

## “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