

Generosity – 1

Introduction:

A family was leaving church after weekend worship and the mom & dad began to complain about the service: music bad, sermon dry, room too cold, sound too loud...The little kid sitting in the back seat finally spoke up and said, “Well, I thought it was a pretty good show for \$1.”

John Bevere

“The most important doctrines of scripture are the one the Devil tries to pervert the most.”

A. Bible has:

1. 500 verses on faith.
2. 500 verses on prayer.
3. 2,300 verses on money/possessions. Almost 5 times as many.
4. More than heaven, hell, even God!

B. “The Day America Told the Truth” (James Patterson & Peter Kim):

What would you be willing to do for \$10 million?

- 25% - Abandon their entire family
- 23% - Become a prostitute for a week or more
- 16% - Give up their American citizenship
- 16% - Leave their spouse
- 10% - Withhold testimony to let a murderer go free
- 7% - Kill a stranger
- 3% - Put children up for adoption – “some of you may have been tempted to do this for free!”

C. What does this tell us?

1. The Spirit of Selfishness is alive and well in America.
 - This tells us there is something inside of us that would make us give up values such as family and convictions, that is divisive and threatening to the values we hold as Christians and believers.

2. Solution? TRUTH – It will “set you free” God’s Word will set you free.

D. Some people think that Generosity is optional:

1. They cite their good deeds in other areas. Their goodness tank is full of goodness – Christianity is just being nice.
2. But the Bible speaks to this idea.

2 Corinthians 8:7

“But just as you excel in **everything**—in **faith**, in **speech**, in **knowledge**, in complete **earnestness** and in your **love** for us—**see that you also excel in this grace of giving.**”

E. Prayer, good deeds, volunteering, acts of service and kindness, etc., do not take the place of generosity.

1. Paul: “Do all of that and ADD generosity.”
2. We simply cannot leave this out because generosity is the heartbeat of God.

Unknown:

“You can give and not love but it is impossible to love and not give”

Claims about Generosity:

I. All CHRISTians are Generous.

- A. Sometimes we forget that the word, “Christian” literally means, “**Christ-like.**”
 1. Christ was so generous that He gave up perfection in heaven to come to earth.
 2. He was so generous that He gave every drop of blood to pay for our sins.
- B. We are children of a generous God.
 1. Think about the beauty of creation He gave us.
 2. Think of the expense He went to redeem us.
- C. We were created in His image, so we are designed to be incredibly generous.

1. If you are like Christ, you will be generous.

2. The bible makes this so plain. Knowing the truth will make you free:

Psalm 37:21

“The godly are generous givers.”

Proverb 22:26

“The godly love to give.” More than a need to – a want to give!

D. The closer I get to God, the more generous I will become.

1. Listen closely...

2. ***“Everything you have is God’s and only what you give away will have eternal significance.”***

- We will not be rewarded by the amount we saved up in this life; but what we gave and shared with others along the way.
- What does the Lord want you to do with your stuff? Remember, its not your stuff; its what the Lord has allowed you to have.

The story is told that one day a beggar by the roadside asked for alms from Alexander the Great as he passed by. The man was poor and had no claim upon the ruler, no right even to lift a solicitous hand.

Yet the Emperor threw him several gold coins. A courtier was astonished at his generosity and commented, "Sir, copper coins would adequately meet a beggar’s need. Why give him gold?" Alexander responded in royal fashion, "Copper coins would suit the beggar’s need, but gold coins’ suit Alexander’s giving."

E. Giving is not so much about the “need” that you are giving to, but it’s about the “nature” of the “giver.”

1. Because I am a spiritual descendent of Jesus Christ, I am a generous giver.
2. Selfishness just doesn’t agree with my DNA!
3. Generosity ties my heart to Jesus Christ.

II. Blessing is a By-Product of Generosity.

Proverb 11:24-25

“One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly/unfairly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.”

