resources the way we are.
 - i. Would you ask these same questions of yourself and your family?

- ii. This has great implications for how we as a church, and us as individuals steward what God has given us. This impacts how we reach out to others and serve.
- iii. The answers to these questions require sacrifice (positive no), purposeful intent, and dreaming and listening as the Spirit leads.

[Application] How hard is it to re-prioritize the spending of our time and money to benefit others?

- 1. This is a call to godly stewardship of our time, our passions, and our resources – individually and as a church.
- 2. Do you view your time and your money as yours and whatever you have left after you've spent it on yourself might go to God?
 - a. What would it look like to ask those 3 questions for yourself and then to budget your time and money accordingly so that you have space and ability to be generous?
 - b. What would it look like to dream about how you would like to support God's work, make that immovable in your schedule and budget, and plan everything else around that.
 - c. God has called us to a life of reaching out and serving – that's not optional. How we respond to that call is an issue of discipleship and worship.

Resources:

Good and Beautiful God – James Bryan Smith

Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream – David Platt