- A. Did you know that it is not possible to create an empty hole?
 - 1. Nature won't allow it.
 - 2. If there's nothing in there, air will fill it.
- B. When you give something away, you create a hole...and it must be filled.
 - 1. Generosity creates a vacuum into which God flows.
 - 2. This enables us to go on giving again and again.
 - 3. We are blessed to be a blessing!**
- C. Over and over again, the Bible tells us that you cannot “out-give” God.

Luke 16:9

“I tell you, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. In this way, your generosity stores up a **reward** for you in heaven.”

Luke 12:33

“Sell what you have and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven.”

Luke 6:38

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.

For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

J.L. Craft – founder of Craft Organization was asked: “Why do you give such large amounts of money to the church and other organizations? His response was, well it's like this, I shovel out my money and God shovels it back in and God's shovel is much bigger than my shovel.”

- D. Do you see that when you give, you are blessed further to be able to give more?

2 Cor. 9:10 – 11

“For God is the One who gives seed to the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, He will give you many opportunities to do good, and He will produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched so that you can give even more generously.”

There were once two young men working their way through Leland Stanford University. Their funds got desperately low, and the idea came to one of them to engage Paderewski for a piano recital and devote the profits to their board and tuition. The great pianist’s manager asked for a guarantee of two thousand dollars. The students, undaunted, proceeded to stage the concert. They worked hard, only to find that the concert had raised only sixteen hundred dollars. After the concert, the students sought the great artist and told him of their efforts and results. They gave him the entire sixteen hundred dollars, and accompanied it with a promissory note for four hundred dollars, explaining that they would earn the amount at the earliest possible moment and send the money to him.

"No," replied Paderewski, "that won't do." Then tearing the note to shreds, he returned the money and said to them: "Now, take out of this sixteen hundred dollars all of your expenses, and keep for each of you 10 percent of the balance for your work, and let me have the rest and we'll call it even."

The years rolled by--years of fortune and destiny. Paderewski had become premier of Poland. The devastating war came, and Paderewski was striving with might to feed the starving thousands of his beloved Poland. There was only one man in the world that could help Paderewski and his people. Thousands of tons of food began to come into Poland for distribution by the Polish premier. After the starving people were fed, Paderewski journeyed to Paris to thank Herbert Hoover for the relief sent him. "That's all right, Mr. Paderewski, I just wanted to thank you back." was Mr. Hoover's reply. "Besides, you don't remember it, but you helped me once when I was a student at college and I was in a hole."

E. When you give, it will always come back to you.

1. Your gift leaves your hand but not your life!

2. God promises this throughout the Bible as a covenant promise:

Proverbs 28:27

“He who gives to the poor will lack nothing.”

III. Selfishness Stifles Happiness.

Proverbs 14:30-31

“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.”

A. **Selfishness** is so unlike God; it will stifle everything good in your life.

1. Selfish in marriage – it won't be a happy marriage.
2. Selfish in finances – no joy in the things you do have.
3. Selfish with talent – your talent loses its appeal.
4. Selfish with your heart – you'll end up lonely.

B. Why? Because selfishness is opposite with the nature of God.

1. Selfishness separates us from God.

For the past forty years Eunice Pike has worked with the Mazatec Indians in Southwestern Mexico. During this time, she has discovered some interesting things about these beautiful people. For instance, the people seldom wish someone well. Not only that, they are hesitant to teach one another or to share the gospel with each other. If asked, "Who taught you to bake bread?" the village baker answers, "I just know," meaning he has acquired the knowledge without anyone's help. Eunice says this odd behavior stems from the Indian's concept of "limited good."

- They believe there is only so much good, so much knowledge, so much love to go around.
- To teach another means you might drain yourself of knowledge.
- To love a second child means you have to love the first child less.
- To wish someone well--"Have a good day"--means you have just given away some of your own happiness, which cannot be reacquired.

Sadly, some people live their lives like this.

But God loves a cheerful GIVER.

Conclusion:

2 Corinthians 9:15

“Thank God for his Son – a gift too wonderful for words.”

- Another translation – “Thanks be to God for His Indescribable Gift”